

Refugee Accompaniment



Capacitar Practices of Self-Care and Trauma Healing for Refugees and Those who Walk with Them



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The Capacitar en la Frontera Team



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Photos

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Dedication

We dedicate this manual to the hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who have been displaced by violence that has raged in their homelands and who are in migration globally. We also dedicate this manual to the countless who accompany them, minister to them, and empower their lives in the pursuit of a more just and whole global community.



A Prayer of Healing and Transformation

We join with the earth
and with each other
with our ancestors and all beings of the future
to bring new life to the land
to recreate the human community,
to provide justice and peace,
to remember our children,
to remember who we are.

We join together as many and diverse
expressions of one loving mystery,
for the healing of the earth
and the renewal of all life.

—Capacitar Prayer
adapted from the UN Prayer of the Sabbath

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1: Introduction & Overview



“Globally, one in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum.”

—UNHCR Report 2015

Recognizing the urgent need across our global community to accompany men, women and children who have survived forced migration, we have developed this manual of Capacitar practices. Our goal is to provide relief and some healing to the people in our midst who are struggling with recent traumatic experiences as refugees, immigrants and those who accompany them.

During the summer of 2014, tens of thousands of men, women, and children from Central America began to arrive along the US-Mexico border. The reality of the mass migration of peoples was not new to us; for decades we have been accompanying and bearing witness to those fleeing poverty, violence, and war in neighboring countries. In the face of this mass migration, our border community set about responding to the most basic human needs of these men, women and children. Across our borderlands, peoples of conscience organized to provide emergency shelter, arrange transportation, support reunification of separated family members, and liaison those seeking political protection with appropriate legal support. Thousands of volunteers joined church, activist and social service workers to accompany those traumatized by realities that forced their migration—extortion, kidnapping, disappearance or murder of loved ones, torture, gang violence, impressment, physical and/or sexual assault.

In accompanying these refugees, we have depended on the use of multiple Capacitar practices, which our network of solidarity, *Capacitar en la Frontera*, has been multiplying for many years across our borderlands. In settings as diverse as detention centers, emergency crisis response centers, health and mental health community centers, legal aid organizations, and human rights organizations, members of our Capacitar network have shared the practices to provide relief and some healing to the men, women, and children in our midst who were struggling with recent traumatic experiences.

Only one year later, in 2015, our international community is now responding to the mass migration of peoples globally. Again, hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children have been displaced, fleeing violence, war, and oppression in their countries of origin—and the number of those displaced has only continued to rise. Here in our borderlands we are again experiencing the largest spike in the arrival of Central American refugees since the summer of 2014. We now know that there are more people displaced and in migration globally than at any other point since the Second World War. According to the UN 2015 Global Report, there are nearly 60 million people in migration today—a staggering 1 in every 122 persons. This reality is shocking and requires our response.

Today’s refugees are seeking protection from the realities that forced their migration—war, terrorism, genocide, mass violence, forced disappearance of loved ones, torture, and extreme poverty. Sadly, these human tragedies are endemic across our globe and are forcing people to flee in pursuit of their basic human rights—safety, food, shelter, clothing, basic health care, education and the ability to live free from persecution.

We know that our Capacitar solidarity network is actively seeking to respond to this crisis. We know that peoples of conscience across the globe—both within and beyond our network—are looking for specific ways to concretely and humanely respond to these refugees, many of whom are struggling to integrate

their recent and past experiences of trauma.

Recognizing this urgent need, we have developed this manual of Capacitar practices that can be used to accompany those who have survived forced migration. We have attempted to bring together the acquired experiences of individuals and communities who accompany refugees from the US-Mexico border and from across the globe. Included in the manual are the practices we have found most useful, relevant, and accessible to those in migration. This manual is also intended to serve individuals, communities and systems that walk with the refugee community. We know that the regular and consistent use of Capacitar practices guides and sustains our journeys, assisting us in transforming the trauma to which we bear witness. Ways in which Capacitar practices can be used for self-care are interwoven throughout the manual. We offer reflections and an invitation to continue to create systems that more humanely and holistically serve the refugee as well as treating with dignity and respect the workers who accompany them.

Following an introduction to the work of Capacitar and trauma theory, we describe select Capacitar practices in this manual. In addition to detailed practice descriptions, the second half of the manual provides practical application descriptions. Whether you are accompanying migrants in emergency/transitional hospitality settings, detention centers, through visitation, legal aid, health or mental health entities or any number of other human rights venues, we have attempted to include experiences, possibilities, and suggestions that might be relevant to you. Finally, manual appendices include the Capacitar Emergency Kit, some additional resources, and templates for Capacitar workshops and/or groups.

Capacitar International has walked with peoples in migration throughout our 29 year history—in the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Capacitar en la Frontera—a partnership on both sides of the US-Mexico border—is only one of the dozens of Capacitar networks of solidarity that exist globally. Since 2008, when extreme violence erupted in Northern Mexico and forced the migration of hundreds of thousands of peoples, Capacitar en la Frontera has supported trauma workers accompanying migrants and refugees in detention facilities, emergency shelters, crisis response centers, community health and mental health centers, places of worship, legal aid and human rights centers.

We join with you in gratitude and in solidarity as we walk together with those in migration. To accompany is to bear witness, to offer presence in mind, body, and spirit, and to recognize the inherent worth and dignity of the person. Together we transform our collective trauma and move forward in the creation of a more integral global community.

Wars, conflict and persecution have forced more people than at any other time since records began to flee their homes and seek refuge and safety elsewhere. According to the UNHCR's annual Global Trends Report 2015 World at War, worldwide displacement is at the highest level ever recorded. "The number of people forcibly displaced at the end of 2014 has risen to a staggering 59.5 million compared to 51.2 million a year earlier and 37.5 million a decade ago." The report said the situation was likely to worsen still further.

"Globally, one in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum. If this were the population of a country, it would be the world's 24th largest."

"We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything seen before."

—UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres



In some places cultural traditions, rituals and healing practices used for centuries to support healing have been lost or discredited in the face of the destruction of communities, the relocation of refugees or the advances of the “modern” way of life. Capacitar’s trauma healing and wellness approach offers invaluable skills to professionals and grassroots to support their healing process and to empower them in their communities.



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Capacitar's holistic approach to trauma healing and self-care

Capacitar's program of trauma healing has grown out of years of experience accompanying grassroots people and professionals in many cultures. Mali, an internally displaced South African who had been tortured during the Apartheid era, challenged us: "As I struggle with the trauma of my own life as well as the stigma of HIV, I want you to teach me how to live well. And I want to share what I learn with others in my community!" With a popular education approach to trauma healing, people like Mali and countless others around the world have demonstrated the efficacy of Capacitar's method and vision: healing ourselves, healing our world.

History

Capacitar began in 1988 during the war in Nicaragua when founder Pat Cane was invited to work on an art festival in the barrios of Managua. To survive the stress of her work, Pat practiced Tai Chi and acupressure for self-care. Nicaraguan colleagues commented: "Your art is great, but teach us what you do to care for yourself." The people intuitively recognized the value of ancient wellness practices to deal with the violence and trauma of their lives. With this insight Capacitar was born. From Nicaraguans came the word "capacitar"—a Spanish verb meaning to empower, to encourage, to bring to life—that became the name of the organization and the spirit of a movement. And from a grassroots center in Managua came the inspiration for the method of popular education.

