

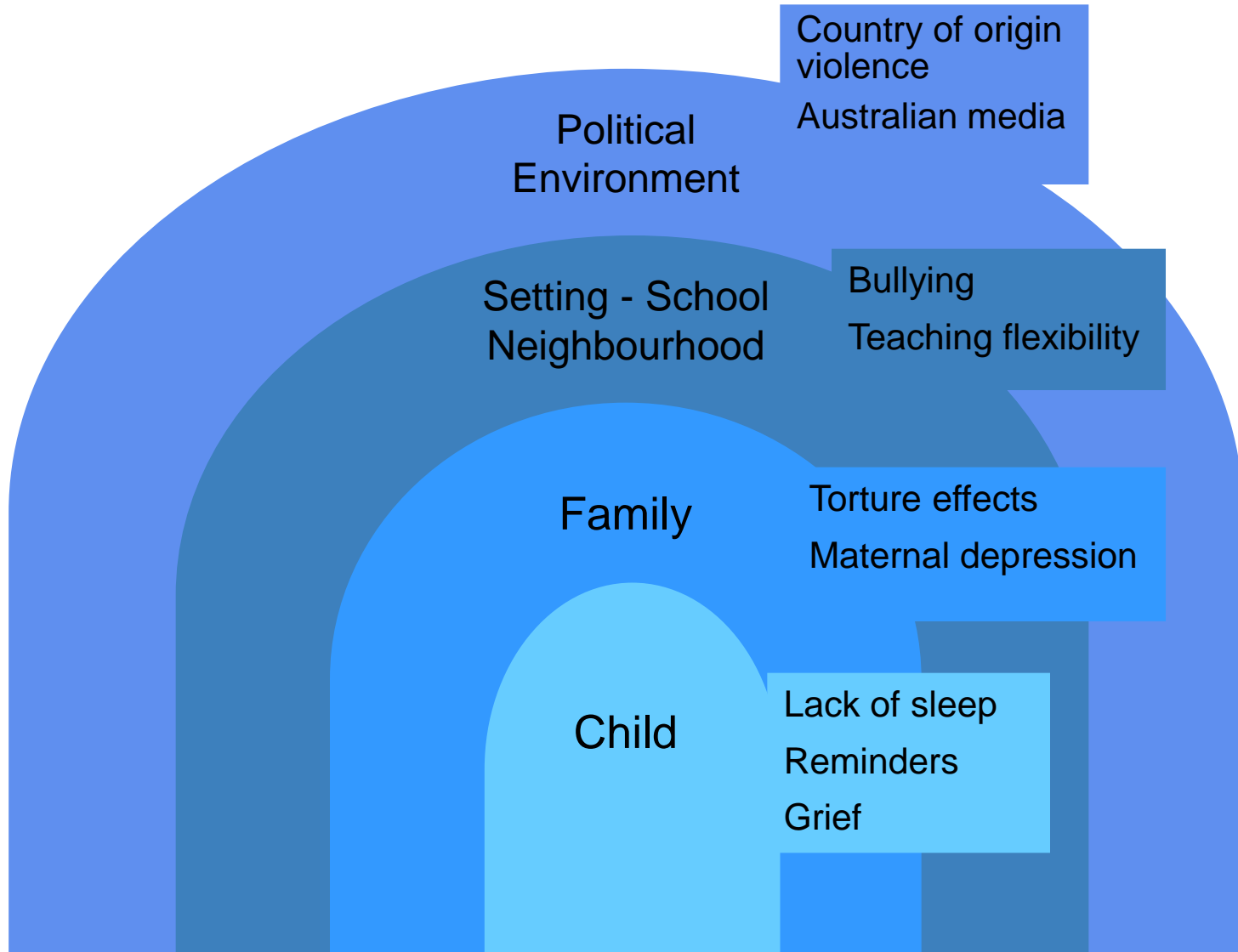
Assessment of Children and Adolescents of Refugee Background



Issues in Assessment

- Consideration of cross-cultural factors
- Good assessment “conditions” needed
- Comprehensive assessment at multiple levels required
- Importance of developmental and migration history

Comprehensive Assessment



VFST CLIENTS' EXPERIENCE OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA 2008/09

(% frequency)

	0-17 years	18+ years
Under Combat Fire	23	32
Lack of Food or Water	19	25
Lack of Shelter	17	24
Refugee Camp	38	32
Dangerous Flight	56	73
Disappearance of Family Members	28	41
Forced Separation from Family	44	69
Threat of Harm to Family	64	80
Witnessing Violence	50	74
Witnessing Others Killed	18	35

LOSSES

	0-17 years	18+ years
War Related Loss*	11.1	17.1
Non War Related Loss*	1.3	3.0
Forced Separation**	9.5	16.1

