

The Center for

Mind-Body Medicine[®]

Science. Training. Community. Outreach.

New Orleans Hope: The CMBM School Initiative A Trauma Healing Program for New Orleans Children

The Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) is now proposing to significantly expand its highly effective, broadly accessible, scientifically validated program for addressing disaster related psychological trauma and ongoing stress in students in the various four New Orleans School systems. The program is specifically aimed at providing the CMBM's educational, non-stigmatizing empowering model of care to 150 school psychologists, school counselors and nurses, teachers and others who in turn serve the vast numbers of students still experiencing stress, depression and poor school performance related to the disruption and aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The CMBM's work has been demonstrated to be powerfully effective in helping children to recover from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A research study conducted in post-war Kosovo shows the striking effectiveness of this approach – reducing incidence of PTSD in a sample of 139 high school students from 88% to 38% in only six weeks. (*The Journal of Traumatic Stress*, April 2004). More recently, this program has been demonstrated, in the first randomized controlled trial of any intervention (*Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, August 2008), to decrease by 80% symptoms of PTSD in war traumatized adolescents. In other studies, The Center for Mind-Body Medicine approach has been used to decrease stress, improve mood, enhance feelings of professional competence, and promote hope and optimism in professionals (in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the US) who care for war and disaster traumatized populations. Preliminary data collect on 500 traumatized children in Gaza is showing significant decreases in PTSD, depression, and hopelessness. In addition, this program is being used successfully with the children “on the bus” who survived the collapse of the I-35 W Bridge in Minnesota.

The Center for Mind-Body Medicine

The Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) is a Washington DC based, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded by James S. Gordon MD, a former researcher at the Institute of Mental Health, who is a professor at Georgetown Medical School, and who Chaired the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy. The Center has trained close to 3,000 health and mental health professionals around the world to use its program.

- The CMBM approach uses a wide variety of scientifically proven techniques for self-awareness, self-expression, self-care, and stress management that effectively address anxiety, depression and hopelessness that debilitate children and adults in disaster and post-disaster situations.
- This empowering model mobilizes health professionals' teachers', school nurses' and community leaders' capacity to help themselves and enables them to address far more effectively, comprehensively and responsively, the needs of children and families affected by psychological trauma and stress.
- A group approach and a teaching-of-teachers model ensure that this method is able to reach far more people than conventional therapeutic models.
- As an **educational** model, rather than a “therapeutic” model, the program helps remove the stigma often associated with seeking mental health services.

CMBM in New Orleans

Shortly after Katrina, The Center for Mind-Body Medicine began to respond to the overwhelming psychological needs of children and adults in New Orleans-as much as 50% of the population was

experiencing anxiety and depression, anger and despair, and was estimated to be in need of mental health care.

Since 2006, the CMBM has held 5 mind-body medicine trainings and provided over 80 health, mental health and education professionals with the tools they need to integrate the CMBM model of self-care and group support into their lives and their work. The program has been demonstrated to improve the mental health and wellbeing of those whom we are training; program participants reported a 17% decrease in PTSD; 53% decrease in Anger; 36% decrease in Depression; 19% increase in vigor and significantly less burnout and compassion fatigue.

The model is now being successfully used and studied with patients and staff at East Jefferson General Hospital; with school children through the Baton Rouge Children's Health Project mobile medical unit; at FACES Children's hospital with HIV+ mothers; with patients at Common Ground Health; and through the LSU Department of Psychiatry's Mindful Living Program, as well as in other locations. A leadership team is in place which will facilitate the School Initiative and be available for ongoing support and supervision.

New Orleans Hope: CMBM School Initiative

This 2-year project with New Orleans school children will establish a city-wide collaboration of education professionals and clinicians using mind-body techniques to address the trauma and ongoing stress of the students and families they serve. The 150 participants will be drawn from all three New Orleans school systems and will join an already existing network of 80 CMBM trained health, mental health and education professionals in New Orleans who are actively facilitating support groups in their communities.

Project Benefits:

- Help Katrina-impacted children and adolescents to alleviate stress, build resilience, increase academic performance, heal from psychological trauma, and return to a state of emotional wellness.
- Reduce the rate of burnout and compassion fatigue among teachers, clinicians and other health professionals, and improve their ability to meet the academic and emotional needs of their students.
- Provide a sustainable network for local educators and health and mental health professionals — as they integrate the CMBM model into the regular provision of services in schools.

The CMBM approach is based on self-care and mutual help, and utilizes a small group model of 8 – 10 students. Groups typically meet for 2-hour sessions for 10 – 12 weeks, and consist of didactic, experiential, and processing components. The mind-body skills used are simple but powerful science-based techniques that are cost-effective and easily taught and learned. Techniques include meditation, deep breathing, guided imagery, biofeedback, journaling, drawings, movement and group support. They have proven effective with many sectors of the population, including those which are least likely to seek and use mental health services such as troubled and delinquent children and teenagers.

Program Participants will receive a 5 day basic training in the science and skills of mind-body medicine for self-care. Three to six months later, participants will continue with the CMBM's 5 day advanced mind-body training program with a special track focused on working with children ages 3-14. All program participants will continue to receive ongoing clinical supervision from senior CMBM faculty, the New Orleans Clinical Director, and the New Orleans Leadership Team.

The total cost for fully training 150 clinicians, teachers, providing ongoing supervision as they bring the CMBM model into their schools and integrating these trainees into the region wide network of CMBM graduates is approximately \$525,000.

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