

CONTINUAL SUPPORT OF TRAUMA AID UK TO SELF-SUSTAINING OF THE BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA EMDR ASSOCIATION

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Dear Editor

In 2019 Trauma Aid UK celebrated its 10th Anniversary of our work in Bosnia-Herzegovina. During this time, we have trained nearly 150 Bosnian clinicians in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) therapy. EMDR was recommended by WHO in 2014, along with CBT Trauma Focussed Therapy as the treatment of choice for PTSD. To date, there are some 32 RCT's (Randomised Control Trials) which attest the efficacy of EMDR for the treatment of trauma. Its benefits in relation to TFCBT include a shorter treatment time, the client is not required to do homework and adherence to the treatment by clients. In addition, there is no significant relapse. EMDR is fast gaining popularity amongst clinicians as an effective treatment in Europe and globally because of its remarkable results. As this is reflected in research, it has become more firmly established.

In 2018 your journal you covered a landmark event which was the First Nation Conference of the national association of the Bosnia-Herzegovina EMDR Association. Trauma Aid UK's aim in undertaking projects overseas is to establish a national EMDR Association which becomes self-sustaining as local clinicians progress from novice to expert. It is very gratifying therefore that the EMDR Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina is now at a point where it can accredit its own EMDR therapists. The President of the EMDR Association of Bosnia Herzegovina, Professor Mevludin Hasanovic has supported the work and development of Bosnian EMDR clinicians and I was delighted that, at the Second National Conference in November 2018 the majority of the presentations were given by Bosnian clinicians, showcasing particularly their work with case studies (Hasanović 2018, 2021).

In my keynote speech at the Conference, I highlighted the future aspirations for EMDR in Bosnia focussing on continuing professional development for our clinicians. There are now 10 Accredited Practitioners who are working towards Consultant status in 2021/22. These advanced EMDR clinicians will then provide ongoing supervision and support to newly trained EMDR clinicians. This is the final step towards the national

EMDR Association becoming fully self-sufficient. It is already a full member of EMDR Europe and Professor Mevludin Hasanovic participates in board meetings with other European EMDR Association Presidents.

In 2019 a number of CPD events took place in Sarajevo, including a two-day workshop on EMDR Complex Trauma streamed by Dr Jim Knipe, an eminent American EMDR clinician. This was simultaneously translated by Sema Sabanovic and Selvira Draganovic and facilitated by a UK Consultant, Sonya Farrell. To supplement this, his book *An EMDR Toolbox* was translated into Bosnian by a team led by Selvira Draganovic.

As 2020 and the Covid19 pandemic unfolded across Europe, Trauma Aid UK focussed its efforts on providing EMDR Training and CPD workshops via zoom. This medium has in fact opened up opportunities for the Bosnian EMDR Community to access a number of EMDR UK based workshops including EMDR & Psychosis with Prof. Paul Miller and techniques focusing EMDR for Covid initiated trauma and grief. Obviously the pandemic has led to significant numbers of the population experiencing traumatic events either as survivors of the illness or as bereaved families.

The use of EMDR therapy has a vital role to play throughout the world in addressing the psychological scars that will undoubtedly remain long after the pandemic has been brought under control. I am proud to say that I have every confidence that all Bosnian EMDR trained clinicians will have a significant contribution to make to the healing of the psychological wounds this devastating virus leaves in its wake.

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