*10 is equivalent to a death of a parent for a young child or death of a child for a parent

**10 is equivalent to a separation from a parent for a young child or separation from a child for a parent

Quality of family relationships: the child's perspective

- Being a failure at school is a major concern
- Making up for their parents suffering
- Ideas of fairness clash with their parents
- Want to be like other young people
- Conflict between play and responsibility
- Worry and guilt about family members still at risk
- Unrecognised grief

Quality of relationships: the parents' perspective

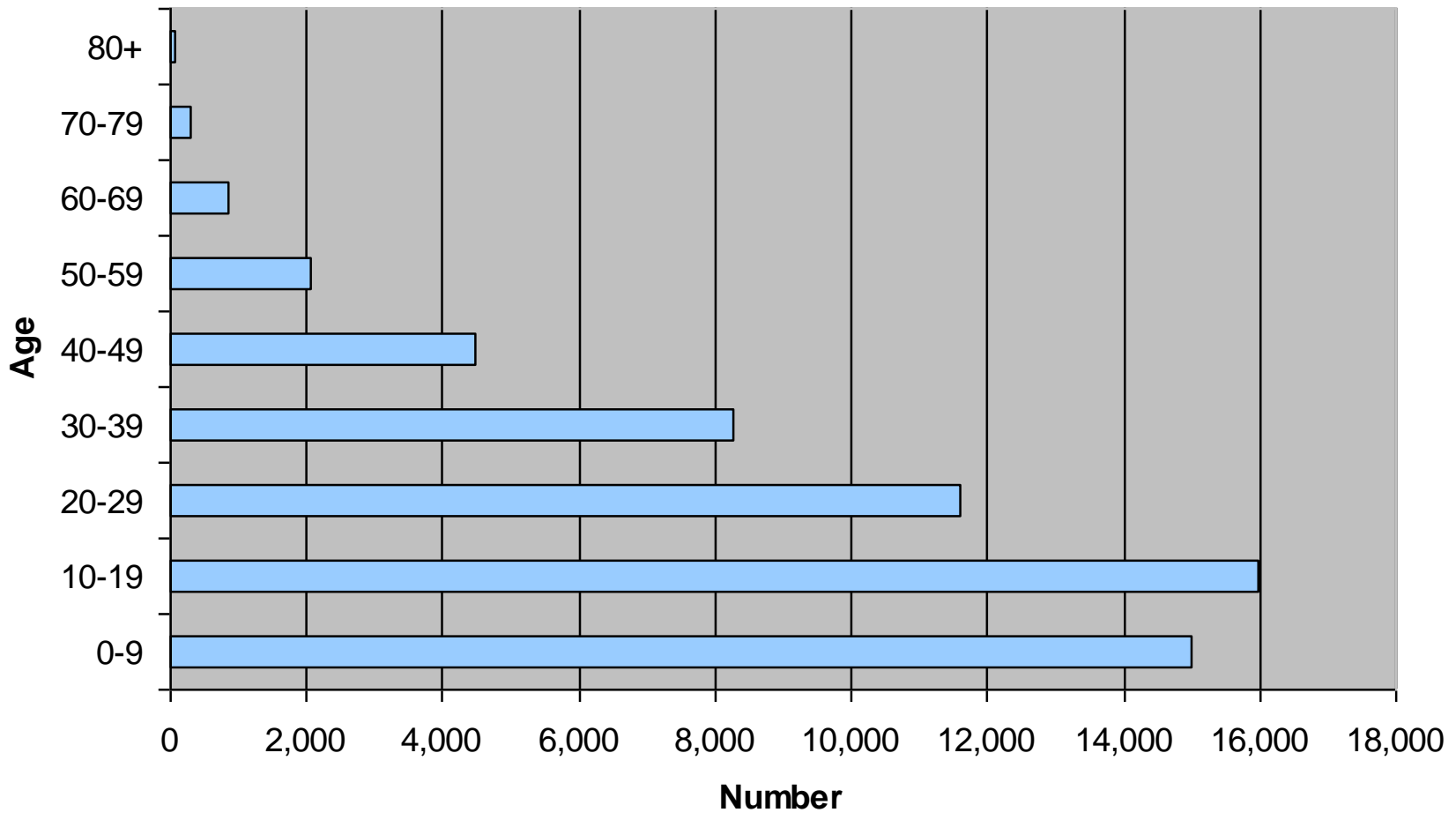
- Fear of losing children to dominant culture
- Sensitive to dangers in the environment
- Disappointments when children do not uphold traditional values
- Children acculturate faster
- Dependency on children for communication, advocacy
- Bewildered about the rights of children
- Loss of dignity associated with unemployment, loss of status, loss of agency, loss of role
- Isolation