Popular Education and Body Literacy

Based on the theory of Brazilian Paulo Freire (1970), popular education awakens people to their own wisdom and capabilities and empowers them to multiply what they learn in the community. Capacitar adapted Freire's approach, emphasizing "body literacy" and integrating skills for body, mind and spirit in a program of multicultural

wellness education. The first Capacitar workshops gave people simple tools (such as body movement, acupressure and tapping exercises) that they could use for themselves to deal with the ongoing stress and trauma of war, political and domestic violence, poverty and disaster. As they healed their traumas and transformed their lives, people were empowered to reach out to bring peace and healing to their families, communities and societies. As word of Capacitar circulated in solidarity circles, Guatemalan union leaders under threat and friends in Chile under the dictatorship requested workshops. In 1995, Capacitar coordinated the Healing Tent in China for the World Forum of Women, and within a few years Capacitar's outreach began to grow. Capacitar currently works in over 40 countries in the Americas, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Through the years Capacitar has responded to the needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and families of the disappeared, and has accompanied those walking with them, in refugee camps, border communities, conflict zones and aid centers. With growing awareness of the extent of vicarious trauma and ongoing trauma everywhere, Capacitar developed programs in self-care.

Resource for Healing and Empowerment

In many places where Capacitar works people have little access to medical care or to psychotherapy to heal the wounds of their traumatized lives. Often a client-therapist model does not fit the needs of grassroots people, who for most of their lives have been disempowered by state, church, educational or medical institutions. In some countries the cultural traditions, rituals and healing practices that were used for centuries to support the natural healing of the individual and the community have been lost or discredited in the face of the destruction of communities, the relocation of refugees or the



Traumatic reasons for leaving the host country as well as the potentially long and hazardous journey and process of resettlement increase the risk for refugees to suffer from a variety of mental health issues... Common mental health diagnoses associated with refugee populations include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depression, generalized anxiety, panic attacks, adjustment disorder, and somatization. The incidence of diagnoses varies with different populations and their experiences.

—Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center 2011

advances of the “modern” way of life. Capacitar’s trauma healing and wellness approach offers invaluable skills to professionals as well as to grassroots individuals and groups to support their healing process and to empower them in their communities. The methods can also complement the work of medical and mental health services.

The Face of Trauma

Trauma is never an abstraction, but shows itself in human faces and individual stories. From Capacitar’s first years in Central America the story of María Carmen comes to mind. María Carmen was a union leader in Guatemala, who lost her hand in an industrial accident. After twenty-three operations and skin grafts, she was extremely depressed and rarely slept. Adding to her trauma, she lost her job and her union at the plant where she worked was destroyed in a political struggle. María Carmen had lived through the assassination and disappearance of a number of union leaders and she and her colleagues often received death threats. Now her job and her union were gone, as well as the sense of meaning for her life. As a widow and single mother of four children and five grandchildren, María Carmen felt she could no longer support her family. She suffered all the signs described as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD): flashbacks, insomnia, nightmares, depression, anxiety, body pain and headaches. María Carmen’s doctors gave her strong medications to alleviate many of her symptoms but, since she was poor, she often did not have the money to pay for them. She also vacillated between taking her medications or leaving them because she didn’t want to feel numbed by the drugs. Out of desperation her family and union friends asked to include María Carmen in Capacitar’s work to give her a sense of meaning and to help with her health condition. As she learned Tai Chi, visualization, acupressure, massage and other practices, there was a definite change in her. She was less depressed, had fewer headaches, slept better, and had a more positive outlook on life. And she began to share what she learned with her family and those in her community.

María Carmen is a dramatic example of the countless people dealing with stress and trauma who have participated in Capacitar programs through the years. Her story exemplifies the overwhelming challenge of traumatized people, as well as refugees and displaced persons, who have limited access to medical or mental health resources. And it demonstrates the empowering impact of Capacitar’s simple methods and approach to trauma healing.

Fight-Flight Response

According to leading traumatologist Bessel Van der Kolk, Ph.D. (1996), “Experiencing trauma is an essential part of being human; history is written in blood. Some people have adapted to terrible life events with flexibility and creativity, while others have become fixated on the trauma and gone on to lead traumatized and traumatizing existences.” When a person is in danger the “fight-flight” response takes over in the body to help the person survive. In the organism there is an increase in alertness, breathing, blood pressure and heart

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rate, along with decreased activity in digestive, reproductive and immune systems. The strong physiological reactions connected to the fight-flight response are normal and highly effective to help the person flee or protect themselves at the time of danger. However, if the danger is prolonged, the bodily response or traumatic reaction can take over in the person.

Psychologist Peter Levine, Ph.D. (1997) describes PTSD symptoms as caused by blocked energy or a “freezing response” in the person. After the fight-flight reaction if energy has not been resolved or discharged, it remains trapped or “frozen” in the nervous system. Levine theorizes: “A threatened human must discharge all the energy mobilized to negotiate that threat or it will become a victim of trauma. This residual energy does not simply go away. It persists in the body and often forces the formation of a wide variety of symptoms. These symptoms are the organism’s way of containing (or corraling) the undischarged residual energy.”

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder—PTSD

PTSD is now seen as a very common disorder resulting from being exposed to extreme stress. By definition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), the person “experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others; the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror” (1994). PTSD is recognized as the person’s inability to cope because of being overwhelmed with the traumatic experience in body, mind, and spirit.

A large number of people live with some degree of traumatic symptoms. In the case of refugees, they can be living with complex trauma or ongoing trauma. The range of symptoms varies but often includes any of the following. A person may experience hyper-arousal, reliving of the trauma, and avoidance or numbing. With hyper-arousal the person will be hyper-vigilant and easily startled, irritable with outbursts of anger, have difficulty with concentration and have difficulty falling or staying asleep. The person may have a number of bodily reactions including: dizziness, blurred vision, altered consciousness, irregular or rapid heartbeat, tremor, headache, weakness, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, shortness of breath, irregular breathing, hyperventilation, urge to urinate, perspiration or fever. They may have recurrent memories or distressful dreams of the event. They may have hallucinations or flashbacks or experience intense distress when exposed to cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event. After some period of time with hyper-arousal and intrusive symptoms, the person may react with avoidance and numbing as a means of self-protection. The person may not be able to recall details of the trauma, may avoid thoughts, feelings or interactions associated with the trauma, as well as avoid activities, places or people that arouse memories of the trauma. They may feel detached or estranged from others with a loss of the

The incidence of diagnoses varies with different refugee populations and their experiences. Different studies have shown rates of PTSD and major depression in settled refugees to range from 10-40% and 5-15%, respectively. Children and adolescents often have higher levels with various investigations revealing rates of PTSD from 50-90% and major depression from 6-40%. Risk factors for the development of mental health problems include the number of traumas, delayed asylum application process, detention, and the loss of culture and support systems.

—Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center 2011



Goma Refugee Camp—DR Congo

US Trauma Estimates:

- *An estimated 70% of adults in the US have experienced a traumatic event at least once in their lives. Up to 20% of these people will develop PTSD.*
- *An estimated 5% in the US (13 million people) have PTSD at any given time.*
- *Approximately 1 in 13 people will develop PTSD in their lifetime.*
- *An estimated 1 in 10 women will develop PTSD in their lives. Women are about twice as likely to develop PTSD as men.*

—Sidran Institute: Traumatic Stress Education and Advocacy
www.sidran.org

PTSD Incidence:

Current studies have shown that the following populations are likely to suffer PTSD at some point in their lifetime:

- *30% of veterans*
- *45% of battered women*
- *50% of sexually abused children*
- *35% of adult rape victims*

Rates of PTSD in police are 4-6 times higher than in the general public. With firefighters, PTSD symptoms can be as high as 18%.

—from National Institute of Mental Health NIMH and other PTSD sources

capacity for love or intimacy. They may also lose hope in the future, and live with a sense of meaninglessness and proximity to death.

Unique Experience of Trauma

Each person has a unique experience of trauma depending upon many factors including their personality, family history, emotional makeup, age, relationships, culture, support system and coping ability. The whole person is affected by the trauma and the foundation of the person's life is shattered. There are marked changes in body, mind, emotions and behaviors. The person's view of themselves, of the world and of other people is changed. They usually experience a wide range of strong feelings including sadness, grief, depression, guilt, rage, irritability and fear. They feel helpless and hopeless. They see the world and others as a threat and can no longer trust. Symptoms of traumatic stress are often found in many grassroots people, refugees and internally displaced persons who have gone through personal traumas, as well as living through political violence or disasters. Besides the horror of the current trauma, many of the survivors also have their experience compounded with flashbacks to earlier traumas from childhood, such as incest, physical or domestic violence, accidents or death of loved ones.

