



The Center for Mind-Body Medicine in Ukraine

The Center for Mind-Body Medicine is working with its Ukrainian partners to create a nationwide program of public mental health, a multi-year effort which will provide immediate relief from the physical and psychological symptoms of trauma and lay the foundation for an enduring program to address and prevent its ongoing consequences—**anxiety and depression, heart disease, cancer, immune disorders, substance abuse, disrupted relationships, and workplace disorder**—and to build resilience.

CMBM’s Model for Population-Wide Healing

CMBM offers a model of self-care and mutual support at scale, by integrating a comprehensive evidence-based program into services already in place in hospitals, clinics, schools and colleges, faith communities, prisons, the military, and community-based organizations. The model is learned, implemented, and led by people in their own communities, often expands exponentially, and remains a powerful and sustainable force for healing long after other aid efforts have ended. Our approach fosters healing from trauma first within oneself and then with others. It supports communities in addressing historical as well as present trauma. By customizing the model to the needs, history, values, and culture of the community, CMBM teaches people skills to restore the physiological and psychological balance disrupted by trauma, including war, sexual abuse, environmental disaster, and chronic illness. As we do this, we bring together local leaders to build each community’s capacity to sustain their healing and create a culture of well-being.

Our approach depends on strong local partnerships with community leaders, clinicians, elected and civil service officials, educators, clergy, and others who have the capacity to engage the larger population in efforts to heal from trauma. These partners help engage participants in CMBM’s comprehensive and intensive training, mentorship, and supervision programs. CMBM begins by teaching trainees, who are themselves traumatized, to use practical, evidence-based skills—various forms of meditation, guided imagery, biofeedback, and self-expression in words, drawings, and movement—to restore their own physiological and psychological balance. Next, we teach them how to share the skills with others and guide them as they integrate these tools into their work with those they serve. As the program evolves, we work with partners to choose and train a Local Leadership Team which will sustain the CMBM model in Ukraine for years to come.

CMBM’s Country-Wide Program in Ukraine

In March 2022, CMBM mobilized to bring its healing program to the people of Ukraine, engaging local partners and laying the foundation for a country-wide program. CMBM Founder and CEO, Dr. James Gordon, has since traveled several times to Ukraine and to Poland to engage with local partners, – leaders in medicine, psychotherapy, pastoral counseling, the military and municipal organizations – who are supporting the war-traumatized Ukrainian people. Dr. Gordon has also worked closely with children and families who have lost loved ones and seen their homes and communities destroyed.

In response to the urgency of the situation in Ukraine, the challenges of working during an ongoing, active conflict – when it is impossible for Ukrainians to community to sustained periods of training time – and the enormity of need, CMBM modified our customary response. Instead of immediately providing the typical two-stage, 10-day intensive training for an initial cohort of 200, and gradually enlarging the

numbers trained, we are first offering sequential emergency training seminars to alleviate the immediate adverse impact of the ongoing crisis.

In June 2022, CMBM presented the first two 2-day online emergency seminars for 270 trainees. (There were an additional 450 people on the waiting list.) These seminars combined large group instruction in the science of mind-body medicine and practical experience of its tools and techniques in supportive small groups. The first seminar was produced in partnership with psychiatrist Dr. Roman Kechur and his team at the Catholic University of Ukraine, and the second, in collaboration with Polish psychiatrist Ewa Dobiála, the leader of International Association for Positive Psychotherapy, which includes as many as several thousand Ukrainian psychiatrists and psychotherapists.

The emergency seminars were primarily attended by psychotherapists and physicians, also included educators and other community leaders. They offered participants an opportunity – the first many had had – to find relief from the primary trauma of the war, and the secondary trauma of working with so many bereaved and devastated people, as well as training in the use of self-care tools which they can share with those whom they serve. 35 CMBM faculty continue to meet monthly with these participants, providing ongoing support and guidance as all trainees begin to integrate mind-body skills into their own lives and their work with war-traumatized Ukrainians.