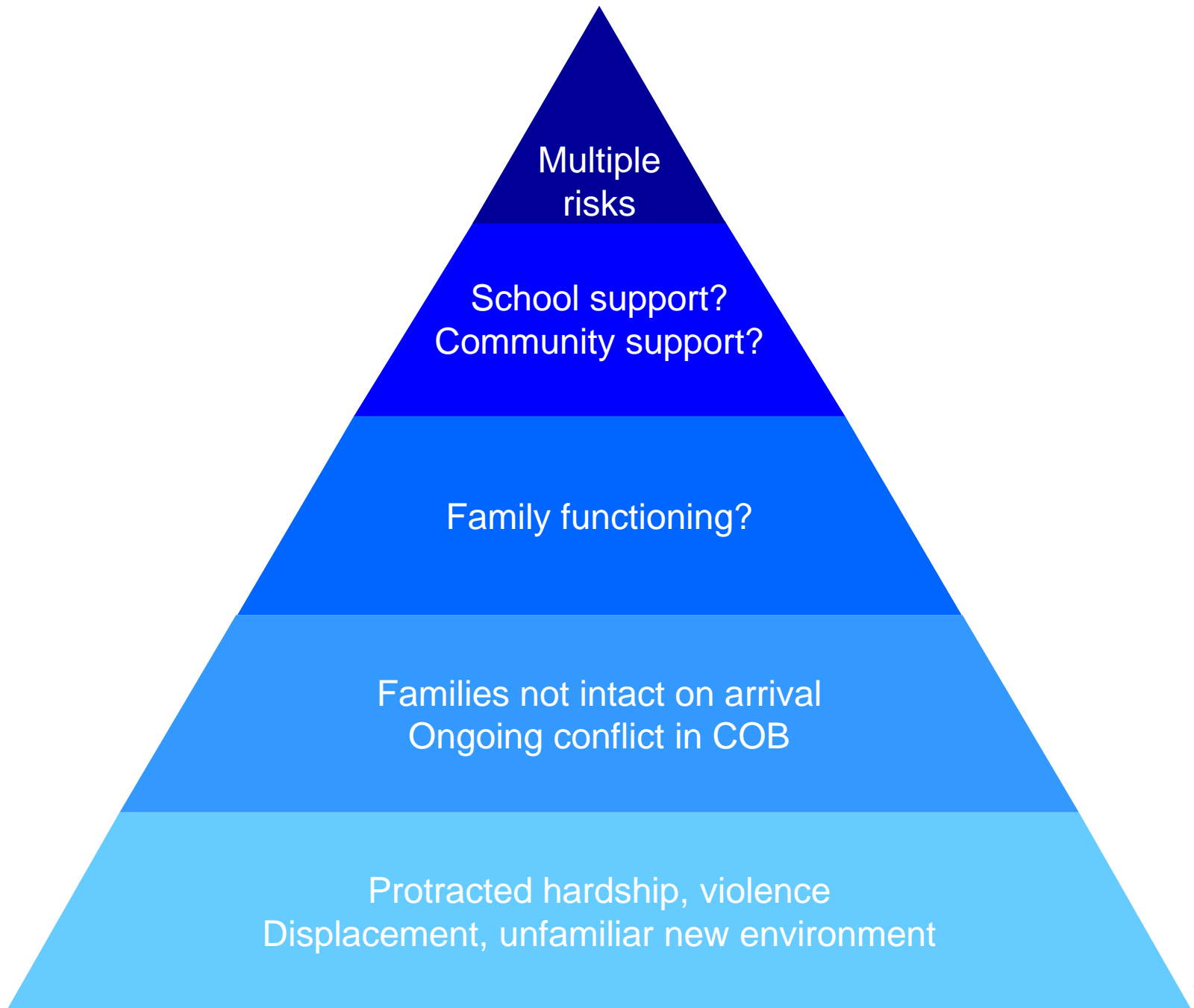
Settlement factors affecting children, adolescents and families

- unfamiliarity with service systems – medical, educational, legal
- limited access to mainstream specialised services –family support, mental health
- effects of disrupted schooling
- limited adequate housing
- training and employment for parents
- effects of discrimination
- feeling welcome in the wider Australian community
- building capacities of communities to support children and adolescents

Age Groups

Refugee & Special Humanitarian arrivals 2004-2009





Direct violence
Witnessing of violence



Lack of control
Helplessness
Fear and anxiety

Forced displacement
Separations
Death of loved ones
Community support fragmented



Attachment relationships disrupted
Grief
Isolation
Depression

Witnessing violence on mass scale



Shattered assumptions of human existence
meaning?
trust?

Forced choices
Sacred values violated



Shame
Guilt