Vicarious Trauma—VT

In most of the countries where Capacitar works, vicarious or secondary trauma is another level of trauma encountered in a broad cross section of people—aid and humanitarian workers, those accompanying refugees, personnel at refugee and legal aid centers, caregivers, social workers, teachers, medical professionals, psychologists, trauma workers, police, military, religious, community and development leaders, hospice workers, HIV/AIDS caregivers and those serving the impoverished in their communities. Even if these persons have not been exposed directly to a traumatic or life-threatening event, they can still begin to manifest traumatic stress symptoms. Psychologists Karen Saakvitne and Laurie Pearlman (1996) describe how the nature of the job, the kinds of clients, the pressures at work or the workplace itself can contribute to vicarious trauma.

Yet another aspect of trauma encountered in the field is what some like to call continuing or ongoing trauma: a person can't get away from what causes the trauma. The person has an ongoing experience of fight-flight and their body is on constant alert to survive real or imagined dangers. These include persons living in refugee detention centers, in war zones, in oppressive societies, in homes where there is incest or domestic violence, in places of poverty or natural disasters, in places of physical or psychological threat and in places where there is bullying. As with direct or vicarious trauma, the symptoms are the same.

Intergenerational Trauma

When trauma is viewed at a systemic or global level, intergenerational and cultural patterns, as well as religious and social mores, can be

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seen as contributing factors. Our lives mirror our family and societal histories. In many families and cultures trauma is often repeated from generation to generation. The Scriptures speak of the “sins of the fathers affecting the third generation.” The indigenous peoples counsel us to remember that “whatever we do affects all beings to the seventh generation.” Sandra Bloom, M.D. (1997), has studied how traumatic affect gets passed on to each successive generation: “By ignoring traumatic affect and memory we do not make it disappear; we just create a psychic abscess that infects the rest of the person and subsequent generations.” To stop societal and intergenerational trauma requires that we look at the legacy of attitudes, beliefs and mores that affect the whole system. To begin a process of healing means that we address the “sins of the fathers” within the society, as well as within the person.

The new field of Epigenetics studies the alterations on genes that change the way that genes function in persons exposed to trauma and in their offspring. Neuroscientist and professor of psychiatry Rachel Yehuda, MD, is researching the impact of trauma on Holocaust survivors and women pregnant during the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11 in New York. Preliminary findings show that a significant number of children whose mothers were pregnant during 9/11, exhibit an increased distress response and less resilience, with similar results found in studies of children of Holocaust survivors. Citing the possibility of reversing this genetic change in a positive direction, Stanford University historian Laura Stokes, PhD, of the Research Group on Collective Trauma (2015), states that “recent research has also shown that profound healing is possible even for seemingly intractable cases of post-traumatic stress disorder, using new therapies (such as EFT tapping or EMDR) that integrate brain chemistry and human interaction in key ways.” Dawson Church in “The Genie in Your Genes” (2009) describes the “epigenetic social cycle”: “Nurturing of children produces beneficial gene change, which produces increased nurturing of subsequent generations, and a less violent and safer society.”

Traumatogenic Systems

As societies around the world deal with the refugee crisis, as well as growing scandals of sexual or physical abuse in church, military, educational and political institutions, the systemic structures, procedures and practices of institutions themselves are being called into question. In War and the Soul, psychologist Edward Tick, Ph.D. (2005) describes trauma in veterans and the impact of war on the person, family and nation. In Bearing Witness: Violence and Collective Responsibility, Sandra Bloom, MD and Michael Reichert, PhD. (1996) analyze how institutions in many societies are organized around unresolved traumatic experiences and how major institutions and practices, such as child rearing and military formation, are “traumatogenic” and are the cause of trauma. “Virtually all of our human systems are organized around trauma and the prolonged, transgenerational, and often permanent effects of traumatic experience.” In Power Under: Trauma and Nonviolent Social



*Internally displaced family—
Nicaragua*

“In many families or cultures trauma is often repeated from generation to generation. To stop societal and intergenerational trauma requires that we look at the legacy of attitudes, beliefs and mores that affect the whole system.

By ignoring traumatic affect and memory we do not make it disappear; we just create a psychic abscess that infects the rest of the person and subsequent generations.”

*— Bearing Witness
Sandra Bloom, Michael
Reichert*

“The primary task of treatment is to reprogram the emotional brain so that it adapts to the present instead of continuing to react to past traumatic experiences. It is generally more effective to use methods that act via the body and directly influence the emotional brain rather than use approaches that depend entirely on language and reason, to which the emotional brain is not as receptive.”

*—David Servan-Schreiber
Psychiatrist*



Afghanistan

Change, Steve Wineman, Ph.D. (2003) analyzes how unhealed violence within leaders can often impact organizations and whole nations when unresolved personal traumas are projected onto individuals, communities and societies.

New Approaches to Trauma Healing

Many professionals working in the field of trauma are beginning to recognize that for many persons a traditional Western medical approach using cognitive psychotherapy and medication is not enough. New research shows that healing and recovery involve a holistic process on the levels of body, mind, spirit, and emotions. Psychiatrist David Servan-Schreiber, in his landmark book Healing Without Freud or Prozac (2003), explains the functions of cognitive and emotional brains in the process of trauma healing. The cognitive brain, the center of language and thought, is the focus of cognitive therapy and most traditional methods of psychiatry. However, it is the emotional brain that governs psychological wellbeing and most of the body's physiology, and many emotional disorders result from dysfunction in the emotional brain. Servan-Schreiber recognizes that the primary task of treatment is to reprogram the emotional brain so that it adapts to the present instead of continuing to react to past traumatic experiences. "To achieve this goal it is generally more effective to use methods that act via the body and directly influence the emotional brain." Servan-Schreiber recognizes that the brain has an "instinct to heal" finding balance and wellbeing.

Trauma Treatment and Recovery

Bessel Van der Kolk (1996) describes the goals of a treatment plan as: stabilizing the person; de-conditioning traumatic memories and responses; re-establishing secure interpersonal connections; and accumulating positive emotional experiences. Judith Lewis Herman, M.D. (1992) in Trauma and Recovery, notes that the core experiences of trauma are disempowerment and disconnection. She sees recovery as based on the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections, all taking place in the context of relationships. Psychologists and therapists using different treatment approaches agree that with trauma, the person gets "stuck" in the experience. The focus of therapy then is to empower the person to move beyond helplessness and the trauma of the past so that they can live effectively in the present. Therapy enables the person to regain control over emotional responses; to recognize emotionally arousing stimuli as different from the original trauma; to see the trauma in the context of life; and to recognize the meaning of the experience, transforming wounds into wisdom. In short, trauma healing involves a process of recovering the balance and wellbeing of body, mind, emotions and behaviors.

Neuroscience and Brain Healing

Current research in neuroscience is also opening the way to a variety of innovative body-mind approaches to trauma healing and wellbeing. The fields of Somatic Psychology and Transpersonal Psychology offer different approaches for work via the body with trauma and recovery. The pioneering

research of HeartMath (2000) has developed invaluable methods for transforming “chaos” patterns in the “heart brain” to ones of “coherence” and wellbeing. Jon Kabot-Zinn (2005), with his pioneering work in mindfulness, as well as neuropsychologist Rick Hanson and neurologist Richard Mendius (2009) have popularized the insights of neuroscience and spirituality to empower people to heal dysfunction and negative patterns in the mind so they can live with greater compassion and wellbeing.

