

InterChange GTA Symposium: Peacebuilding Show & Tell

November 21-22, 2009



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Saturday November 21

- 9:30am Light breakfast and snacks
- 10am-12:30 Welcome and orientation
- Opening and introductions
 - Purpose of symposium, orientation to InterChange
 - Creating an art culture for peace in Toronto through visual peace murals (Cassandra Rizzotto and Min Kaur)
 - Check-in on interest in GTA leadership
- 12:30pm-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30pm-5:00 Workshops
- Peace Literacy (Anne Goodman and Amina Sharif Hassan)
 - Media and Peacebuilding (Katie Meyer)
 - Connecting Across Differences (Henry Wai)
 - Community Building and Healing through Gardening (Zora Ignjatovic)

Sunday November 22

- 9:30am Light breakfast and snacks
- 10am-11:00 Check-in and Community Arts Workshop
- Community Arts (Sara Escott and Kevin Kester)
- 11am-12:00 Mind-Body Medicine and Self Care for Practitioners (Gjiorgi Nikoloski)
- 12pm-1:30 Lunch (potluck) with Storytelling (Erin Novakovich)
- 1:30pm-4:00 GTA Leadership Discussion
- Process for developing local committee
 - Developing future directions and establishing responsibilities

Opening and Introduction (Anne Goodman)

Anne gave an overview of InterChange's History. IC began with a desire to highlight and support grassroots peacebuilding. IC asks what local peacebuilders are doing and explores best practices in peacebuilding across the world. IC aims to merge academic theory with community practice; one effort is to shift the images of diaspora communities from conflict to active potential.



InterChange is founded on collaborative participation and community building, sharing knowledge and nurturing each other. IC encourages that we are all peacebuilders.

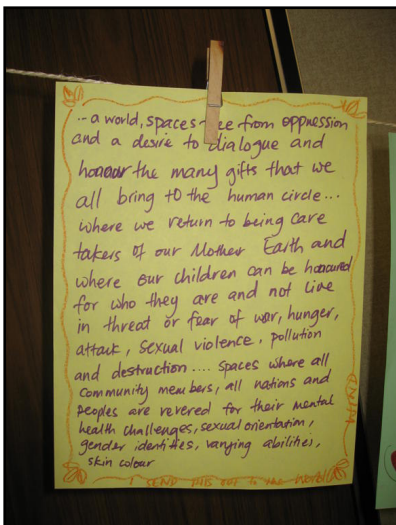
One participant offered a Quaker quote: "Peace is an idea whose time has come." War is an outdated system of conflict resolution...

The opening session concluded with participants writing on sticky notes what they were bringing with them to the symposium. These contributions – ranging from enthusiasm to curiosity to peacebuilding skills – were posted and grouped on the wall.



Art Culture for Peace (Cassandra Rizzotto and Min Kaur): Cassandra and Min highlighted the importance of trusting oneself and having the confidence to present and share your knowledge with others.

Four art stations were set up to participate in over the course of the symposium. (See handout - Appendix A)



Check-in on interest in GTA leadership

Participants were informed about the GTA local centre of InterChange and encouraged to put their names forward to help to coordinate the group.

Workshops

Following each set of workshops participants were asked to consider and discuss:



- Where do you see this playing a role in peacebuilding?
- Who might this work for?
- In what situations?
- What are some benefits?
- What challenges might be encountered?

Peace Literacy (Anne Goodman and Amina Sharif Hassan): Anne and Amina drew a Peace Line (a line on the floor using tape)

1) A volunteer was invited to go to the line and say what he would rate his level of Peace here in

Canada (between 1-10). The rest of the group asked him why he was at that level.

2) The volunteer was asked what he would have rated his level of peace when he lived in Angola. The Group asked why.

This exercise brought forward that many things come into play to contribute to a person's sense of peace. While one person may feel at peace in one situation another person may not. The group talked about the many ways and situations in which this exercise could be used. (See handout – Appendix B)

Participant Discussion

By getting the body involved this exercise can seem less threatening than engaging purely at a cognitive level.

The peace line makes discussions very real. It could be used in role play – to have participants think outside their own positions.



Media and Peacebuilding (Katie Meyer): Katie introduced concepts of peace journalism and war journalism. Activities included reading articles while keeping in mind how violence was explained, who was said to be to blame, and what solutions were given. (See handout – Appendix C)

Participant Discussion

Peace journalism could be used to explore / challenge the language of peace activists, who often have a violent and polarized way of speaking.

Individuals can use the concepts of peace journalism to be aware of what is embedded within articles. The concept can also give individuals a tool to evaluate biases – it could be applied to all leaders, peacemakers and general politicians.

