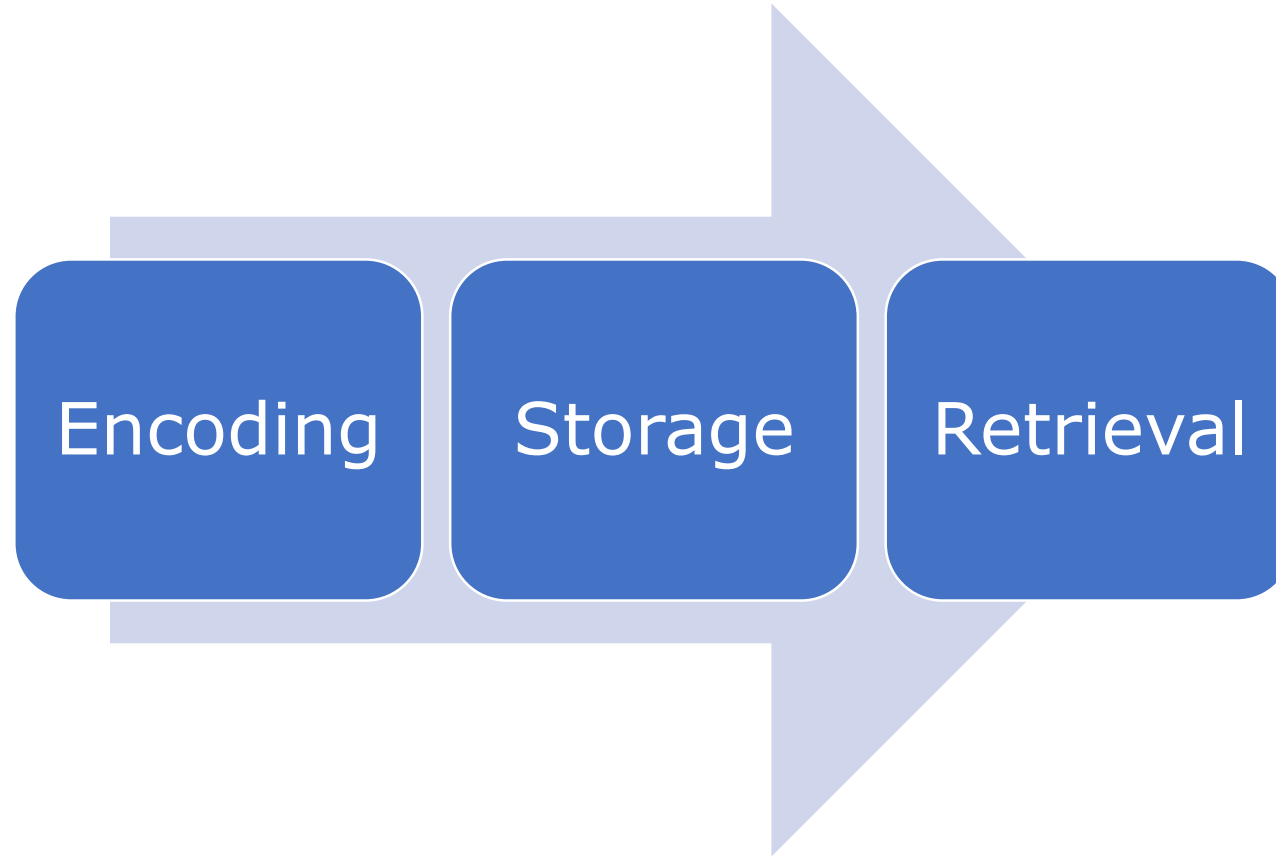


The vulnerability of memory

Dr Julia Korkman

HEUNI; the European Institute for Crime Prevention and
Control, affiliated with the United Nations
& Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The memory process



Distortions can occur in every phase!