Capacitar’s Holistic Approach to Trauma Healing

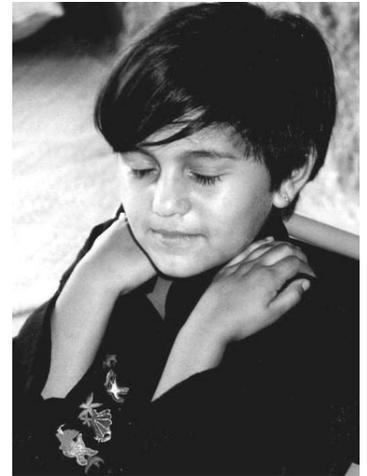
According to transpersonal psychologist Aminah Raheem, PhD (1987), cognitive and talk therapies are not enough to address the healing of traumatic experience. What is needed is an approach based on a holistic paradigm that recognizes the fundamental unity of body, mind, spirit and emotions, and the healthy flow and balance of energy. Asian and indigenous cultures recognize energy as the fundamental unifying principle of healing.

Capacitar uses a popular education holistic approach, working with the energy system to empower the person and the community in their healing process. A key premise to this approach is that the person has an inherent capacity to return to balance and wholeness—body, mind, spirit and emotions. Peter Levine’s insight (1997) that sees traumatic stress symptoms as caused by blocked energy that is not discharged at the time of fight-flight is key to Capacitar’s approach. According to Levine’s research, healing occurs through release of the undischarged energy as well as through a strengthening of the natural flow of energy in the system. Through the release of blocks and the renewed flow of energy the person can return to a state of dynamic balance and wellbeing.

Through years of work in the field, Capacitar has found that many practices, such as, Tai Chi, Pal Dan Gum, Fingerholds, Tapping exercises, Acupressure and the Holds, promote the release of blocked energy and a return to balance. Capacitar’s approach recognizes the fundamental unity of body, mind, spirit and emotions and focuses on the energy system and balance of the whole person. The simple practices taught in Capacitar workshops promote the unblocking, awakening, balancing and nourishing of the energy system. Traditional methods of psychotherapy and medication usually treat the symptoms of trauma, and often are not sufficient to heal the deeper traumatic experiences stuck in the emotional brain and the body of the person. Through popular education methods, Capacitar gives people tools they can use for themselves to awaken “body literacy” and to empower the “instinct to heal” in themselves and their communities. In the case of refugees and those who accompany them, the tools serve as an “emergency kit” for daily use as well as for stabilization and self-care during challenging experiences.

Energy and Trauma Healing

A holistic approach to healing has been recognized for many centuries in Eastern and indigenous cultures. When a culture lives with a consciousness of the fundamental unity of all being, the experience and effects of traumatic events can be quite different. His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1997) has described Tibetan monks who spent their lives in concentration camps and prisons, yet very few had symptoms of post-



Honduras

The person has an inherent capacity to return to balance and wholeness—an “instinct to heal.” Healing occurs through release of undischarged energy as well as through a strengthening of the natural flow of energy in the body, mind, spirit and emotions of the person.

Through popular education methods, Capacitar gives people tools they can use for themselves to awaken “body literacy” and to empower the “instinct to heal” in themselves, their families and communities.

“The healing or restructuring of old traumatic patterns should follow the opening and releasing of energy held within them. . . Wounds and limiting patterns can be transformed into valuable resources. . . Bodywork is usually essential to release traumas from the tissues, and to assist in restructuring them in the consciousness. . . Depth transformation can be accomplished by bringing new perspectives and creating new realities around the traumas.”

*—Aminah Raheem, PhD
Transpersonal Psychologist*



Haiti

traumatic stress disorder as diagnosed in Western cultures. For thousands of years Buddhists have been aware of the healing capacity of the mind and the power of consciousness. It is only within the last twenty years that some Western physicians, biologists and psychologists have begun to recognize this fundamental unity and the relationship between emotional states and mental and physical wellbeing. Neuropsychologists Hanson and Mendius (2009) and other neuroscientists are studying the impact of meditation, breathwork and other Eastern practices on brain structure and healing.

A holistic model of healing sees health as an ongoing dynamic process involving interdependent physical, psychological and social dimensions. Disease and trauma represent an imbalance and a disruption in the equilibrium of the whole system. Aminah Raheem (1987) in *Soul Return* describes what is at the heart of healing trauma: “The healing and/or restructuring of old traumatic patterns should accompany or follow the opening and releasing of energy held within them. . . Wounds and limiting patterns can be transformed into valuable resources. . . Bodywork is usually essential during such depth transformation processes, to release traumas from the tissues, and to assist in restructuring them in the consciousness. . . Depth transformation can be accomplished by bringing new perspectives and/or creating new realities around the traumas.”

Recovery, Accompaniment and Empowerment of the Individual and System

The healing process includes a number of stages that involve the empowerment of the survivor, the creation of new connections, along with making meaning of the experience. Capacitar methods include work with the different stages of the recovery process to promote the healing of the wounds as well as the recuperation of the inner strength and energy of the person. The community can provide the place and the container where a person may consciously put words and meaning to their traumatic experience. In many developed countries where an individualistic culture prevails, the person often lacks community connection and resources. Capacitar groups can provide an energetic connection with the community for many individuals. Healing takes place through sharing and group rituals that integrate and give meaning to personal and communal traumas.

It is not enough to alleviate the physical or emotional symptoms of PTSD. Healing also involves a deeper transformation of the whole system: from the person, their relationships, and their environment, down to cellular and energetic levels. In many ways this profound healing is like a rebirth. The way traumatic experience is handled can be a catalyst for growth and transformation. Wounds of the past can be transformed into wisdom. There is a return to wholeness and balance, which are the natural state of the person and the community.

Throughout the healing and empowerment process, it is important

2. Trauma Healing & Accompaniment

to recognize the significant role of accompaniment. Mary Watkins (2014), Professor at Pacifica Graduate Institute, describes “accompaniment,” as a new psychosocial paradigm growing out of Liberation Theology and Psychology. When we accompany, we walk with others in a process of mutual liberation and empowerment. As we accompany people in their struggle, we “claim the ‘open door’ available in our consciousness so that the ‘possibility of love’ can emerge.” Accompaniment is key to the healing process in work with refugees and displaced persons.

Societal and Global Healing

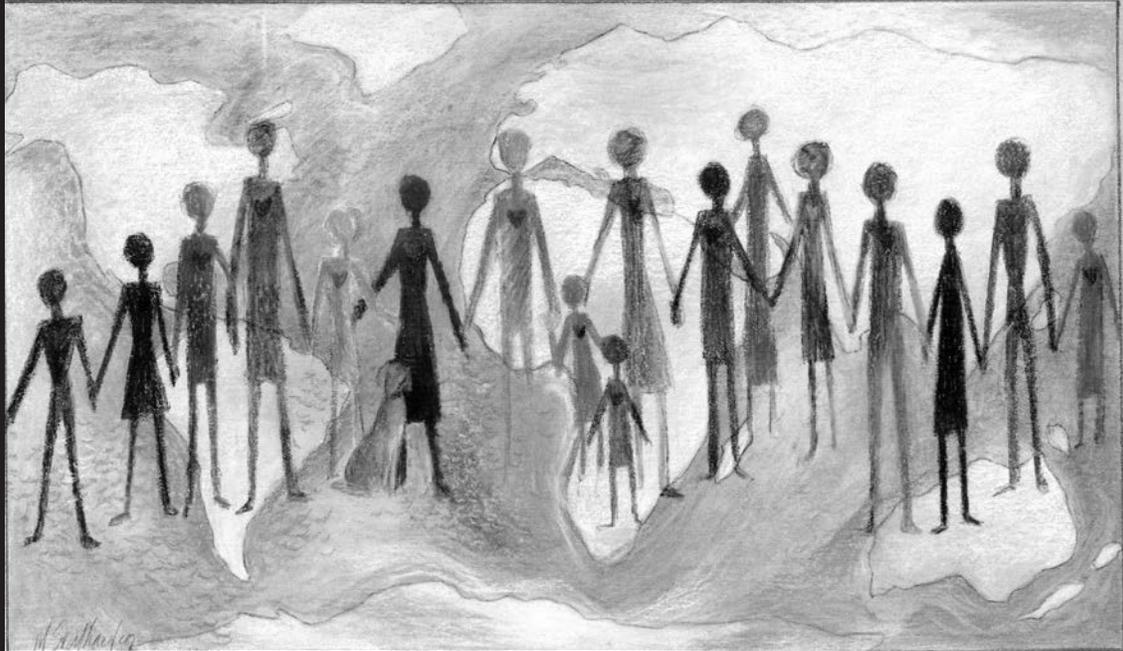
Just as healing trauma involves the individual and the community, so it is necessary to look at the larger systems and the global issues causing traumatic events. Many persons suffer anxiety and depression not only from their personal traumas, but also from the current crises in the larger world—climate change, environmental catastrophes, economic crisis, food shortages, genocide, political and domestic violence and natural disasters. Trauma is no longer only an individual experience, it is a societal and global reality.

