



Gaza Community Mental Health Program

Newsletter

March 2008



"Sound mental health is a product of the subjective feeling of well-being and harmony with the environment"

In response to the regrettable incident that Dr. Ahmad Abu Tawahina was exposed to, GCMHP President and Board of Directors denounced the attack against Director General Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina and requested investigation into the incident from the police services in Gaza. Moreover, GCMHP's Workers' Committee sent a letter of solidarity in support of Dr. Ahmad's commitment to GCMHP.

In response to the current invasion of North Gaza, (GCMHP) Launches Crisis Intervention Team

-As part of its role and commitment to alleviate the mental health consequences of Israeli military operations against Palestinian citizens, GCMHP launched the crisis intervention program following the last Israeli invasion



against Northern Gaza Strip. In this context, GCMHP responded to the immediate needs of the population in terms of mental health counseling and debriefing of the pressures and mental health problems among the civilians who experienced Israeli attacks and home demolitions. In this regard, the crisis intervention team including, Hasan Zeyada, Rawya Hamam, and Yaser Abu Jamee'e conducted a series of crisis intervention sessions in Beit Hanoun area in cooperation with Al-Hayya and Al-Amal Society in Jabalya and CRS. During the session, debriefing and psycho education were done for a number of children who have been affected by Gaza invasion.

- In cooperation with the Women Health Center in Jabalia, GCMHP Training Department held a training course on Group and family counseling, with participation of 15 professionals of the center. Dr. Hani Ghadour presented on introduction to mental health and human rights.

- In cooperation with Al-Hanan Health and Development Society, GCMHP's Training and Education Department conducted a training course entitled "mental health and human rights" for 15 participants of the university graduates. Dr. Akram Nafi'e presented the first lecture about mental disorders and intervention methods and community work and discussed a number of topics including; communication, trauma, behavioral problems of children, and psychological pressures.

-The Training Department held a training course entitled "principles of community mental health" with participation of 20 of El-Wedad Association



for Community Rehabilitation. Dr. Nemer Abu Zarqa talked about clinical interview and social upbringing of children.

- The Training Department held a training course entitled "Crisis Intervention" with participation of 20 of El-Wedad Community Rehabilitation Association. The training included many topics such as: dealing with children during crises, mechanisms of crisis intervention, and mental disorders and trauma. In this regard, Dr. Nemer Abu Zarqa talked about clinical interview and social upbringing of children.

- Enas Jouda, Mental Health Worker, lectured at the Community College for Applied Sciences and Technology about psychodrama. Ms. Jouda highlighted a number of topics including: concepts of psychodrama, its significance, the main aspects, and the difference between psychodrama and role play.

- Dr. Samir Zaqout, conducted a training course in cooperation with Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights entitled "leadership and ways of changing attitudes" for 25 youth.

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In cooperation with Ministry of Education, Gaza Community Center held a workshop entitled "psychological stress and relaxation" with participation of 35 school teachers. Abdel Hameed Mohareb Highlighted psychological pressures and ways of intervention to alleviate mental health problems.

-The Training Department conducted a course entitled "group therapy and family counseling" at the Women's Health Center in Jabalia with



participation of 15 of its staff. Dr. Hani Ghandour gave the first lecture, highlighting mental health and group therapy.

-In cooperation with Syada Center, GCMHP's training department conducted a course entitled "Society Leader" with participation of 20 lawyers at Gaza Community Center. The training covered many significant topics including; introduction to mental health, role of religion in enhancing mental health, mechanisms of dealing with mental pressures and disorders.

- Dr. Samir Zaqout participated in a training course for Tamy Center in coordination with WEP where 25 journalists from different media agencies participated in the course. The course covered two major topics including the psychology of women and mental health.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

- GCMHP held 11 public meetings in different geographical areas of Gaza Strip. The main purpose of such meetings was to provide an awareness and information about GCMHP's telephone counseling services for different sectors of the community, particularly women. Such meetings were supported by UNIFEM.

- Dr. Khaled Dahalan conducted a public meeting in coordination with the Palestinian

Youth Forum, where he talked about smoking among children as a dangerous phenomenon and the role of media in promoting smoking through the advertisement and marketing campaigns.

- Dr. Samir Zaqout participated in the events of national reconciliation in cooperation with the Palestinian Center for Democracy and Conflict Resolution.

- Dr. Samir Zaqout, conducted a public meeting at El-Salah School about adolescents' problems with participation of 60 students, teachers, counselors, and parents.

In the Anniversary of Women International Day

As part of Women International Day Activities - 8th April, GCMHP's Women Empowerment Project participated in the Festival that was organized by number of women organizations at Al-Comodor Hotel. In this occasion, many of



WEP's products were exhibited including embroideries and crafts.

VISITORS AND DELEGATIONS

- Representative from the consortium of donors, Yvonne Fredrikson and Mario Carera met with Dr. Ahmed to express solidarity with him after the incident attack that occurred against him by unknown group.

