

Update – Healing the Wounds of War in the Middle East

December 2005

In Israel

The CMBM held its Leadership Training Program in Jerusalem from December 4-7, 2005. Five CMBM international faculty members, including two from our program in Kosovo, led this training to assess and further develop leadership capabilities among selected Israeli program graduates.

In this course, 34 attendees presented lectures on the science, research and applicability of mind-body techniques in the treatment of psychological stress and trauma and demonstrated their ability to lead mind-body skills groups in the CMBM model. The faculty was very pleased and impressed with their original and thoughtful presentations, as well as their continued enthusiasm and commitment.



Remains of the former Gaza settlement of Neve Dekalim



In the coming months, these leadership program graduates will provide local workshops and lead mind-body groups for CMBM projects throughout Israel. Their focus will be on populations most in need of help, including settlers relocated from Gaza, traumatized children within the Israeli public schools and the Israeli Defense Force soldiers and military police. In addition, CMBM staff and local colleagues will select some leaders to become trainers themselves.

Leaders in psychology and psychiatry from the Army, the Ministry of Education, Israeli peace groups and Israeli's medical schools will train approximately 120 of their peers in late 2006.

For the first time, the Israeli training faculty included Muslims – 2 psychiatrists from Kosovo – as well as Christians and Jews. These Kosovar psychiatrists' experience of war and their deep knowledge of the CMBM program helped to forge close connections with their Israeli colleagues. "These Muslim men are my brothers," one Israeli psychologist announced in the closing session to rousing applause.

In December 2005, CMBM Israel was registered as an official not-for-profit organization in Israel. This will help us to better serve our Israeli graduates as they provide seminars and workshops, lead mind-body skills groups and implement projects with targeted populations. It may also open access to funding sources available only to Israel-based organizations.

Israeli program graduates are already using their CMBM training in their work with:

- Israelis displaced from Gaza settlements
- IDF soldiers and military police who were involved in the disengagement from the Gaza settlements
- victims of terror bombings and their families
- educational psychologists within the Israeli Ministry of Education
- patients and clients in their clinical practices, and
- colleagues and employees in their workplaces

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In Gaza



The CMBM Advanced Training Program was held 11 – 15 December 2005 in Gaza City. Eight international CMBM faculty members, including two psychiatrists from our program in Kosovo, led this training for 70 Palestinian health and mental health professionals. During the months between the initial (July 2005) and advanced training, more than 66 attendees had voluntarily participated in program

study groups designed to provide practice and guidance in leading mind-body skills groups in their workplaces and communities. Palestinian leaders who have shown exceptional skill and expertise in the CMBM model lead these ongoing groups. All graduates of this program are now trained and well-equipped to begin further implementation and dissemination of the program throughout Gaza.

Many are already using the techniques with children and adults who suffer the everyday psychological trauma of living in Gaza. CMBM graduates are integrating their training into their work with children in Palestinian schools and orphanages, as well as with families and colleagues. Dr. Fadel Abu Hein, a prominent Palestinian psychologist and CMBM leader, created a series of weekly radio shows that provides the public with techniques learned in his CMBM training. This not only provides exposure to the program and its techniques, but also an opportunity for those who are experiencing symptoms of stress and trauma to get help anonymously, without fear of the cultural stigma surrounding mental health care.



The CMBM program is now being implemented through local health and human rights organizations as well as through several government ministries. CMBM staff and local leaders are working together with these organizations and ministries to determine the most effective partnerships for a successful, sustainable regional structure. The next phase of training in Gaza will be a Leadership Training planned for the fall of 2006, similar to the one recently conducted in Israel.

Next Steps

In the next several months, CMBM program staff will be working diligently to expand partnerships in both Israel and Gaza as we explore the potential for clinical and research projects in both areas. We will also begin to create an advisory board of Israeli and Palestinian colleagues who will help shape a joint Israeli-Palestinian training program planned for 2007. Work in Israel and Gaza is supported by a matching grant from The Atlantic Philanthropies. For every dollar contributed to CMBM, Atlantic will donate two dollars to Healing the Wounds of War in the Middle East.