In facing the challenges that surround us, we can no longer find answers within the context of old worldviews. As Einstein said, we cannot solve problems with the same thinking that created them. We must go to a higher perspective. If we can move beyond depression and despair, the global trauma that we see daily in the mass media is gradually pushing us to a higher and deeper level of awareness and a growing recognition of our interconnection and interdependence. With a consciousness born of spiritual practice, our individual and collective traumas can become catalysts, giving us the opportunity and empowering us to heal and transform our wounds into wisdom. Buddhist scholar Joanna Macy (1998) inspires us to face the despair and grief of our times and calls us to be actively engaged in the “Great Turning” through our work, commitments, and conscious choices. Our personal and collective recovery depends on our being engaged in this process of healing and transformation. Our models of trauma healing and recovery must have systemic, spiritual and global perspectives.

As the refugee crisis due to wars, political violence, poverty and disasters grows at a global level and as trauma impacts us individually and collectively, we are challenged to recognize our interconnection as one human family. And as we work with personal and global trauma, we are called to reawaken our deepest wisdom and commitment to compassionate service to heal ourselves and to heal and transform the pain of our world, accompanying those around us. This is the vision and mission of Capacitar.

Just as healing trauma involves the individual and the community, so it is necessary to look at the larger systems and the global issues causing traumatic events. Many persons suffer anxiety and depression not only from their personal traumas, but also from the current crises in the larger world. Trauma is no longer an individual experience, it is also a societal and a global reality.

If we can move beyond depression and despair, the global trauma that we see daily in the mass media is gradually pushing us to a higher and deeper level of awareness and a growing recognition of our interconnection and interdependence. Our individual and collective traumas can become catalysts, giving us the opportunity and empowering us to heal and transform our wounds into wisdom.



The Capacitar basic practices can be easily used with individuals and with refugee groups. They are tools to provide a solid base for healing many symptoms resulting from stress and trauma and to promote a way to live in wellness in the midst of the challenges of life.



3. Capacitar Basic Practices

to transform traumatic stress and promote wellbeing

The following section offers a variety of energy practices to promote balance and healing in the whole person and to nourish and harmonize the core energy system. The practices can be easily used with individuals and groups. The vocabulary and explanation of each practice can be appropriately adapted or changed to fit the culture, background and learning level of the person or group. These practices are tools to provide a solid base for healing many symptoms resulting from stress and trauma and to promote a way to live in wellness in the midst of the challenges of life.

Breathwork is fundamental. Often with trauma the breath becomes shallow and rapid. Work with breath is a way to release and re-energize the whole system. Visualization works with the mental field, the memory, and the imagination. With visualization the person can create an inner experience of safety and security, as well as transform and heal many physiological and psychological reactions. For many refugees there is no sense of safety, so creating an inner safe space is an essential step in the healing process.

Tai Chi, Pal Dan Gum, and the Salute to the Sun are forms of body movement and stretching to bring balance and calm to the entire system. The movements are done with guided imagery to release negative or traumatic memories and impact the healing process in the person. Fingerholds work on the energy channels or meridians that flow through the fingers to release and balance strong emotions and attitudes that cause obstructions in the system—grief, fear, anger, worry and lack of self-esteem. The Emotional Freedom Tapping exercise works with negative or traumatic images, thoughts, and anxiety, transforming personal wounds and difficult experiences into wisdom. Acupressure on specific points along the energy channels or meridians works to release congested and constricted areas, alleviate pain, and bring harmony to the energy flow of the body. Bodywork, such as the Holds, Hand Massage, Drum Massage or Polarity, helps promote peace, relaxation and comfort, as well as improve circulation and a sense of wellbeing. Many of the practices can be done on oneself, and some can be shared with permission with another person, always respecting boundaries and culture.

If the practices are used on a regular basis, the natural healing capacity of the person takes over, blocked energy is released, and many symptoms of traumatic stress are improved. For use with refugee groups, it is helpful to relate the different practices to what people did in their own countries and cultures to alleviate stress, anxiety, depression and physical or emotional pain. Asking “what does this remind you of?” or “What did your granny do?” often helps people to reconnect to positive cultural memories.



Juarez, Mexico

Many resources, additional practices and application to different kinds of groups can be found on the Capacitar website: www.capacitar.org. The Capacitar Emergency Kit of Best Practices can be downloaded in over 20 languages.

BREATHWORK

Breath is the source of life, bringing fresh energy into the tissues and cells to nourish body, mind and spirit. Breathwork can be a valuable tool for refugees in difficult moments. When we breathe out, accumulated stress and toxins are released. Breathing through a stressful time is an effective way to let go of the tension that accumulates in the body. A few long deep breaths at a difficult moment can completely change the way we handle a situation. The breathing pattern shifts when different emotions arise. Through conscious breath we can become aware of the flow of these emotions. By changing the way we breathe we can change emotional and physical states. Feelings and emotions can be released and cleared out of the body by working with the breath.

The following breathing exercises can be used to consciously unblock, move, balance and increase energy. Breathwork combined with images of light, nature or beautiful flowers is helpful to promote feelings of peace, calm and focus. Language can be adapted depending on the culture and age level of the person.



Palestine

Abdominal Breathing

Sit comfortably supported in a chair and close your eyes. Breathe deeply and center yourself, letting go of all worries and thoughts. Place your hands on your abdomen, breathe in deeply through your nose and imagine the air moving down through your body into a center within your abdomen. Imagine that your abdomen fills with air as if it were a balloon. Hold your breath for a few moments and then exhale slowly through your mouth, contracting the muscles of your abdomen, letting go of all the tension in your body. Continue abdominal breathing for several minutes. If thoughts come into your mind, gently release them, returning to the image of the air moving in and out of your body.

Breathing in Nature

Trees and nature are great sources of energy for grounding and healing us. Remove your shoes and place your feet on the ground (or imagine doing so). Breathe in deeply imagining that your feet are like the roots of a tree running into the earth. Breathe in the earth energy through your feet, and as you exhale, imagine that you are breathing out stress, tension and pain.

Breathing through the Pores

This exercise is especially helpful for releasing pain. Breathe abdominally for several minutes aware of any pain you are carrying. Breathe in and imagine that the air is like cleansing golden light that comes into your body through the pores of your skin, circulating through areas that are painful and tense. Hold your breath as the healing golden light circulates throughout your body. Imagine that your tissues can absorb the light and release the pain and toxins. Breathe out slowly and imagine the toxins and pain releasing out through the pores of your skin, draining down into the earth to be transformed. Continue breathing, directing the cleansing light to areas needing special attention. Feel your body become lighter and brighter.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Alternate nostril breathing is a powerful practice from India that is used to circulate and balance energy. This breathing exercise is used with students in many Indian schools before study or taking an examination to balance left and right sides of the brain—the rational and the creative capacities. Alternate nostril breathing helps to release anger and strong emotions and to bring clarity and calm to the body, mind, and spirit of the person. The exercise should be discontinued if dizziness is experienced. This can be a very useful exercise for refugees in moments of anger or frustration.