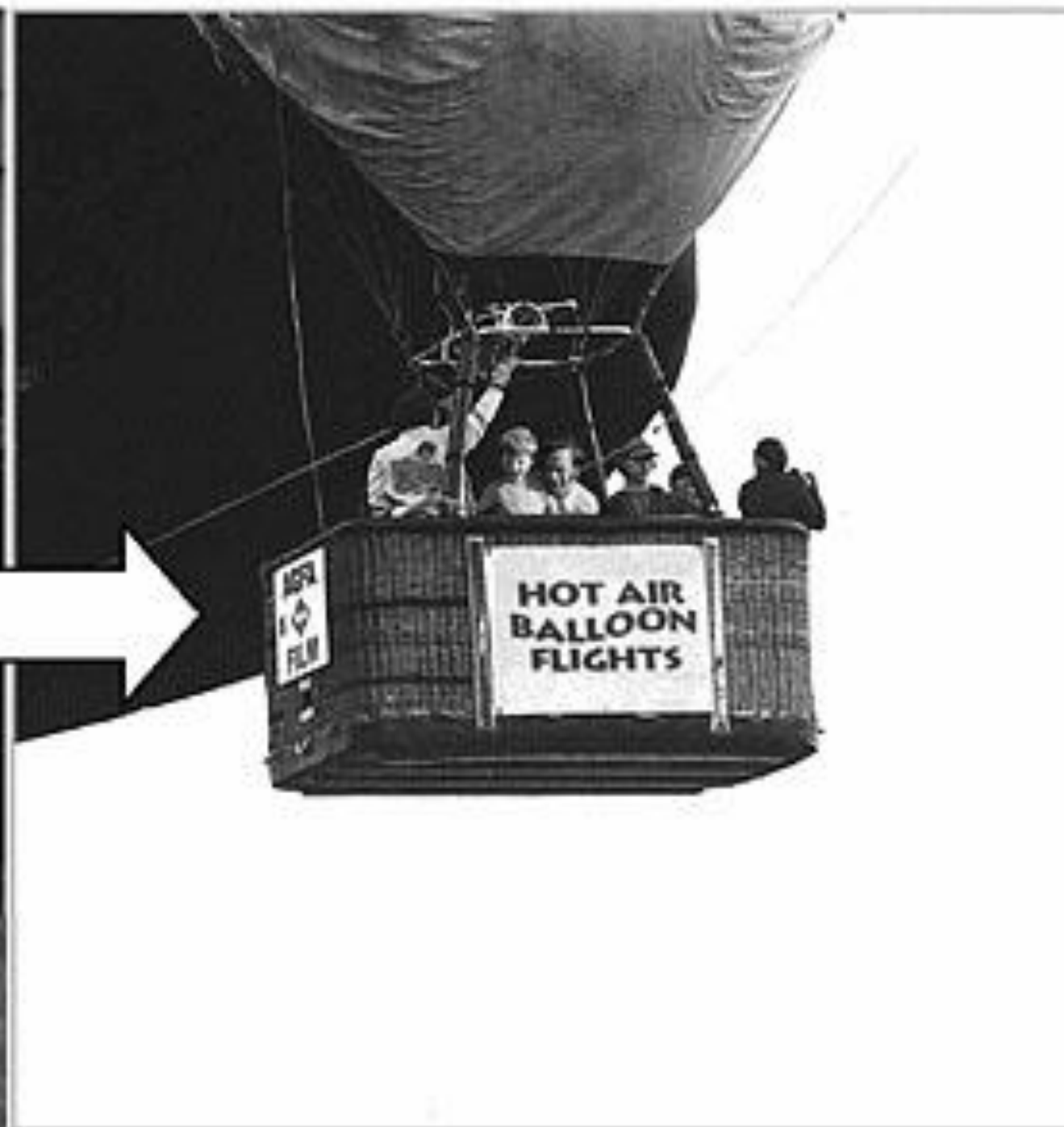
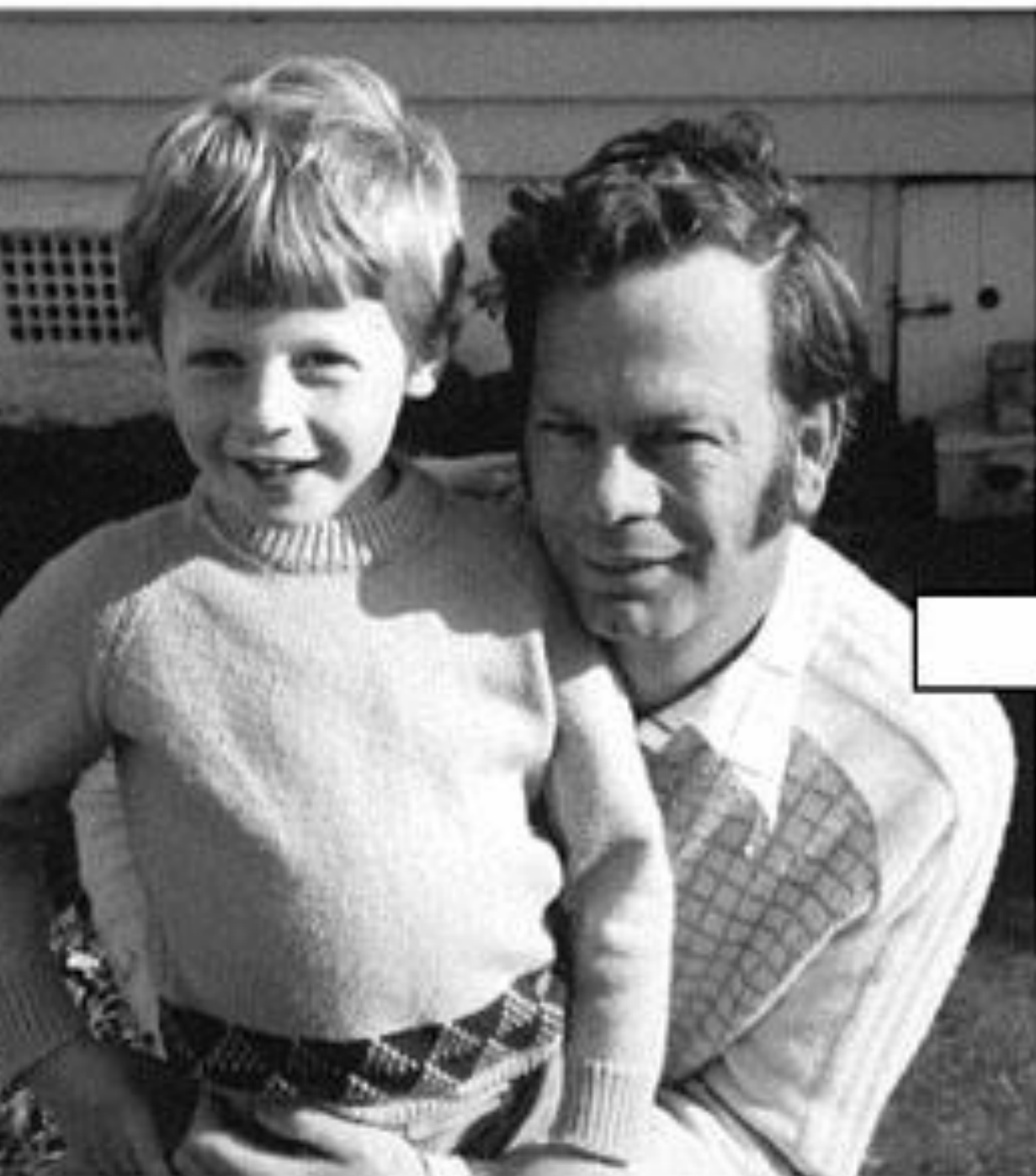
New York Times 15.5.2015: Witness accounts in midtown hamer attack show the power of false memory