One participant wanted to take these models out to youth groups and work toward creative literacy. Media Report Cards were proposed – that could help in monitoring media and media accountability.

Nonviolent Communication (Henry Wai): Henry talked about how stories reveal the underlying assumptions and motivations of individuals.

He presented 4 positions for analyzing individual responses to conflict:

- a. condemning / labeling / blaming others
- b. condemning / labeling / blaming oneself
- c. connecting to self
- d. connecting to others

The group explored situations in which each of these positions were used and examined the different ways to respond to conflict. (See handout – Appendix D)



Community Building and Healing through Gardening (Zora Ignjatovic)

Zora discussed the use of garden boxes to teach students in the classroom. They can help learners connect with the earth and understand where food comes from.

The connections between health, food security, poverty and diseases were discussed. Zora tied cultures of competition and greed to supporting the war system.

Community gardening necessitates

mediating different situations and needs of the parties involved. It teaches parties how to go deeper into communication.



Community Arts and Theatre (Sara Escott and Kevin Kester): Sara and Kevin engaged participants in activities to build relationships and explore peace concepts.

For one of these activities participants made images with their bodies to explore issues of peace and conflict.

Participant Discussion

Theatre opens connections between people in a non-threatening way.

There is a sense of collaborative meaning-making. We gather inspiration from each other.



Mind-Body Medicine Workshop (Gjiorgi Nikoloski): Gjiorgi presented 2 different meditation techniques for practitioners.

Participant Discussion

One participant expressed difficulty with the application of meditation for soldier's calmness in light of the destruction caused by soldiers. Why is there no critique of the war system itself and the violence caused by militaries? The group discussed the challenges of integrating the links from individual to social to systems.

The group discussed applying meditation with an awareness of the audience, objectives, and with a critique of power structures. (See handout – Appendix E)

Storytelling and Lunch (Erin Novakovich)

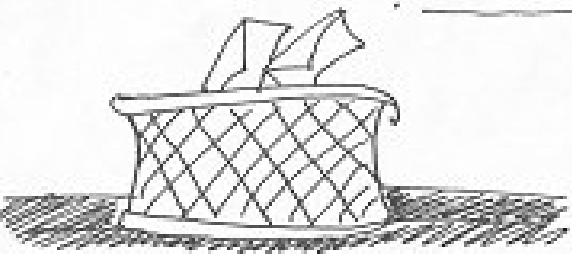


Participants put out the food that they had brought and shared stories about where their contribution came from and why they chose to bring / make the food they provided.

While some had reasons for preparing various foods others expressed the time challenges in their lives that brought them to buy certain quick foods at the store. Participants were able to unveil stories about their lives through this process.

Appendix A: Handout from an **Art Culture for Peace**
(prepared by Cassandra Rizzotto and Min Kaur)

EARTH / ROOTEDNESS




- commitment to self in a letter
- gentle reminder to self about self-care

Instructions

- write yourself a letter or a note, sharing either a goal you are going to make to create a culture of peace OR a self-care regimen for yourself as a peacebuilder
- no one but you will see or know about this
- we will mail you this letter in a season from now
- *Please write your address + seal envelope!*

WATER / RIVER

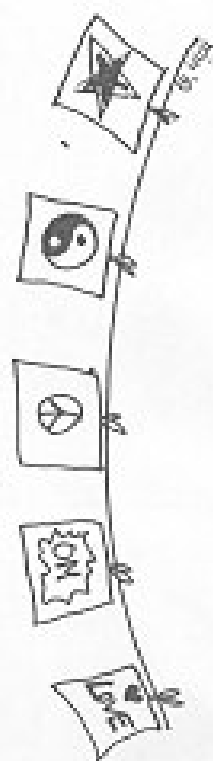


- visioning
- collective mind-map with trigger words

Instructions

- use any/all materials provided to contribute to the mind-mapping process
- you may choose to start a trigger word at any point in time and start draw mind-maps of their own!!

FIRE / SUN

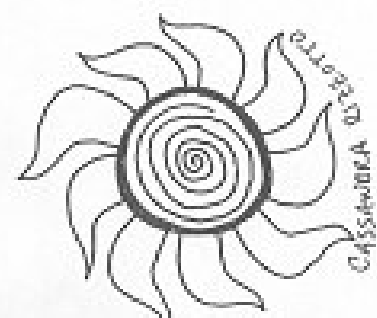


- prayer flags
- what is your symbol of peace?