Sit comfortably with your back supported and your feet touching the ground. You will be using your right hand during this exercise. You may close your eyes. With your right thumb at the side of the nose, gently shut off your right nostril. Breathe deeply through your left nostril to a count of 8. Hold your breath for a count of 4 (or 8). Then release your right nostril, place your index and/or middle finger over your left nostril, while exhaling through your right nostril to a count of 8. Hold for a count of 4 (or 8) and breathe in through your right nostril to a count of 8. Hold the air, release your left nostril, and place your right thumb over the right nostril while exhaling through the left side. Inhale through the left nostril and hold for a count of 4 (or 8). With index and/or middle fingers shut off the left nostril and exhale through the right. Continue this alternate breathing pattern for several minutes.

When you are finished open your eyes and breath normally. Observe any changes you feel in your body. This is an excellent practice if you are unable to sleep at night to discharge the feelings and tensions of the day. This is also a very effective practice to balance and harmonize strong emotions.

Breathing in Peace or Positive Images

In moments of challenge or depression, the use of breathwork in combination with positive images or peaceful memories of the past can be a resource for refugees and the traumatized.

Sit comfortably and begin with abdominal breathing. Recall a memory of the past that is peaceful or comforting. Breathe in deeply, imagining in detail a moment of peace or comfort. As you breathe out let go completely any tension in the body. Continue doing this exercise for several moments feeling that peace is entering all of the tired stressed areas of your body and spirit.



Suggestions for Facilitators

Persons dealing with trauma or stress often hold their breath or breathe in a shallow way. To better teach abdominal breathing, have the person place their hands below the navel and lean forward in their chairs. Then lead them in breathing slowly through the nose and exhaling through their mouth. In this bent position the only way they can breathe is abdominally. After a few minutes have the person straighten up in the chair and continue to breathe deeply into the abdomen.

In tense or difficult moments, remind the person to breathe deeply imagining that the energy of feelings can move through them and out into the earth. For refugees, deep breathing can bring a sense of peace and centeredness in difficult moments.

SWITCHING

The following exercise, adapted from the work of Brain Gym, is very effective in helping a person to connect with their center and release strong emotions.

- Sit comfortably and breathe deeply.
- Cross your left ankle over your right ankle.
- Extend your hands forward and turn your hands over so that the thumbs are directed toward the ground.



- Cross your right hand over the left hand and interlace your fingers.
- With interlaced fingers touch the center of the sternum.
- Close your eyes, breathe deeply and relax your entire body. Imagine that you are able to drop down deeply into the center of your being.
(You can imagine a center beneath your navel in the middle of your abdomen. For the people of China this center is called the Dantien. For the people of India this center is the Hara.)
- Relax your tongue in the roof of your mouth with the tip of the tongue touching behind the upper front teeth.

• Breathe deeply and let go of all thought. Rest in stillness and deep peace for several minutes.

• After several minutes relax your hands into your lap. Breathe and slowly open your eyes.

• Stretch your hands and arms and gently tap your head to stimulate your brain and energy.



Switching is a very beneficial exercise to calm and center oneself; to use before meditation for centering; to lighten depression and anxiety; and to focus the mind and spirit. When working with individuals or groups, the practice helps to calm and settle a person before therapy; or helps to focus refugees who are having flashbacks or strong memories and emotions. With children it can be adapted as a game.

CENTERING

Centering is an important skill for everyone, especially those who have been traumatized, to help them reconnect with themselves. Often persons who are traumatized dissociate or disconnect from themselves as a means to survive. Persons who deal with daily stress or violence are often scattered and unable to focus. With refugees often this state is accompanied by flashbacks or strong memories of their difficult experiences. Many indigenous or native cultures talk of “soul return” or use ceremonies to heal the person and help them to return to themselves.

Breathwork or abdominal breathing can be used to reconnect with the center. Switching is an invaluable practice to learn how to center, to contain one’s energy and to return the flow of energy to a healthy direction. Normally energy flows in the left side of the body, circulates and then flows out the right side. With violence or conflict, one’s energy can be easily scattered or drained. Many times when listening to a needy person, energy can be drained by the person, who usually feels better afterward, while the listener who has absorbed their problems feels “burnt out” or like a “sponge”, exhausted by the interchange.

To protect oneself, to create boundaries, and to better focus and concentrate one’s energy, the person can be seated with crossed ankles and with their fingertips together. Or they can rest their hands lightly on their abdomen imagining that they can feel their breath going into a center within their abdomen. Using this position, one can be present in their center while listening deeply to others. Centering helps those who accompany others to be present as a witness to their pain, rather than being a “sponge” absorbing their problems.



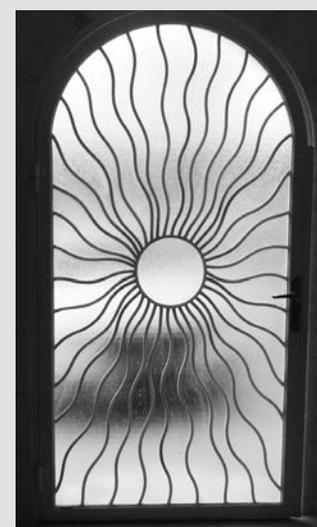
Aida Refugee Camp, Palestine

Centering Meditation:

The following meditation can be done in silence or with music.

Be seated in a comfortable position, cross your ankles and put your fingertips together. Breathe slowly and deeply. Imagine that you are able to breathe in and rest in a safe place deep within yourself. Rest within your center and feel a deep sense of peace and relaxation. Enjoy this place for a few minutes, fully alive to yourself, focused and aware of all that is happening around you.

Try to stay centered in your daily life and when challenges arise, use deep breathing or Switching to return to your center.



FINGERHOLDS TO MANAGE EMOTIONS

The Fingerholds are a simple way to work with emotions and to develop emotional literacy. Emotions are like waves of energy moving through the body, mind and spirit. Often we judge emotions as "good" or "bad", rather than recognizing them as wise messages from the body guiding us in our response to challenges, dangers or people in our environment. With overwhelming feelings, energy can become blocked or repressed, resulting in pain or congestion in the body.

Through each finger runs a channel or meridian of energy connected with an organ system and related emotions. By holding each finger while breathing deeply, we can work with the flow of emotional energy to bring physical release and healing. Fingerholds are a helpful tool to use in daily life. In difficult situations when tears, anger or anxiety arise, fingers may be held to bring calm and focus so that the appropriate response or action may be taken. The practice may also be done as a meditation with music, or used before going to sleep to release the problems of the day and bring deep relaxation. The practice may be done on oneself or with another person.



Tanzania

Fingerhold Practice

Hold each finger with the opposite hand for 2 to 5 minutes. It doesn't matter which hand is used. You can experiment to see which hand feels more comfortable. Children need less than a minute with each finger. Adults usually need 2 to 5 minutes or more to calm and balance their feelings.

Breathe in slowly and deeply; recognize and acknowledge whatever feelings or emotions you hold inside yourself. Breathe out slowly and let go, imagining the feelings moving out of your finger into the earth. Breathe in a sense of harmony, strength and healing. Breathe out releasing past feelings, strong emotions and difficult memories.

Often as you hold each finger you can feel a pulsing sensation as the energy and feelings release and become balanced. You can tell which emotions need your attention by the strength of the pulse. Often we think we are dealing with one emotion, but the finger that has the strongest pulse can tell us what we are feeling perhaps unconsciously.



FINGERHOLDS for Different Situations

Refugees

The Fingerholds are a tool that refugees can carry with them on their journey. Whenever strong feelings or memories emerge, take hold of whatever finger is needed or several fingers at the same time.

Children

The Fingerholds are very helpful for young children who are crying or having a tantrum. You can hold the child's finger or better, teach them how to hold their own fingers as a way to calm themselves.

The Sick and Dying

Fingerholds can be very supportive of a person who is bedridden or in the process of dying. Friends or family members can accompany their sick or dying relatives by holding their fingers to release long-held fear, anger or anxiety. Prayer or appropriate passages of Scripture (*Appendix, page 134*) can be used with each finger. For example, with the Fear Finger: "Be not afraid, I am with you always."