- A delegation from the Representative office of the kingdom of Netherlands to the PA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs represented by Nelly Blokker and Harry Putker visited GCMHP and met with Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina who briefed the delegation about GCMHP activities in the area of mental health in light of the current difficult conditions.

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- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina met with a delegation from CRIC-Italy to discuss the latest developments in the current project between GCMHP and CRIC-Italy, regarding capacity building for kindergarten school teachers.

- A delegation from CRS (Catholic Relief Services) visited GCMHP and met with a number of professionals regarding the activities of GCMHP in crisis intervention right after the incursion to North Gaza and to discuss mutual work between GCMHP and CRS.

- Wafa'a Elyan, representative of the American organization – Mercy Corps visited GCMHP and met with Marwan Diab and Wejdan El-Bayomi and discussed the psychosocial services offered by GCMHP for children for the purpose of joint future work between the two organizations.

- A delegation from Save the Children – Sweden visited GCMHP and met with GCMHP professionals to discuss the services offered for children in the area of psychosocial support.

- A delegation from Ashbal and Zaharat Association visited GCMHP. The delegation included Mr. Nemer Rabah, Chief in Editor of Ashbal and Zaharat Magazine, and Mr. Samir Kanan, Public Relations Director where they discussed GCMHP's participation in their conference in the occasion of Palestinian Children Day.

- 2 students from Islamic university visited GCMHP and were provided with information about impacts of siege on mental health of Palestinian Families in Gaza.

MEDIA ACTIVITIES

- Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina, Director General, conducted a media interview with Journalists from media section of the Islamic Relief regarding the impacts of siege on the children in the Gaza Strip.

- A journalist Nuala Haughey, hired by the EU to write a series of newspapers articles about EU funded projects in the OPT, met with Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina and talked about GCMHP activities in the area of children. The Journalist met with Dr. Dahlan and Rawaya Hamam and discussed some specific cases that the Community Centers dealt with in the area of children.

- Dr. Abel Aziz Thabet, Psychiatrist and Senior Researcher, interviewed by Al-quds Radio to talk about the shelling in North Gaza and its impact on the population, with particular emphasis on children's mental health problems.

- Dr. Abdel Aziz Thabet was interviewed by the British newspaper, the Guardian and talked about the research studies of GCMHP's as well as violence and its impacts on children's mental health.

- Dr. Abdel Aziz Thabet was interviewed by Aljazeera international where he highlighted recent research studies and psychosocial intervention with children.

- Dr. Khaled Dahlan was interview by Wafa News agency and talked about the current conditions and behavioral problems of Palestinian children in light of the current wave of violence by the Israeli occupation forces to the Strip. The role of GCMHP in intervening with children and their families was highlighted as well.

- Dr. Khaled Dahalan was interviewed by El-Eman Radio to talk about the role of GCMHP in helping traumatized children who have been affected resulting from the state of internal conflicts; highlighting the issue of protection of children from developing mental health problems.

- Dr. Khaled Dahaln was interviewed by Al-Hayatt local newspaper to talk about the impact of violence on children highlighting the issue of displacement for families who live in the northern parts of Gaza strip resulting from the ongoing conflicts.

- Dr. Samir Zaqout conducted an interview with Islam online highlighting the issue the impact of watching violent scenes on TV by children.

- Dr. Samir Zaqout conducted an interview with Al-Jazeera Net to talk about the impact of incursions on the psychological well-being of children.

- Dr. Samir Zaqout conducted an interview with Al-Ayam local newspaper about the impact of traumas on children.

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- Dr. Samir Zaqout participated in a broadcasted session for Al-Quds radio about the importance of social reconciliation, with participation of 3 university academics.

- Marwan Diab was interviewed by the Middle East magazine and Al-Ahram Weekly to talk about the impacts of Closure and siege on Gaza Population.

- Marwan Diab conducted an interview with Aljazeera Net in English on the psychological impacts of the current incursions to north Gaza and the effects of violence on psychological profile of Palestinian children.

- Marwan Diab was interviewed lively on South African Radio to talk about the psychosocial conditions of Palestinian children under siege, and the services offered in terms of psychological intervention.

- Hassan Ziada was interviewed by Al-Ahram weekly newspaper to talk about the psychosocial impacts of siege on children.

- Fox News Agency interviewed Hasan Zeayda and Dr. Yaser Abu Jamee'e to cover the activities and sessions of crisis intervention program that took place in Beit Hanoun area in cooperation with Al-Hayya and Al-Amal Society in Jabalya and CRS in order to broadcast those sessions on TV.

- Enas Jouda, Mental Health Worker, was interviewed by El-Eman radio to talk about GCMHP's services for children and women, highlighting the psychodrama intervention used in the therapeutic process.

- Hasan Zeada was interviewed by Al-Huda TV station in Saudi Arabia to talk about the current Israeli practices and its impact on Palestinians from an economical, political, and psychosocial perspective.

- Hasan Zeyada was interviewed by Alwan Radio and talked about ways for families to deal with their children's behavioral problems resulting from traumas and incursions.