Instructions

- using materials provided, create your peace flag that can hang in the wind and spread its message far and wide...
- Use clothes pin to attach to string!

FIRE / SUN



- a community collage of images & symbols
- this is a collaborative, relational effort

Instructions

- use any materials to add-on to the community collage
- Ask yourself, "How am I an agent of creating a peace culture?"
- "can I be a peacebuilder? am I one already?"

04/18/11

Peace Literacy Workshop

**Presentation at InterChange GTA Show-and-Tell Symposium
November 21, 2009
Anne Goodman and Amina Sharif Hassan**

This is a workshop with widespread use and applicability.

Potential audiences: Refugees/immigrants (especially from war-torn countries), youth, women, community leaders, students, policy-makers, practitioners.

Format: A single workshop or a series of workshops. Could involve varying degrees of academic work (readings, assignments etc.) Could be done by a homogenous group (e.g. one ethnic group, women etc.) or by a mixed group. It could also involve some sessions done separately and then bringing the people together. Will include hands-on activities and a mixture of theory and practice.

Concepts to be included:

- The meaning of peace and peacelessness
- The culture of peace
- Dimensions of peace: emotional, spiritual, physical, structural and cultural
- Different kinds of violence: direct, structural and cultural
- Negative and positive peace
- Cycles of violence
- Identity issues in peace
- Stages and processes of peacebuilding, especially in asymmetrical conflicts
- Peace as both a product and a process
- How to practice peace at all levels: individual, community, neighbourhood, nation, international

Sample exercise: the peace line

This is a very versatile exercise with many applications. It gives an opportunity to understand that peace has many dimensions and also that it is not an abstract, absolute concept but always has a subjective quality.

The basic idea is to ask where participants would locate themselves on a line ranging from 0- absolute peacelessness to 10- absolute peace. This could be a real line marked by masking tape or simply an imaginary line. Another way to do it is to put 3 or 5 chairs in a row, representing absolute peacelessness, relative peace and absolute peace. It could be done by asking one person at a time or the whole group- which would then give opportunity for dialogue from the different places where people situate themselves.

After the participants have explored the idea of peace in one context (e.g. peace in Canada, peace in Toronto, peace in their own life), they can be asked to look at a different context (e.g. peace in their country of origin, peace in the world). Other dimensions can also be explored, e.g. where would they situate themselves on the peace line according to their gender, their religious group etc.

Appendix C: Handout from **Media and Peacebuilding** (Katie Meyer)

PEACE/CONFLICT JOURNALISM	WAR/VIOLENCE JOURNALISM
I. PEACE/CONFLICT-ORIENTED	I. WAR/VIOLENCE-ORIENTED
a.) explore conflict formation, x parties, y goals, z issues; general "win, win" orientation	a.) focus on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war; general zero-sum orientation
b.) open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture	b.) closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone
c.) making conflicts transparent	c.) making wars opaque/secret
d.) giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding	d.) "us-them" journalism, propaganda, voice, for "us"
e.) see conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity	e.) see "them" as the problem, focus on who prevails in war
f.) humanization of all sides; more so the worse the weapons	f.) dehumanization of "them"; more so the worse the weapon
g.) proactive: prevention before any violence/war occurs	g.) reactive: waiting for violence before reporting
h.) focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)	h.) focus only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)
II. TRUTH-ORIENTED	II. PROPAGANDA-ORIENTED
a.) expose untruths on all sides	a.) expose "their" untruths
b.) uncover all cover-ups	b.) help "our" cover-ups/lies
III. PEOPLE-ORIENTED	III. ELITE-ORIENTED
a.) focus on suffering all over; on women, aged, children, giving voice to the voiceless	a.) focus on "our" suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouth-piece
b.) give name to all evil-doers	b.) give name of their evil-doer
c.) focus on people peace-makers	c.) focus on elite peace-makers