What do we remember?

- What is relevant for us?
- Dependent on background, culture, previous experiences and context
- Evolution: sex & violence are central for survival
- Memories are highly malleable and prone to distortions and reinterpretations
- Memory tends – in psychologically well being persons - to be favourable to us

Common misconceptions about memory

- *"Memory works like a video recorder"*
 - It does not. Every time we process an event, it changes to some extent.
- *"If something has happened several times, it is remembered better than singular events"*
 - Paradoxically, unique experiences are often better distinguished in memory, whereas frequently occurring situations form so called scripts ("usually") with less details
 - Relevant in, for instance, cases of intimate partner violence



Choice
blindness
& change
blindness



Johansson, Hall, Sikström & Olsson, *Science*, 2005

"Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, or whatever it is that you think you remember?"

(Elizabeth Loftus)

Misconceptions regarding trauma

- *"Traumatic memories are often blocked and cannot be accessed"*
 - Traumatic situations are, in fact, *less* likely to be forgotten than neutral or positive ones
 - Like all memories, also those of traumatic events *can* be forgotten, distorted or re-evaluated based on new understanding
- *"If something utterly traumatic happens, you would remember it forever"*
 - Not really – while you may recall *that* you have experienced something, many or even most of the surrounding details may be forgotten or distorted
 - However, *not being able to forget* is indeed a common feature in posttraumatic stress

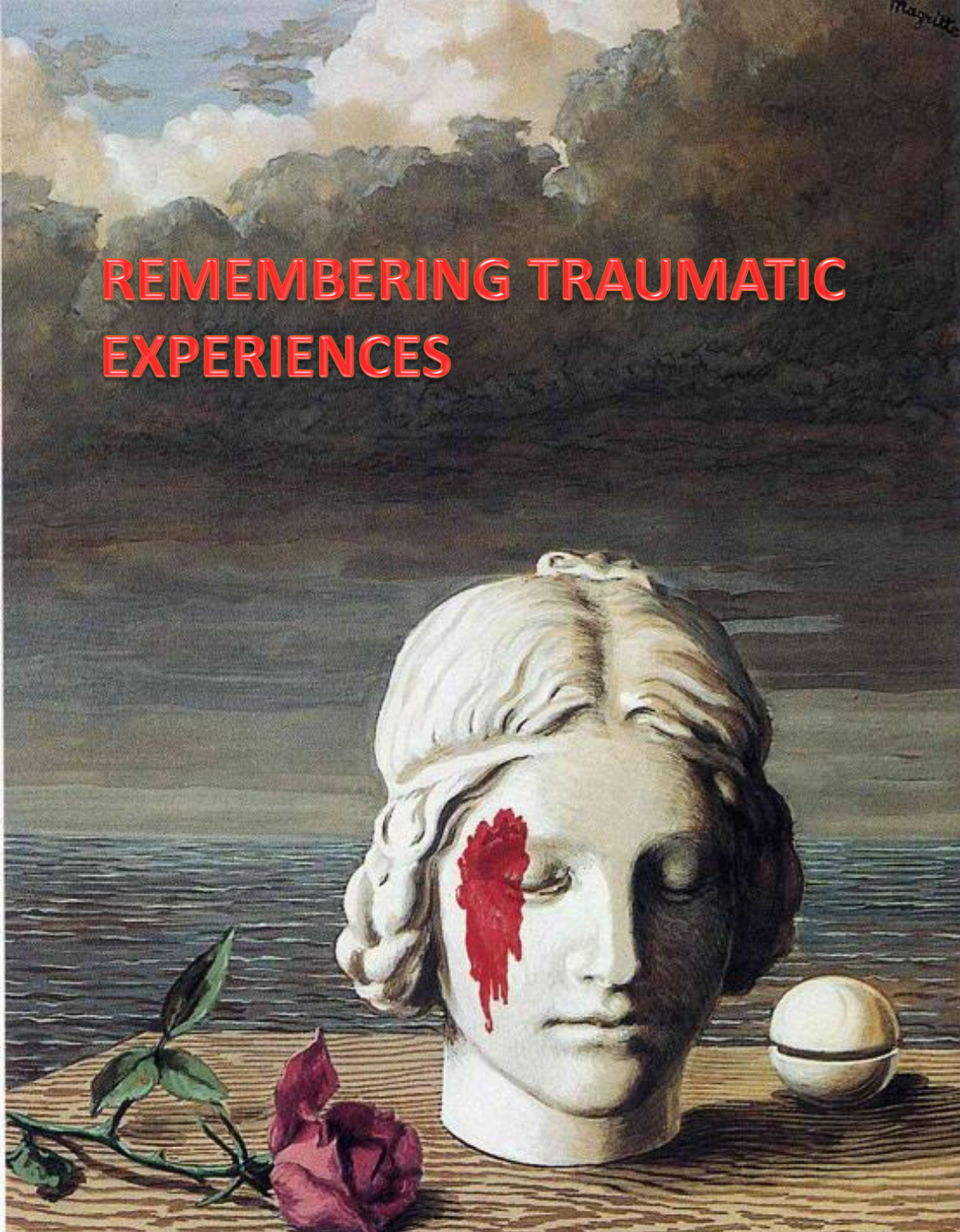


Hirst et al 2010:
Long-term memory
for the terrorist
attack of September
11: flashbulb
memories, event
memories and the
factors that influence
their retention

■ BBC

September 11 attacks: What happened on ...

