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LIGHTHOUSE

Information & Support

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HOW TO HELP WISELY

Recent events will forever be etched in our memories: Russia's attack on Ukraine has shocked the whole world. The people of our country were immediately united in helping the people of Ukraine, and heartening news of further selfless gestures is reaching us from everywhere. If we ourselves wish to welcome refugees into our home, it is worth doing so carefully.

HOSTING REFUGEES

When offering temporary accommodation, it is a good idea to prepare accordingly. As a host, you decide how many rooms, for how long and to how many people you can offer. Before your guests arrive, prepare the rooms, luggage storage areas, bathroom, towels, bedding, etc. Organise everything to ensure privacy.

Think about the rules in your home. The people you are helping will not want to feel intrusive, so it is a good idea to familiarise them with the important rules of your home: when is the bedtime, where is the dustbin, what hours you work, etc. Think about it before they arrive.

ARRIVAL OF GUESTS

Newcomers will probably arrive with many different emotions. The best way to welcome them will be to offer tea and food. Be prepared for them to be tense and nervous – they are in an unfamiliar house, with people they have only just met. Smile gently, provide basic information and make sure they get some rest. When exhausted, they can sleep for up to several days.

Internet access is also very important – your guests will certainly want to contact relatives and check information from their country.

Also provide meals. You can eat together, but perhaps your guests will want to prepare food themselves. Respect that and organise space for storing products and cooking.

You can show your guests the surrounding area, walks and sightseeing have a calming effect. In addition, give them information about important places: where to get medical, psychological, legal help. Show them where the nearest shop is. Also be vigilant about other needs – sometimes they may be embarrassed to talk about them.

Above all, show empathy, be authentic and natural. What you are doing is very noble. Accept all the emotions that arise for both you and your guests. And if you yourself need help, don't be afraid to ask for it.



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Inspire yourself to change for good





You can find more necessary information and tips about helping refugees in our special guide: Guide for hosts of refugees from Ukraine

HOW TO TALK TO REFUGEES

The language barrier can cause stress. However, we are not in the worst situation – Polish and Ukrainian languages are similar to each other. When communicating with refugees, remember:

- Nothing by force – do not persuade them to accept your solutions, respect the other person's decision.
- Don't push them to talk to you. Don't ask about the family, the war situation – if they want to, they will tell you about it themselves.
- Be empathetic. It is the ability to see, feel and understand someone's emotions. Don't shy away from affection, even if it's uncomfortable for you – just hand a tissue, offer a cup of tea, and if the person lets you, give a hug or hold their hand.
- Don't pretend anything. Try to be authentic. If you are afraid, say so. Also, don't feel remorse if you feel a pleasant emotion.
- Accept. Don't judge. In a crisis situation, people react differently. Your guests are in a strange place, they have fled a war, their loved ones are fighting several hundred kilometres away. Just support them.
- Ask your guests if they need anything, but don't push them. Give them time to get used to the new situation.
- Learn basic phrases in Ukrainian. This inspires trust and helps build a positive relationship.
- You can use electronic dictionaries or translators on your phone on a regular basis. Many thoughts can also be conveyed through gestures.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO

To help wisely, you must first take care of yourself. The current situation in Ukraine evokes many difficult emotions such as sadness, anger, rage, terror and a sense of helplessness. To feel better, try the following tips:

- Listen to yourself – if you want to laugh, do it without remorse. If you want to cut yourself off from the media, do it. Choose things that give you support.
- Avoid things that do not serve you well. Do not engage in difficult conversations. Mute some social media accounts. Find something that brings you relief.
- Talk about how you feel. Naming emotions helps to 'tame' them.
- Do as much as you can. Do not act beyond your means. If you donate even a small amount to a proven fundraiser, it is still a big help.
- If you have a lot of thoughts accumulating in your head that don't give you peace – write them down. Writing can bring great relief.

The situation in Ukraine will not stop your daily life. Some problems may seem trivial, but that does not mean you should overlook them. Don't be afraid to ask for help either – if you feel you need support, contact a psychologist, psychotherapist or psychiatrist.

*Don't wait, call now! If you feel that you cannot cope with the difficult situation, consult a specialist.
We are here to support you!*