IV. SOLUTION-ORIENTED

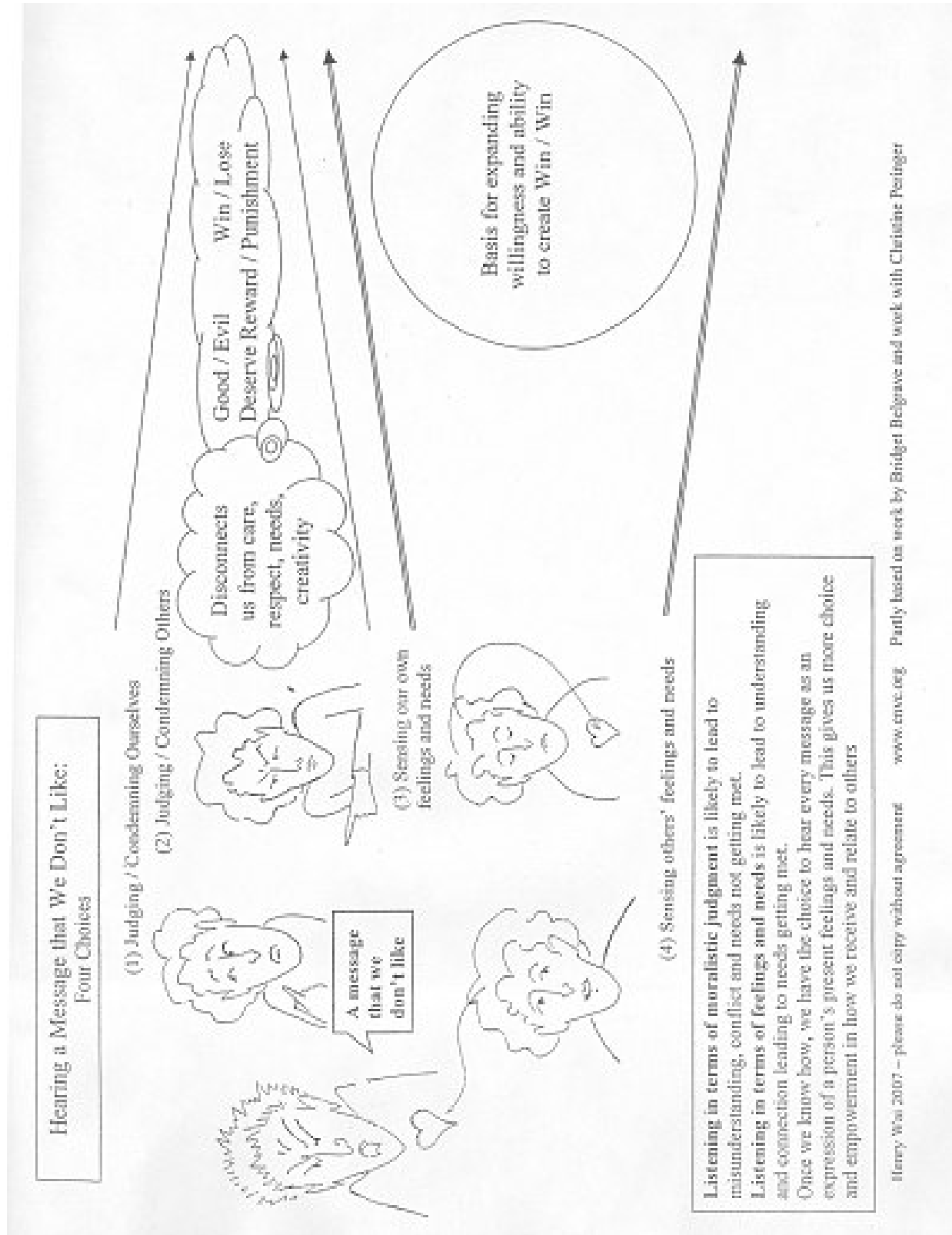
- a.) peace=nonviolence+creativity
- b.) highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war
- c.) focus on structure, culture the peaceful society
- d.) aftermath: resolution, re-construction, reconciliation

