



Social Health Care (SHC)

Training and Treatment Program



Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Syria

Local capacity building for local recovery and empowerment

Amid turmoil in the Middle East, a US based organization is providing a major, innovative service to train hundreds of local mental health workers in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey to assist tens of thousands of Syrian refugees suffering from trauma throughout these countries and in Syria itself. **Psychological trauma due to war and violence is historically a commonly ignored problem, allowing devastating unhealed communal wounds to be inherited into future generations. Transgenerational trauma is an underlying and potent fuel for past, present, and future violence between and within communities.**

Understanding and preventing it are essential to freeing ourselves of fear-based beliefs, victim identities, and knee-jerk responses of revenge that can plague us, our children, and our children's children. Trauma informed psychological treatment is virtually non-existent in these countries hosting the largest numbers of refugees.

To help accomplish this **Common Bond Institute (CBI)** and the **International Humanistic Psychology Association (IHPA)**, along with a large and growing consortium of international partners, has launched the **Social Health Care (SHC) training and treatment program**, a landmark humanitarian initiative to provide needed emergency mental health services to refugees suffering from PTSD and trauma related disorders due to recent upheaval and violence in the Middle East. Over 2 million Syrian refugees languish in dozens of camps across the region placing huge strains on extremely inadequate human service systems within countries already struggling to meet the needs of their own citizens. The SHC service provides free intensive professional

training in immediate care and long term treatment skills to hundreds of university students, professionals, and NGO staff in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, and in the future Syria, enabling them to quickly begin offering services to the large population of civilian victims, while at the same time providing trainees with vocational skills and a marketable profession.

The SHC program is in an ambitious 18 month comprehensive professional training designed to develop and put in place direct service components at each stage of the training process, staffed by trainees and beginning at the basics - from crisis phone lines, to drop-in centers, to coping skills training groups, to longer term, more in-depth clinical treatment services. The structure is



SHC co-director Steve Olweean holds a child with SHC trainees and refugees at a camp in Jordan.

fully grounded in an interdisciplinary peer team model enlisting the professions of psychology, psychiatry, social work, psychiatric nursing, special education, and rehabilitation therapy.

The initial classes of the first training cycle were held in June 2013 in Amman for over 130 graduate students. Within 1 year over 600 fully trained and certified practitioners will be prepared, and 900 by completion of the 1st 18 month curriculum. The training cycle repeats over a 3-5 year period to progressively produce an ever expanding pool of mental health service providers. Some trainees are prepared as future trainers, so responsibility for future trainings beyond this time is eventually shifted to the local colleagues. Many trainees are Syrian refugees themselves who will eventually return to their country with these vital skills. The model is designed to be culturally sensitive and replicated in similar regions of conflict.

“Models for treating individuals and small groups have existed for some time,” said SHC co-director Steve Olweean, *“however there is very little that has been understood or developed for treating trauma at the large group level when entire communities and societies are the victim.”* The SHC program is based on the integrated **Catastrophic Trauma Recovery (CTR)** training and treatment model, developed by Olweean in the late 90’s in response to searching for such new culturally appropriate models and methods for healing at the societal level.

CBI has also established the **Global Network for the Study of Transgenerational Trauma** made up of professionals organizations around the world, linked to the **Annual International Conference on Transgenerational Trauma**, for the long term task of researching and understanding the many interweaving dynamics of transgenerational trauma both historically and in the present. *However, the Social Health Care program is meant to act now* in building services to heal existing wounds of communal trauma and to help prevent their carry over into future generations where

they can fuel the creation of yet more victims.

“It seems that the living and the dead are somehow complicit, in a kind of unconscious/unseen contract, because of past wounds, and continue to replicate/repeat and resonate with these wounds in present day conflicts. The real work of the living is to take responsibility, by becoming conscious of these contracts and echoes, and in doing so, release them. This often enables us to value the positive intentions of those who have gone before, even if at face value, their actions and lives may have been misguided and then to forgive them.” ~Alexandra Asseily

Over 45 mental health specialists from CBI’s global network make up the expert trainer teams that provide both on-site trainings and supervision in Jordan, as well as on-going virtual classes and consultations through live teleconferencing. Team members commit to providing follow-up classes and on-going consultation indefinitely.



SHC co-director Myron Eshowsky joins Patch Adams and his group in clowning at Zataari Refugee Camp, Jordan providing trauma treatment for children in need at the camp.



Complete information about the SHC humanitarian aid program and how to donate is available online at www.cbiworld.org.

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All donations to I.H.P.A. , a federally approved non-profit, which oversees the SHC program are tax deductible.