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words

Migration and mental health

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The history of humanity is a story of migrants. Gradual migration was the progenitor of trade, innovations, war and epidemics. Recent rapid migration across vast cultural landscapes can bewilder both migrants and hosts. Migrants experience contrary emotions juxtapositioned: grief and renewal, loss and hope, separation and assimilation. The host feels invaded. The results, positive health or mental illness, arise from this complex, multilayered interplay – there is no inevitability of outcome. Our relationship with land is intergenerational: the land where our ancestors lived and which our children inherit. As migrants develop such cross-generational links with their new land, flourishing replaces distress.

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