IV. VICTORY-ORIENTED

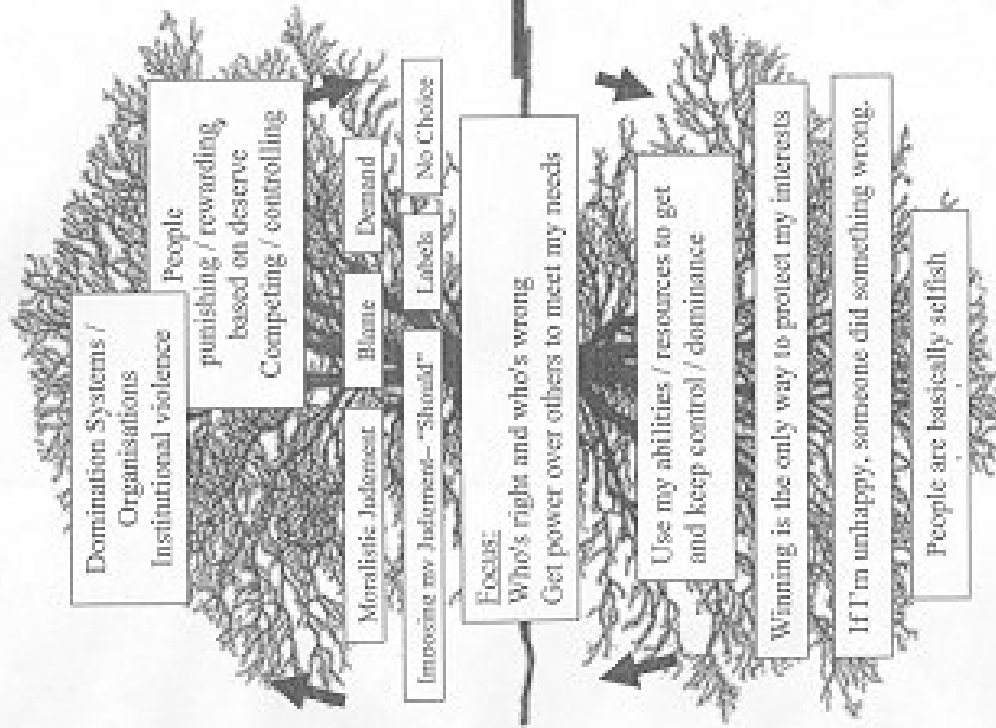
- a.) peace = victory + cesse-fire
 - b.) conceal peace-initiative, before victory is at hand
 - c.) focus on treaty, institution the controlled society
 - d.) leaving for another war, return if the old flares up
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FROM: HIGH ROAD, LOW ROAD: CHARTING THE COURSE FOR PEACE JOURNALISM

By Johan Galtung; Director, TRANSCEND: A Peace and Development Network Track Two, Constructive approaches to community & political conflict, Vol. 7, No. 4, December 1998, pp.7-10.



Communication that Disconnects



Communication that Connects



A Work in Progress by Henry Wai - 416.913.8861

Some content adapted from Marshall Rosenberg, Glerda Matizson, and John Stevens

Introduction to Mind-Body Medicine and Self Care for Practitioners

Mind-Body Medicine focuses on the interactions between mind and body and the powerful ways in which emotional, mental, social and spiritual factors can directly affect health. The Mind-Body Medicine emphasizes an approach that uses scientifically validated techniques that respect and enhance each person's capacity for self-knowledge and self-care. These techniques include self-awareness, relaxation, meditation, exercise, diet, biofeedback, visual imagery, self-hypnosis and group support.

Mind-body approaches use the conscious mind to directly affect the workings of the brain and the rest of the body. The techniques exert their effect on the hypothalamus, the switching station in the brain, which exercises control over the autonomic nervous system (which controls heart rate, blood pressure etc.), the endocrine (glandular) system and the immune system.

The scientific literature on these approaches is now rich and robust. Studies dating from the late 1960's showed the power of these techniques to balance the over - activity of the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system ("the fight or flight" and "stress" responses) which is implicated in many physical and emotional diseases and conditions, with parasympathetic nervous system stimulation that promotes relaxation. More recently, these techniques have been demonstrated to create beneficial changes in many of the body's physiologic responses (including blood pressure, stress hormone levels, pain response and immune functioning) and to make a significant clinical difference in conditions as diverse as hypertension, HIV, cancer, chronic pain, and insomnia as well as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Mind-Body Medicine's programs teach these techniques for affecting physical and emotional functioning in small groups that also provide an opportunity for self-expression and mutual support. These experiences of self care – experiencing one's ability, for example, to lower blood pressure or decrease anxiety – enhance each person's sense of self-efficacy and self responsibility even as they provide direct physiological benefits. The groups also provide an opportunity for ongoing practice of these techniques and offer members support in making the major changes in lifestyle, which are required to alter the course of chronic physical and emotional problems.

These approaches and the "Mind-Body Skills Groups" in which they are taught make use of peoples' strengths; encourage them to experiment with their own abilities; enhance their sense of control; are free from any stigma that may be associated with "mental illness"; and are as well, interesting and fun. The techniques and the groups have proven appealing and applicable to people of all ages, ethnic groups and levels of education – from war traumatized Kosovo children and U.S.A inner city teenagers to stressed out medical school faculty, military and diplomatic personnel in hostile situations, and elderly people with chronic illnesses.

Research at The Center for Mind Body Medicine in Washington D.C and similar programs at Harvard, Stanford, Georgetown, UCLA and the University of Massachusetts Medical School has consistently demonstrated the power of this kind of group intervention in treating heart disease, cancer, HIV and chronic pain; in helping medical students and health professionals reduce their levels of stress; and in relieving the psychological stress and trauma that accompany war and terrorism.

For more details please visit: www.cnbm.org