Fingerhold Meditation

Sit in a comfortable position and breathe deeply. If you are able to, close your eyes and imagine that you are seated in a safe and beautiful place. When you are ready, take hold of your Thumb with either hand. Breathe in and connect with your feelings of tears, sadness, grief or emotional pain. As you breathe out imagine these feelings flowing through you and out of your Thumb into the earth. Breathe in strength and peace transforming grief and tears into wisdom and compassion for yourself.

Move to your Index Finger. Breathe in and connect with your feelings of fear, panic and terror. As you breathe out imagine these feeling flowing out of your finger into the earth. Breathe in again transforming your fear into strength and courage to guide your life.

Move to your Middle Finger. Breathe in and connect with your anger, rage and resentment. As you breathe out imagine these feelings flowing out of you into the earth. Breathe in transforming your anger into action and passion for justice and compassion for yourself and others.

Move to your Ring Finger. Breathe in and connect with your feelings of worry, anxiety and overwhelm. As you exhale, breathe out these feelings into the earth. Breathe in calm and strength, feeling lighter and freer, able to hold your responsibilities for this day.

Move to your Small Finger. Breathe in, connecting with your feelings of lack of self-esteem and victimhood. Breathe out these feelings into the earth. Breathe in self acceptance and gratitude for your life, just as you are. No matter what has happened to you, your life is good and you have value.

Now join your fingertips together and cross your ankles. Imagine yourself again in your Safe Place. Breathe deeply and feel the pulse of energy in your fingertips. This is the pulse of life that you received from your parents in the moment of your conception. And this is the energy that transforms to a different level with your death and passing. Feel gratitude for the gift of your life and feel deep peace in your center. Breathe deeply and when you are ready separate your fingertips and uncross your ankles. Slowly open your eyes and take a moment in peace after this meditaton.

EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TAPPING—EFT

Emotional Freedom Tapping (EFT), developed by Gary Craig, Ph.D., is very useful for unblocking and healing strong emotions, fears, anxiety, emotional pain, anger, traumatic memories, phobias and addictions, as well as for alleviating body symptoms and pain, such as headaches and overall body pain. The technique is based on energy field theory, along with meridian theory of Eastern medicine. Problems, traumas, anxiety and pain can cause a block in the healthy flow of energy. Tapping or pressing points on channels or meridians of energy can help move blocks in congested areas and promote the healthy flow of energy in the body, mind and spirit. This can be an invaluable tool for refugees as they experience difficult memories and traumas. *(Adapted with permission from Gary Flint, Ph.D. Emotional Freedom Technique.)*

Tapping Practice

• Think of an issue to work with and measure your anxiety level:

Choose to work with a problem, worry, fear, anxiety, traumatic memory or negative self-concept. Using a scale of 0—10, measure the level of anxiety that you feel when thinking about the issue. (0 means no anxiety, 10 means extremely high level of anxiety). If it is difficult to measure with a number, use a simple scale such as: (none, small, medium, large) or (big to little) or (tall to short). Often people who have suffered great trauma believe that they will never change. The reason for measuring the anxiety level is to show change.

• Tap the sequence of Acupressure Points 9-12 times:

Breathe deeply and tap 9-12 times with index & middle fingers :

- Points above where the eyebrows begin 1
- Points at the side of the eyebrows 2
- Points below the pupils of eyes on bone 3
- Point below the nose 4
- Point below the lips on the chin 5
- Points below armpits (about 4 inches down) 6
- Points below clavicles on sides of sternum 7

• Tap point A at side of hand and say:

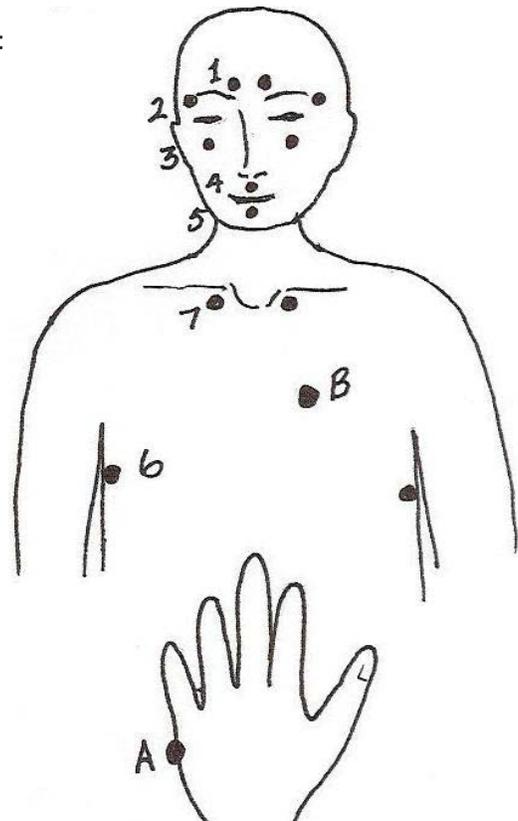
Tap Point A at the side of the hand while saying 3 times:
“In spite of the fact I have this problem, I’m OK,
I accept myself.” *(or some other appropriate phrase)*

• Repeat the tapping and hand sequences:

Repeat sequences until anxiety level is down to 0-2.

• Rub or tap the Sore Spot B:

Rub the Sore Spot located on left side about 3 inches below the left clavicle and 2-3 inches to the side of the sternum.



EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TAPPING

(Adapted with permission from Gary Flint, Ph.D. Emotional Freedom Technique.)

- Choose a problem or an issue to work with. Measure your anxiety level 0-10.
- Tap the sequence of Acupressure Points 9-12 times:



- Points above where the eyebrows begin
- Points at the side of the eyebrows
- Points below the pupils of the eyes on cheek bone
- Point below the nose
- Point below the lips on the chin
- Points below the armpits (about 4 inches down)
- Points below the clavicles on sides of the sternum.



- Tap point A at side of hand 3 times and say:
“In spite of the fact I have this problem,
I’m OK, I accept myself.” *(or some other appropriate phrase)*



- Repeat the tapping and hand sequences:
Repeat sequences until the anxiety level is down to 0-2.

- Rub the Sore Spot B:
Rub the Sore Spot located on left side about 3 inches
below the left clavicle and 2-3 inches to the side of the sternum.



VISUALIZATION and SAFE SPACE

Visualization or guided imagery is a powerful practice that focuses the mind on healing images to bring about physiological changes in the body, mind and spirit. Through the conscious creation of peaceful images or thoughts many positive outcomes can result, including the healing of disease, alleviation of physical and emotional pain, elimination of traumatic stress symptoms, and change in behavioral patterns. The power of visualization has been recognized in many cultures throughout



the ages, and it is now effectively used to lower blood pressure, work with cancer and HIV/AIDS, promote the healing process after surgery, alleviate pain, improve stamina, and enhance performance. Visualization used with traumatized persons can help them to develop and focus their active imagination. The Safe Space visualization develops the capacities for safety, trust, and a sense of security. Images of boundaries and protection can also be created through visualization. With breathwork and the image of an inner refuge, persons dealing with trauma can center and focus themselves in challenging moments.

Safe Space

One of the most important visualizations is the Safe and Sacred Space. A person can imagine a place they consider to be their refuge—a garden, the beach, the mountains, a waterfall or stream, a chapel, their bedroom or a place important to childhood or culture. Pictures or postcards can be used to help a person create images of the place they choose for their safe space to help them feel safe, secure and peaceful. The following visualization may be tape-recorded with soft music adapting the language to use with different cultures or groups. Read slowly with a soft voice, taking plenty of time for each part. The first part of the visualization involves complete relaxation of the body. The second part is an interior journey to the Safe and Sacred Space. A visit with a wise guide may also be added at this time. The third part consists of a complete return to the body and to present time. The part for relaxation of the body may be shortened because of time constraints. After the visualization participants can be invited to write or draw the experience or to share this with someone else.

