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CMBM Publishes Groundbreaking Study on Trauma Healing in Palestinian Youth in the International Journal of Stress Management

WASHINGTON DC/GAZA CITY: The Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) announced today the publication of a groundbreaking study on the treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Gaza. CMBM used its comprehensive mindfulness-based, non-drug model to significantly reduce symptoms of PTSD and depression in children and adolescents living in the war-traumatized Gaza Strip.

The study, "Mind-Body Skills Groups for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Depression Symptoms in Palestinian Children and Adolescents in Gaza," is a major contribution which reveals the CMBM approach to be highly successful at treating trauma symptoms *in the midst of a violent conflict*.

This study analyzed the effectiveness of a mind-body skills group program created by CMBM which includes self-expression in words, drawings, movement, and mind-body techniques (including meditation, guided imagery, biofeedback and yoga). The program was offered to war-traumatized Palestinian children over 10 sessions in an educational, supportive small group setting. Results produced were highly significant reductions in levels of depression, PTSD symptoms, and hopelessness. **72.4% of children who had PTSD no longer met the criteria** at 7 month follow-up.

"This study is especially important," said Dr. James S. Gordon, MD the senior author and Founder and Director of CMBM "because the gains were fully maintained at follow-up in spite of ongoing violent conflict and severe economic hardship. In fact, the resulting improvements in 'hopelessness' were entirely sustained."

In maintaining significant improvements, the CMBM model proved to be not only an effective treatment of PTSD and Depression but also a powerful tool for building resilience. This resilience is sustained by the children's focus on psychological self-care and mutual help. As participants learned to heal their own trauma, they also worked with each other to build a community of healing.

Senior author Dr. Gordon, and his team of international faculty, will be in Gaza City training 300 more health and education professionals to use this model with children, from July 2-13th 2011. Dr. Gordon welcomes phone or in-person interview in Gaza during this time (or from the US upon his return).

This comprehensive model for psychological healing and growth has been used with success around the world. Previous studies, including a randomized controlled trial in Kosovo (Gordon et al, *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 2008), have validated the results in the current study. Additional research on The Center for Mind-Body Medicine's program is underway in Gaza and with US veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

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