



A Look at the San Diego TRN

By Catherine Butler, Ed.D., MFT

The San Diego Trauma Recovery Network (TRN) chapter grew out of seven therapists sitting around a table and considering the local disasters that could befall us, namely fires and potentially earthquakes. We all had a heart for those who suffer during disasters of all natures, and had heard about the TRN model. It seemed time for San Diego to catch up and see what we could do. We didn't have any money, but we had a lot of talent sitting around that table so we decided to move forward one step at a time and see where we ended up.

Our TRN has a primary focus on the community as opposed to waiting for a large scale incident. We have partnered with the American Red Cross and have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place.

Additionally, we support a local non-profit called TIP (Trauma Intervention Program). While the Red Cross clearly supports larger scale disasters (and so will we when they happen), they also respond to house fires and other local incidents every day. We have connected with the clinicians who staff the Disaster Mental Health department who go to the scene and we



receive referrals from them as needed. We also offer support to the volunteers who staff our local TIP program. These are community volunteers who are called out by local first responders to sit with victims of various incidents at the scene or at the hospital, until other support arrives. They often see and witness very traumatic things and are affected deeply. We have made our TRN available to them to assist with TIP related memories and consequences in their personal lives.

Our TRN offers up to five pro bono sessions, and each volunteer has agreed to help one to two people at a time, as their schedule permits. Our goal is to work

“smarter, not harder”

and make sure that our volunteers are not overwhelmed with paperwork or commitments. They agree to help a caller find another clinician, if they are unable to accept the case at the time. Our clinicians will not travel to any disaster site, or otherwise involve themselves in the crisis as it unfolds.

To date, we have hosted two trainings for the EMDR therapy community at large, and have incurred virtually no expenses to date for our projects. Trauma Recovery/HAP assists us by maintaining the list of volunteers and ensuring that our people have up to date insurance and licensure information posted there. As well, Trauma Recovery/HAP sponsored the Recent Traumatic Episode Protocol (R-TEP) training in 2014. Then in 2015, we offered training for the Protocol for Recent Critical Incidents (PRCI) and the Integrative Group Treatment Protocol, sponsored by the EMDR Institute. Lunch was even provided for our training by Sierra Tucson, the residential treatment centers that can be found nationwide.

The San Diego TRN website is hosted for free. We invite you to visit our page and feel free to take any of the forms or language you like from our site to apply to your own. We have our therapists listed there, and information for the public. They can email our

webmaster directly for a referral or use the list of providers to call on their own.

Please visit us at <http://sandiego-emdr-trn.weebly.com/> We are willing to share all of our best practices, the Red Cross agreement, and our lessons learned with anyone who would like to call and talk it through. Each individual TRN must carefully consider the resources available and tailor their efforts to whatever passion they share. It may be making contacts with schools, community relief agencies, first responders, pastoral resources, or other emergency services who may be overwhelmed by the community's needs. Are you familiar with your community disaster preparedness plan? Who are the volunteers? Who are the paid employees? Go to meetings, offer trainings, and make contacts. Then you can commit your team resources wisely and effectively with confidence.

Our group has evolved into approximately 25 volunteers across San Diego County, and we hope to keep recruiting at the EMDR regional meetings, Part II trainings, and other EMDR related trainings that we may have access to.

Please let us know if we can answer any questions as you move forward with your team and thank you for the energy you put into supporting your community. Remember, "work smarter, not harder".

Please direct any questions or comments to Catherine's attention by clicking the link below:

<http://sandiego-emdr-trn.weebly.com/contact-us.html>