

## **Trauma Recovery Trains to Heal Violent Crime Victims**

Trauma Recovery Humanitarian Assistance Programs began 2020 with a specialty training designed for mental health clinicians treating victims of violence, like homicide, assault or home invasion. The advanced EMDR training builds therapist skills to treat victims or family members who have lost a loved one to a homicide or other violent crime. The course was originally created by Don deGraffenried, Trauma Recovery

Director of Outreach and Programs, to assist therapists seeing families of victims and survivors of the 2012 Sandy Hook, CT mass shooting. This protocol specifically focuses on how to use EMDR recent event protocol to treat trauma events that have occurred in the last 90 days.

### **Focus on Early Intervention**

The training course was open to all EMDR trained clinicians who had completed Part 1 and 2 training. Many of the 22 participants were interested in deepening their EMDR skills to use early intervention methods with victims of manmade violence. Mr. deGraffenreid led the training, with Trauma Recovery volunteers, Dawn Herring, LMFT and April Minjarez, Ph.D. assisting as course facilitators.

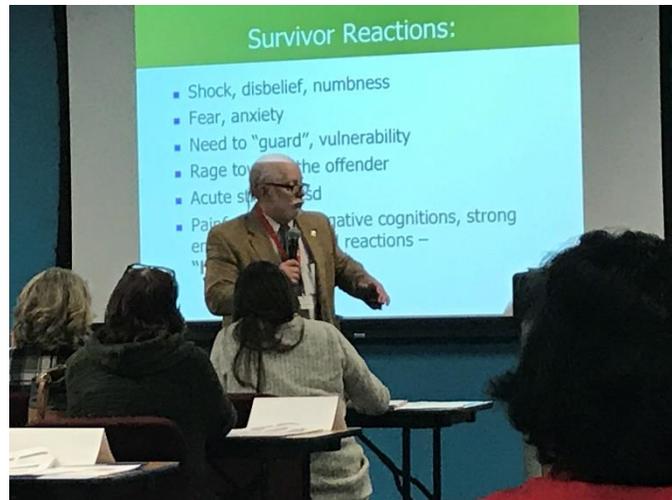
The objective of the protocol is to desensitize the traumatic experience. “Through lecture, demonstration and proactive role-play, clinicians learn to use the Visual Assessment Tool, a linear geometric icon model that allows clinicians to effectively develop and treat the multiple targets that are present in a recent event, without overwhelming clients in revisiting the event.”, deGraffenried said. Clinicians learn to measure client progress via the 0 to 10 Subjective Unit of Disturbance Scale. He noted, “The goal of this treatment protocol is to help clients reach zero, which is a no distress or neutral level.”

### **Meeting the Needs of Victims and First Responders**

The training was held January 27, 2020, at the University Medical Center of Southern Nevada (UMCSN), the only level 1 trauma center in the state. This hospital is where many of those injured or killed in the 2017 Mandalay Bay mass shooting were first taken. Aaron Stagg, Organizational Development and Employee Assistance Programs

Manager at the medical center was enthusiastic about hosting the advanced EMDR training.

His responsibilities include providing hospital staff and their families' short-term mental health counseling. Acquainted with the benefits of EMDR through his work in the Veterans Administration system, Stagg hosted Trauma Recovery /HAP's first EMDR basic course at UMCSN shortly after the 2017 shooting. Meeting the needs of doctors and nurses in the critical care and trauma units has been a challenge, since the medical center can only offer short-term consultation. He says, "The Trauma Recovery/HAP trainings helped me fill the needs of staff and their families with referrals to therapists in our community who I know have received quality training and are well equipped to heal. EMDR takes what we are doing and speeds up the healing, and strengthens the results." He believes that EMDR therapy helps people dealing with trauma go to places emotionally and therapeutically faster than traditional methods.



### **Positive Learning Outcomes**

Participants were extremely positive about their learning outcomes. Mr. Stagg said the feedback he has received from those trained has been extremely favorable. "They say it changes the direction of the work they do, and that the sessions are therapeutic and life-changing." Trainee evaluations found that the workshop was excellent in training others to perform seamlessly and logically. One participant commented, "I appreciate the expertise of the instructor, the ease at which he was able to explain and teach the material, and the joy he conveys for EMDR." Another evaluation noted, "I enjoyed the many real time examples of why the content worked."

### **Get Involved**

For more information about Trauma Recovery Humanitarian Assistance Programs, specialty training offerings and EMDR basic training contact [training@emdrhap.org](mailto:training@emdrhap.org). If your agency would like to bring EMDR training to your clinicians and clinicians in your community, [get started here](#).