

### Editorial Note

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This month marks the second anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy. The Al Qaeda-sponsored attack on the United States was bold, ruthless, and heartless. The explanations and repercussions from this traumatic event continue to unfold. In contrast to the US, however, experiences with terror, death, and fear are far more frequent and on-going in the Middle East. The first two papers in this issue address the long-term effects of trauma on two opposing groups in this explosive region of the world.

The first article, written by Katri Kanninen and Raija-Leena Punamäki of the University of Tampere (Finland) and Samir Qouta of the Palestinian Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, sheds light on both the plight of Palestinian political prisoners and the role played by adult attachment styles in the emotional responses to, and processing of, traumatic memories. There are few published reports on this special population of traumatized people. This is due in part to the perception that they are terrorists. As the authors point out, they were placed in prison primarily because of their political position in opposition to the occupation of their land. The authors focus on the traumatic memories among Palestinian former political prisoners and the role of adult attachment. As predicted, the investigators confirm that the emotional profile of insecure-**dismissing** men is represented by both **high** intensity of cognitive appraisal and a **low** intensity of affective emotional responses. Insecure-**preoccupied** men, however, are characterized by an emotional profile that shows **low** intensity of cognitive appraisal and **high** intensity of affective responses, and an intensive behavioral urge to act. In contrast to the insecure, the **secure** men in turn had a moderate and balanced emotional profile involving both cognitive and affective responses. These findings are discussed by the authors and suggest important strategies for both assessing and treating the traumatized in a way that acknowledges and accommodates to their particular attachment styles and cultural context.

In contrast to the first article with attention to former Palestinian political prisoners held by Israel, the second article focuses on the terror experienced by Israelis. In their article, "Stress reactions in Israel in the face of terrorism: Two community samples," written by Irwin J. Mansdorf and Jacob Weinberg both of the Hadera (Israel) Institute for Psychological Studies, the authors posed three questions: (1) What stress symptoms and coping mechanisms do Israelis exhibit as a result of living with regularly occurring terror attacks? (2) Are there differences within Israel with respect to these symptoms and reactions based on degree of geographical proximity to terror attacks? (3) Do adults in these populations perceive their own reactions to terror and their children's reactions similarly? Two Israeli samples, similar in all demographic categories, were used to answer these questions. One sample was from a city (Hadera) that had experienced terror attacks while another sample lived in a city (Ra'anana- Hod HaSharon) that has not yet experienced an attack. As with all areas in Israel, people of both cities live under constant threat of attack. While both groups were similar in stress symptoms among adults, the factors that best differentiated the two samples were parents' perceived stress in their children's behavior and level of involvement in proactive activities related

to coping. As expected the attacked sample were more likely to report distress in children and fewer proactive coping behaviors than the sample living in the non-attacked city. The results may serve as a model for further study related to the effects of ongoing terror threats. This study together with others conducted in the US (e.g., contrasting New York City with other large cities that were not attacked on September 11<sup>th</sup>) indicate a growing support for a “crisis by observation” thesis: that living in a community attacked by terrorists fundamentally changes one's view of the world in contrast to those who live in communities not attacked by terrorists. Future research needs to focus on specific symptom patterns between contrasting communities and the role of habituation to fear of terrorism. As the authors note, it may be that continuing terror creates a routine of coping where both symptoms and coping change over time.

The third article is a radical departure from surveys of those traumatized in the Middle East. This article, written by Charlotte Sikes and Victoria Sikes of the University of Iowa, focuses on the revolutionary treatment of Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Not only has EMDR been found effective in eliminating, or at least bringing temporary relief from, the symptoms of PTSD but it appears to be a useful approach for treating other disorders -- especially anxiety disorders. At the same time, skeptics of the approach point not only to mixed results of outcome studies but also to other rather tangential issues (e.g., marketing the training). Although the quality of outcome research has increased substantially since EMDR was first studied, early criticism of the science was justified. Among other concerns were the lack of treatment fidelity, large random samples, comparisons with existing treatments, incorporation of non-self-report measures, attention to the number of sessions necessary. Gradually all of these important issues have been addressed, and EMDR still appears to be an extremely useful treatment for anxiety disorders, including PTSD. However, at times, the attacks on EMDR have been both vicious and personal: so much so that the treatment of EMDR proponents may have discouraged others who may wish to promote for testing their own approaches to treatment. The authors assert, among other things, that differences in findings (pro and con) may be due to unusual treatment procedures that may have effects on clients that are as yet unknown.

The final paper is another Report from the Field, a special feature of the Journal. Reports allow authors who rarely have time to write journal articles, an opportunity to describe what they are doing and to give their positions on various issues. Here David Harmon, a special emissary for the Bethany Social Services, provides the reader with a first-hand account of helping traumatized people living in poverty and enduring various difficulties in Albania at the time of the war waging in neighboring Kosovo. Among other things, he discusses his 15-hour days and attempts to be an agent of change.

These articles raise important issues for modern traumatology. Although the field has a rich and long history, a robust theory and research base, an impressive literature, numerous specific and related scholarly and practice journals, it is lacking in three ways. First, there are no universally recognized standards of practice for those who work with the traumatized. Second, there are no universally recognized standards of what

constitutes a traumatologist and the qualifications she or he must attain in working with the traumatized in one or more roles (e.g., treatment of children, crisis intervention, psychometrics, forensics). Third there is no organization dedicated specifically to the above issues, to the transfer of knowledge specifically, and to traumatology education generally. The Editor therefore proposes the establishment of the Traumatology Educators Association (TEA) that would be dedicated to the above concerns and would significantly increase the importance and utility of the field for a world continually facing traumatic events. If readers are interested in joining and participating in TEA, please contact the Green Cross Foundation through its web site ([www.GreenCross.Org](http://www.GreenCross.Org)). The Foundation with its mission of "*helping the traumatized through research, education and professional development,*" will provide the impetus for such an organization and will welcome the support and participation of traumatologists worldwide.

As we look back over the last two years, we recognize the direct and indirect effects of the 9-11 attacks. We must also appreciate that now more than ever we must understand the immediate and long-term psychosocial effects of terrorism and other fear-inducing events. It is time to come together as a profession for the common good of the entire world.

Charles R. Figley, Ph.D., Editor  
Tallahassee, September, 2003