REMEMBERING TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES



- Traumatic memories can be (even more) skeletal than other memories; focusing on central details at the expense of peripheral
- Exposure to high stress has a negative impact on memory
 - (But moderate stress may improve memory)

article

Journal homepage

Articles

Are memories of sexual trauma fragmented?

Richard J. McNally 

Pages 26-30 | Received 24 Sep 2020, Accepted 28 Dec 2020, Published online: 12 Jan 2021

 Download citation  <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2020.1871023>

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ABSTRACT

Alarming high rates of sexual assault on campus have motivated American colleges and universities to take steps to address this serious problem. Yet university administrators have often felt ill-equipped to assess allegations of sexual assault. Unsurprisingly, they have sought the expertise of psychologists who can educate administrative staff about the complexities of traumatic memory. Dr.

Deborah Campbell is among the most influential figures teaching university

“On average, memories of trauma are no more fragmented than are memories of positive, other negative, or important memories”.

Sensitive listening: TED!

- Be careful with leading and suggestive questions!
 - Including active interpretations – use them wisely and acknowledge their potential power
- Lessons learned in the context of witness interviews: If you want to find out about a person's own experiences, ask them TED-questions:
 - Tell me about...
 - Explain how that made you feel
 - Describe the situation
- Telling about traumatic experiences tends to require time, calm and compassion

Overgenerational trauma



Kannaksen evakkoja talvisodan syttymispäivänä 30. marraskuuta 1939. KUVA: SA-KUVA

Culture, trauma, and memory in investigative interviews

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ABSTRACT

Police investigators, immigration officials, and other investigative interviewers often interview individuals from different cultural backgrounds about potentially traumatising events. Much of the work on the impact of negative life events on memory has overlooked cultural differences. In this article, we integrate insights from legal, clinical, and cross-cultural psychology to shed light on cross-cultural investigative interviews about negative life events. We review how negative life events may be experienced and expressed differently around the world, highlighting the limitations of the Western 'trauma' model. Next, we consider how culture and negative life events may interact to influence memory reporting in investigative interviews. We identify barriers to disclosure and effective communication in interviews, including the role of interpreters. Finally, we propose how research findings on culture, trauma, and memory can be

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 19 December 2022

Accepted 22 April 2023

KEYWORDS

Cultural differences; cross-cultural communication; traumatic memories; investigative interviewing; eyewitness memory

2 Muisti, trauma ja kulttuuri turvapaikka-prosessissa

JENNY SKRIFVARS & HEDAYAT SELIM

2.1 Johdanto

Turvapaikanhakijoiden matka turvaan on usein pitkä ja hengenvaarallinen. Heidän kohtaamansa haasteet kuitenkin harvoin päättyvät uuteen maahan asetuttaessa, sillä siellä heidän on kohdattava monimutkainen oikeusjärjestelmä hakeakseen kansainvälistä suojelua. Turvapaikkaprosessissa turvapaikanhakijoiden odotetaan kertovan vainosta viranhaltijalle, jonka tehtävänä on päättää, täyttyykö kokemastaan oikeudelliset kriteerit. Tämä voi olla erityisen ahdistavaa juuri turvapaikanhakijoille, sillä heidän kokemansa vaara, trauma ja maanpakolaisuus saattavat vaikeuttaa heidän kykyään kuvailla kokemuksiaan uskottavasti. Samaan aikaan asiakirjoja ei välttämättä ole, koska pakoon on lähdetty olosuhteissa, missä niiden keräämiseen ei ole ollut tilaisuutta. Kirjallista näyttöä turvapaikkaprosessiin ei näin ollen välttämättä ole. Näin ollen.

LAT

Thank you!

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LEPÅ

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