While the war continues, and likely during the immediate postwar period, CMBM plans to continue facilitating a sequence of 2-day emergency training seminars. The initial training seminar teaches participants to use 6 evidence-based tools in small groups and receive basic instruction in using these tools with others. The second training offers those who complete the initial one with more advanced training focused on teaching them how to lead the same kind of small group that they have experienced, as well as to use the CMBM approach with individuals, in family settings, and in classrooms and mind-body skills workshops in variety of community settings.

The waiting list for the emergency training has now grown to more than 600. We are urgently fundraising to meet this demand.

Long-range plans: CMBM's Nationwide Program for Trauma-Healing in Ukraine

We are also raising funds to build the long-range, sustainable program for transformational healing in Ukraine. After the war and immediate postwar period, when trainees have time and assurance of physical safety, CMBM will implement its customary comprehensive 10-day training and years-long clinical supervision. This will enable trainees to provide intensive trauma-healing small groups for the most traumatized Ukrainian children and adults as well as ongoing services for individuals and families and programs in classrooms and workshop situations. This comprehensive training lays the foundation for the sustainable nationwide effort to build resilience.

In this training, participants learn to use 15 evidence-based self-care tools. In the subsequent years-long mentorship they receive guidance in integrating what they have learned in their ongoing work with hundreds of thousands or millions in clinics, hospitals, schools, public agencies and community-based organizations. Over five years, we will train 3,000 or more and develop a local leadership team of 300 to supervise, expand, and sustain the work.

The CMBM model continues to support and sustain nation or region-wide programs in Kosovo (after 22 years), in Gaza and Israel (after 17), and in Haiti (after 10). We hope the same for the people of Ukraine.

Summary Budget - CMBM in Ukraine

This comprehensive five-year program of training and mentorship for up to 3,000 Ukrainians and national leadership development will cost about \$11 million. See budget included at end of this narrative. Costs include administration, partner engagement, curriculum development, clinical oversight, faculty and staff time, translation of all materials, and all expenses including transportation and lodging. Activities include emergency seminars as well as comprehensive training in CMBM model, supervision, leadership training and support as Ukrainians integrate the model into the services they collectively deliver to hundreds of thousands or millions.

About The Center for Mind-Body Medicine

The Center for Mind-Body Medicine delivers some of the world's most effective programs for alleviating population-wide psychological trauma and increasing resilience. CMBM was founded in 1991 by longtime NIMH researcher and advisor to three U.S. Presidents, psychiatrist James S. Gordon, MD. In the 31 years since, CMBM, with its international faculty of 160, has trained 7,000 who have, with our guidance, implemented successful, large-scale programs with conflict-affected populations in Kosovo, Gaza, and Israel; with Syrian refugees in Jordan; with highly traumatized indigenous peoples in the United States. We have partnered with communities that have experienced natural and climate-related disasters in Haiti, Louisiana, Houston, Northern California and Puerto Rico as well as those suffering in the wake of a mass-shooting such as in Broward County, Florida and Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Papers in peer-reviewed, scientific journals](#) (some 25 have been published to date) document the efficacy of CMBM's model for interventions in population-wide trauma, stress, and anxiety relief with children, adolescents, and adults, across diverse populations, geographies, and conditions. In 2008, for example, CMBM published the first-ever randomized control trial of any intervention with war-traumatized children (in Kosovo). In numerous subsequent studies, the community- and institution-based application of our model by CMBM-trained practitioners has consistently reduced the percentage of participants who qualify as having Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by 80% or more, with gains holding at 3- and 10-month follow ups.

CMBM's work has also been widely covered by the media. Our recent work in Ukraine has been profiled by [CNN](#) and [NPR](#). An interview with Dr. Gordon appeared in [Visegrad Insight](#), a leading Eastern European intellectual journal, and an article by Dr. Gordon "War in Ukraine: Children bear emotional scars of a horrific conflict" was just published in [USA Today](#). A [CBS 60 Minutes](#) segment featured CMBM's program for war-traumatized children in Gaza and Israel. CMBM's work has repeatedly been covered in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Atlantic*.