- Enas Joda, conducted an interview with Al-Sharq Radio in West Bank to talk about the

services of GCMHP for children and women as well as psychodrama sessions used to alleviate the mental health problems.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

-Dr. Abdel Aziz Thabet presented a paper entitled "Trauma, parents and children" at a conference organized by the Islamic University of Gaza.

- Dr. Samir Zaqout presented a working paper at a conference entitled "towards reinforcing the social fabric of Palestinians and national reconciliation" with participation 60 university academics, intellectuals, and interested individuals.

-Husam El-Nounou participated in a workshop organized by Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights entitled "Legislative Council and its Role in Protection of Citizen's Rights and Liberties after 2 years of Election"

WORK MEETINGS

- Husam El-Nounou participated in a meeting with Human Rights Protection Sector at United Nations High Commissioner Office for Human Rights to discuss the latest developments and reports issued the High Commissioner Office as well as decisions of UN Human Rights Council concerning the Palestinian situation.

- Husam El-Nounou participated in meeting with health sector at PNGO to discuss the developments and consequences of the Israeli incursion in the North of Gaza Strip and obstacles of health sector work. It was agreed to contact the director of UNRWA operations and ask him about the possibilities of help in this regard.

- Husam El-Nounou participated in meeting with PNGO to discuss the possibilities of holding a visit to representatives from Ministry of Interior to discuss some harassment against civil society organizations. Later, he met with Kamel Mady, official at Ministry of Interior, and discussed GCMHP's resumption of work in rehabilitation centers; Meanwhile, Husam presented a work paper to brief the nature of GCMHP's work.

- Ms. Rana Ayad attended the strategic plan meeting at UNDP headquarter in Gaza.

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- Husam El-Nounou participated in meeting with Palestinian Youth Coalition "One Palestine for All" and discussed the internal bylaws and the upcoming activities.

- Husam El-Nounou participated in a meeting at Ministry of Prisoners and Ex-Detainees on unifying the efforts of Prisoners' issues. It was agreed to hold dialogue with all institutes, especially the high committee of national and Islamic Forces to advocate for the prisoners' issues in how activating joint work.

- Dr. Abdel Aziz Thabet participated in a meeting with the "Psychosocial Group for Protection of Children from Violence" which was coordinated by UNICEF in order to set priorities for intervention with children as a result of the recent wave of violence against north of Gaza Strip. In another regard, Abdel Hamid Mohareb, Psychiatric Nurse, participated the group meeting to provide GCMHP input in crisis management and psychological intervention and debriefing sessions for children who have been affected the Israeli incursions to the North Gaza.

- Husam El-Nounou and as part of the Health Sector at PNGO participated in a meeting with Sebastian Drivers, UNRWA Operations Deputy Director, to discuss civil society organization demands from UNRWA regarding health issues including: medicines, patients and medical delegations.

International Conference with WHO "Siege and Mental Health... Walls vs. Bridges"

- Husam El-Nounou, Marwan Diab and Mahmoud Abu Aisha held a series of meetings with Dyaa Syamah from WHO to discuss the developments and organization of GCMHP's 5th international conference "Siege and Mental Health... Walls vs. Bridges". In this regard, Mr. El-Nounou and Mr. Sayma, visited Palestine University and Rashad El-Shawa Cultural Center, and met with Dr. Zaher Khail and other professionals to discuss the possibility of holding the conference in the University. Also, Mr. Abu Aisha, Conference Coordinator, distributed invitations to members of the conference advisory and scientific committees to participate in the conference committees.

PRESS RELEASES AND PETITIONS

-As part of GCMHP's membership in the rehabilitation sector of PNGO, GCMHP issued a press release was regarding the impact of incursions and shelling on people with disabilities and targeting people with disabilities.

-GCMHP signed a petition submitted from Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations to the international embassies in Ramallah, urging them to renew and strengthen the roles of UN Special Reporters as well as to influence the member countries in the Human Rights Council in this regard.

PUBLICATIONS

-GCMHP professionals published a chapter entitled "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder" in a book entitled "CARING FOR ARAB PATIENTS". The writers were Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj, Dr. Taysir Diab, and Dr. Abed Aziz Thabit. The book dealt with many interventions and therapeutic techniques in dealing with the Arab who have mental health problems.

- An article written by Manal Awad, WEP's Director, regarding the effects of siege on Palestinian women and was published in Palestine Newspaper. This was on the anniversary of women's international day. [Read...](#)

-Dr. Samir Zaqout wrote an article entitled "the Sad Gaza...how beautiful!"

- Dr. Samir Zaqout wrote an article in El-Hal local magazine about "siege and the Palestinian community".

- Dr. Abdel Aziz Thabet finalized a research paper entitled "Palestinian children: victims and heroes".

REPORTS ABOUT GAZA SITUATION

An updated report (April 17th) about Gaza situation, please [link](http://www.ochaopt.org/?module=displaysection§ion_id=11&format=html)
http://www.ochaopt.org/?module=displaysection§ion_id=11&format=html