

HISTORY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Laurie Leitch and Elaine Miller-Karas met in Thailand in January of 2005. They were part of an international team that provided treatment and training to survivors of the Asian tsunami of December 2004. They had a shared commitment to bring clinical interventions to the global community, based upon current science about the impact of traumatic experiences upon the body and mind. They were also concerned about the lack of brief training models in biologically-based intervention. This lack created an accessibility issue for many front-line workers who did not have the time or funding to spend receiving other longer models of training. Further, in cases of natural and other large scale disasters skills are needed quickly. A brief training program could equip first responders and other caregivers with stabilization skills which could be appropriate to use both in the acute as well as the longer-term phases of disaster recovery.

In December of 2006, Laurie and Elaine co-founded the Trauma Resource Institute (TRI). TRI is a nonprofit corporation that promotes innovative, brief training models, nationally and internationally, to heal individuals (children and adults) from the ravages of traumatic experiences, whether from developmental or shock trauma, and natural or human made disaster.

Laurie brings her extensive experience as a clinician, teacher, and researcher to TRI's projects, designing the research and evaluation which helps to build the needed evidence base for TRI's resiliency models of intervention. Elaine brings her clinical expertise, teaching background, and conceptualization of a short term, biologically based, model based upon her work at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, as the Associate Director of Behavioral Sciences.

Together they developed the Trauma Resiliency Model (TRM) that can be used to treat adults and children after a traumatic experience. Three other models have now evolved TRM-Warrior geared toward active duty military, TRM-Veteran directed toward veterans and TRM-Community geared toward paraprofessionals, who often serve as the first line of support after traumatic experiences. TRM-Community projects create inter-agency linkages which promote a "trauma-informed community" well-versed in the theory and skills of the biology of trauma.

TRI currently has projects in development in Gaza, Kuwait and with the Veterans' Administration. Since TRI's inception, Laurie and Elaine have traveled to Canada, Rwanda, Kenya, China and many localities within the United States. Their project in China, entitled the China Earthquake Relief Project was co-sponsored by the World Health Organization, the United Foundation for Chinese Orphans and the Foundation for Human Enrichment. Representatives from the World Health Organization in China have encouraged TRI to create an institute for disaster response and training that would train a cadre of trainers throughout east Asia in TRM. The results of the China project will be published in the International Journal of Emergency Mental Health in spring 2010. Laurie's two journal articles about the efficacy of TRM have been published in the Journal of Traumatology and the Journal of National Association of Social Workers.

Over the last two years, TRI has embarked upon an innovative Train the Trainer program for the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) in San Bernardino County. The result is a new contingent of TRI trainers and facilitators within San Bernardino County, the largest county in the United States. DBH serves the most vulnerable, economically challenged and culturally diverse population with mental health conditions. DBH, with funding from the state of California's Innovations Grants in Mental Health, has invited TRI to expand the initial project to train more trainers and facilitators in TRM and to develop the Community Resiliency Model throughout the county. This project will bring biologically-based intervention to all the disenfranchised groups in the county, as well as training members of each group in CRM.

TRI is committed to the projects within Africa. In the summer of 2010, TRI will return to Kenya to work in the internally-displaced persons camps (IDP camps) that were created after the post-election violence of

2007. TRI has now established an internship program with the goal of training TRM trained humanitarian workers. Four interns will be accompanying TRI to Kenya this summer to work in the IDP camps, an orphanage and school. The Kenyan Professional Counseling Association is co-sponsoring, for the second year, TRM Level 1 and Level 2 training in Nairobi, Kenya.

Elaine and Laurie are currently co-directing the Haiti Earthquake Relief Project, which is being sponsored the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. They will begin this multi-phase project in March of 2010 and will continue in the summer of 2010 with more extensive training to create sustainability within the Haitian community in the treatment of traumatic stress.