

### Editorial Note

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As the summer heats up here in Tallahassee, Florida (USA) so does the Journal. The source of the fire is a treatment approach that was introduced to the field more than a dozen years ago. Since that time it has been one of the most studied and debated approaches not only in traumatology but in mental health. Among the reasons why it generates so much heat is that practitioners tend to like it, and non-practitioners, especially those who are guided more by scientific evidence than the demands of clinical practice, are skeptical and at times hostile. Like any good debate, both sides have good arguments and the goal, finding the most effective and efficient methods for relieving suffering, is a good one.

The first article, for example, is a strong response to the review of the research favorable and unfavorable to Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) by Allen Rubin, the Bert Kruger Smith Centennial Professor of Social Work at the University of Texas. The first article, *Some Answers to Unanswered Questions about the Empirical Support for EMDR in the Treatment of PTSD*, by Louise Maxfield, Kristine Lake, and Lee Hyer, makes reference throughout to the Rubin article. These authors assert, among other things, that Rubin has made numerous errors of omission and commission in his review of the research for and against the effectiveness of EMDR. Their stated purpose is to provide a “more balanced perspective” on the massive research literature on EMDR and to “clarify confusion” they believe was generated by Rubin’s 2003 article. The authors then go on to answer the “unanswered questions” posed by Rubin. Their primary thesis is that EMDR is equal to, or in some cases more effective than, exposure therapies and is an empirically-supported treatment for children, combat PTSD, and multiple trauma PTSD. More research is needed before such claims can be called evidence-based.

As with most professional journals, Rubin, the author of the original article, was given an opportunity to respond with the last word. Unlike his original article and the response to it, this article was not subjected to peer review, as is the custom in professional journals. In his response, *Fallacies and Deflections in Debating the Empirical Support for EMDR in the Treatment of PTSD: A Response to Maxfield, Lake, and Hyer*, Rubin vigorously takes issue with his critics and was especially concerned about the tone of the article to which he responded. Both Rubin and the team of Maxfield, Lake & Hyer agree, however, that EMDR is an effective treatment for Type I trauma, though the jury is out regarding Type II trauma treatment. What is obvious to authors of both articles is that far more research is needed to illuminate the effectiveness of EMDR and why. Although there is evidence of considerable emotion in both articles, such passion makes very interesting reading. I urge all readers of this Journal to consider writing an article that builds upon the perspectives of any article published here or in any other issue. This is true no matter whether the author agrees or disagrees with the content. Debate – heated or not – is a useful and constructive device for seeking truth and innovation.

The third paper in this issue is another in a series of articles published in this Journal that focus on the lessons learned from responding to the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack.

*Building Resiliency and Cultural Collaboration Post September 11<sup>th</sup>: A Group Model of Brief Integrative Psychoeducation for Diverse Communities*, by Lukens, O'Neill, Thorning, Waterman-Cecutti, Gubiseh-Ayala, Abu-Ras, Batista & Chen describe an innovative crisis intervention to ameliorate the impact of community trauma. The approach is a brief, integrative psychoeducational intervention that utilizes the power of groups. It is brief because it designed to be only four sessions. It also assumes that participants have various and effective methods of coping and builds upon these and other strengths. Rather than dwelling on the past, the approach places its focus on the here and now. This approach appears to be especially promising for all fields and specialties with a role in trauma recovery. Because it is brief and cost efficient, Lukens, et al. are to be congratulated for inventing and describing here such an innovative and highly adaptable crisis intervention. The perspective is not *whether* some community-wide trauma may happen: rather, it is *when*. The more we can utilize and practice approaches such as Lukens et al. provide in anticipation of such traumatic events, the greater the likelihood that the negative effects can be contained.

The final article in this issue also was written to stimulate debate. *Quality of Memory: Impact on Refugee Hearing Decisions*, by Mambo T. Masinda, introduces the reader to one of the most retraumatizing experiences sanctioned by developed nations. Asylum seekers are subjected to a series of interviews to determine, among other things, if they are seeking entry into a country from their country of origin because of their having been unfairly persecuted at home, or because they only seek to improve their lives. Masinda notes that the main objective of the study, and the article that reports it, is to stimulate debate about the importance of mental health in refugee hearing cases. Based on the study findings, Masinda argues that refugee hearings are inhumane and that decisions to deny refugee status demonstrate that the refugee's emotional state caused by trauma is not adequately considered. Rather, judges follow a "formalistic law approach, which considers the person in the courtroom to be a normal person who can't use the excuse of forgetting some parts of the traumatizing life experiences he or she has undergone." Masinda argues, among other things, that refugee claimants appear less credible due to traumatic memories and their consequences. It is hoped that the study and article will help us to rethink current policies in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> and as fear of terrorism creates a formidable wall to refugees everywhere seeking to be free.

The Journal would like to welcome Brittany Wilkins as the newest member of the Journal staff. As copy editor she brings considerable experience and enthusiasm. I once again urge the readers to consider either submitting to the journal or volunteering to serve as an ad hoc reviewer of either submissions or books. If you are interested let us know and send along an updated resume that clarifies and documents your expertise in one or more areas of interest to the Journal.

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