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**Israeli and Palestinian therapists learn alternative treatments for trauma victims**

**JERUSALEM:** An American specialist who has treated trauma victims in Kosovo demonstrated his methods to Palestinians and Israelis on Thursday, with a goal of helping both patients and therapists cope.

In a session for Israeli and Palestinian therapists in Jerusalem, Dr. James Gordon taught techniques like deep breathing, guided imagery and meditation that therapists could use with their patients suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

"What we're teaching is ways for people to understand themselves and take care of themselves," said Gordon. He said people living in Israel and the Palestinian areas show higher levels of stress during psychological testing.

Gordon said he and his Washington, D.C.-based team have trained more than 400 Israeli and Palestinian mental health professionals in the last four years. He estimated that through these educators, more than 30,000 people have been exposed to his treatments, which often incorporate art, music and dance.

Thursday's program, called Healing the Wounds of War, also focused on helping therapists take care of themselves.

"Every professional should work on his own trauma," said Suhair Tillawi Hriesh, a school counselor from the Israeli Arab town of Nazareth. Other participants came from the Palestinian territories.

Danny Brom, director of the Israel Center for the Treatment of Psychotrauma, said many people who treat trauma victims have found Gordon's methods helpful. He said the approach offered "new coping tools for people living under stress."

Gordon said this week's conference marked the first time he has trained Israelis and Palestinians together.

Ayellet Cohen Wieder, a clinical psychologist in Jerusalem who is a religious Jew, said she found a surprising connection with the religious Muslim women in the group, when she realized that they wore headscarves similar to hers.

Wieder has worked with families in Sderot, which is often the target of Palestinian rocket attacks from Gaza, as well as Israeli children who were removed from settlements in Gaza when Israel withdrew in 2005. Working with Palestinians "removed many, many walls, black walls that we have inside and outside," she said.

Earlier in the week, Gordon and his team conducted clinics in the Gaza Strip and Sderot.