

How Psychosocial Support Can Help One Boy's Experience in Yemen

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Hamza is a 9 years old Yemeni boy who suffered. He had problems with his friends and relatives, who were often mean and complained that he did not listen and did whatever he wanted.

One day he approached one of IOM's Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) in Sana'a. The CFS team realized that Hamza's friends did not accept him, and he was misbehaving.

The CFS team tried to talk to Hamza but either he ignored or did not answer their questions. The team tried to involve him in some activities, and eventually asked the CFS's psychologist to observe Hamza and work with him. After a few individual and group sessions, the psychologist and CFS team discovered that Hamza could not hear well and he had ear problems.



Children playing in the CFS, Sana'a © IOM Yemen 2017

The CFS team learned from Hamza's mother that a fever as a kid caused Hamza's speech to be slow. But his family could not afford the hospital costs to heal him, and instead tried treating him with domestic remedies.

"We thought that he has a speaking problem. When he refused to listen to us, we - family, teachers, and friends - used to hit him because we thought he was stubborn and a trouble maker!" his mother added.

With the consent of his mother, Hamza was referred by IOM to a local hospital for consultation. The doctor claimed that his problem was with hearing and therefore he could not interact well with people. The doctor added that Hamza's aggressive behavior was probably a reaction to the maltreatment by the surrounding people.

Through IOM, Hamza received the prescribed medical care and hearing device. He started to hear and the CFS team worked with him to improve his pronunciation and speak some words. His behavior has improved and he has become friendlier. His family and relatives are treating him better too.

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