Part 1—Body Scan and Relaxation

Take a comfortable position, close your eyes and breathe deeply. Let go of all concerns and be present in the moment. Feel your connection with the earth. Imagine the energy of the earth flowing up through your feet and throughout your entire body. You will now go on a journey through your body, letting go of any tension, and relaxing each part completely. Connect with your toes, feet, ankles and legs. Stretch and flex them getting in touch with any tension you may feel there. Breathe deeply and as you exhale, let

3. Capacitar Basic Practices

go completely, releasing all the tension in your toes, feet, ankles and legs. Feel deep peace and tranquility in all parts of your being.

Breathe deeply and imagine the energy of the earth flowing up into the trunk of your body, moving through your pelvis, abdomen, stomach, and chest, circulating up your back and spinal cord to your shoulders. Stretch and flex the muscles of your trunk, your abdomen, your back and shoulders. Breathe deeply and as you exhale, let go completely, releasing all the tension in your abdomen and stomach (very relaxed), your chest, your back, spinal column, and shoulders (very soft and relaxed). Feel deep peace and tranquility in your body and spirit.

Breathe deeply again and imagine the energy of the earth moving up into your arms, elbows, forearms, hands and fingers. Connect with your arms and hands and stretch and flex these body parts getting in touch with any tension you may feel there. Breathe deeply and as you exhale, let go completely, releasing all the tension in your arms, your elbows, your forearms (very soft and relaxed); your wrists, hands, palms, and fingers (very soft and relaxed). Feel deep peace in all parts of your being.

Breathe deeply and now imagine the energy of the earth moving up into your neck and head. Scan your neck and head to get in touch with any tension you may feel there. Gently flex the muscles in your neck. Open your mouth in a wide yawn, flexing your tongue and jaw, letting go of all the tension and feelings caught there. Make a grimace and flex all the muscles in your cheeks, forehead and around your eyes. Breathe deeply and as you exhale, let go completely, releasing all the tension in your neck (very soft and relaxed), your tongue, jaw, and cheeks (very relaxed), your forehead, eyes, ears, and scalp (very soft and relaxed). Feel deep peace and tranquility in your body and spirit.

Now scan your body and if there is still any place where you feel some tension, go back to that part of your body to flex and tense it, increasing the tension you experience there. Breathe deeply and let go completely. In all parts of your body feel deep peace and calm.

Part 2—Journey to the Safe and Sacred Space

Imagine that you are starting on a journey to a very special place. This is your inner refuge, your Safe and Sacred Space where only you can enter. Take time to journey to this place and to discover your special refuge. What is your refuge like? Perhaps it is a garden, full of flowers and beautiful trees. Or maybe your refuge is in the mountains, by a lake, or in a meadow with a clear blue sky and passing clouds. Or perhaps your Safe Space is in a chapel or house from your childhood. Decide now where you will go to be in your Safe and Sacred Space.

Images for Visualization

- *Visit a forest or a meadow filled with plants, flowers and animals. Feel deeply connected with nature and the healing power of the Earth.*

- *Travel to the ocean or to a river. Enter the water and swim or float freely. Imagine any negative feelings or experiences leaving your body, floating away in the warm water.*

- *Follow a path in the open country and come to a door or a gate. Open the door or gate and enter into a wonderful new world to enjoy. What is it like for you?*

- *Imagine a wise guide, a saint, or a person of great wisdom and love appearing before you. Talk with this person and ask them to give you a special message or gift for your life.*

- *Imagine an animal of great wisdom and power appearing before you. Talk with this animal. Ask this animal to give you a message or the wisdom that you need for your life.*

- *Remember a moment or an experience of joy or happiness in your life. Fill yourself with the energy, vitality and happiness that you felt at that moment.*

Take some time to explore and create this place, filling it with all that will support and nourish you. Are there colors, sounds, smells, textures that you are aware of? How do you feel in this place? What is it like for you? Take some time now to enjoy your special place. Feel very safe, secure, and peaceful. Fill yourself with great peace and a deep sense of security. Take time to open yourself to receive whatever you may need at this moment.

Take a few more moments enjoying your refuge of peace. You might want to look around for some image or gift that you can bring back with you to remind you of your refuge. And when you feel ready say goodbye to your safe space, knowing that you can return here whenever you desire.

Part 3—Return to the Present Moment

Begin now to return to your body. Breathe deeply and feel the energy of your feet and toes. You might want to stretch and flex your feet and toes to feel the connection with your body. Breathe deeply. Stretch and flex your legs feeling the energy flowing fully throughout your body. Stretch and flex the trunk of your body, feel fully alive in your pelvis, your abdomen, your chest and shoulders. Stretch and flex your arms and hands feeling the energy flowing fully through your arms. Very gently stretch and flex your neck and facial muscles feeling very alive and relaxed in your head. Breathe deeply and when you are ready open your eyes, feel very alive and relaxed, present in the moment and in this room. Feel very peaceful and tranquil in all of your being. Take a few moments in silence to reflect on your visit to your Safe Space or to share your experience with another person.

Visualization: The Wise Guide

This visualization may be included with the Safe Space or may be done by itself. Often refugees are deeply connected with their ancestors or loved ones who have died and who represent support.

Enjoy your Safe Space for a few moments. When you are ready invite a special person, a wise guide to join you—a person or a holy one important to your life, a guide or mentor who has wisdom to



share with you. Perhaps this person is a friend, a grandparent, a relative, a holy person, or a model for you. Invite this person to your refuge and enjoy a few moments with them. What are they like? How do you feel in their presence? Take some time with them. Ask this person if they have any special words of wisdom to share with you. Do you have any questions for them concerning your life? Take a moment to listen to what your heart needs and receive their words of wisdom.

Imagine that this person gives you a gift or a special symbol that is significant for your life. What is that like for you? Receive this gift with love and gratitude. Take a few moments more with this special person. When you are ready thank them and say goodbye. Your guide is always within you. You can return anytime to your refuge to seek their counsel and companionship. Take a few moments alone again in your refuge. Feel the warmth and love that surrounds you. Know that you are able to return to this place whenever you desire. And when you feel ready, say

3. Capacitar Basic Practices

goodbye to your Safe and Sacred Place and begin to return to your body and to the present moment.

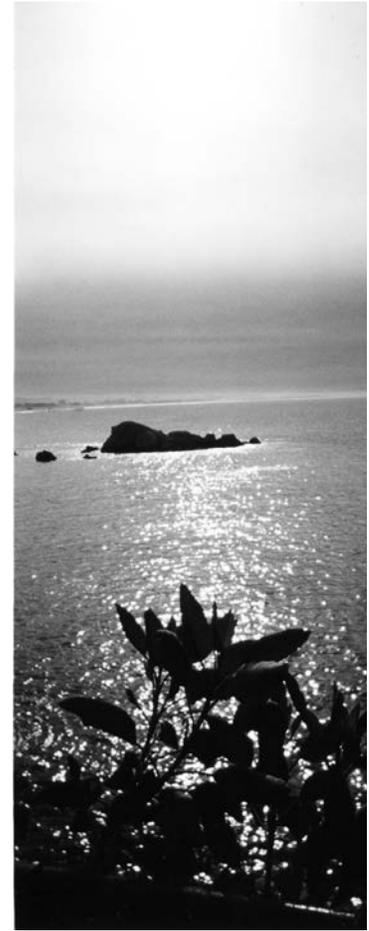
Return to your Safe Space

You can return to your refuge during the day to take a short break when you are tired, stressed or need security. This is a skill that you can practice daily or more frequently to help you be more peaceful, centered and relaxed.

Be seated in a comfortable position, breathe deeply with the intention of going to your special place. Remember the image or symbol you took from your Safe Place. This can be a key to your return. Close your eyes, and remember now the image or symbol. Breathe deeply, flex and move your arms and legs to connect with your body and release tension, and then move into your safe space for a few moments. Return to your refuge enjoying the colors, sounds, fragrances, textures. Once again, feel a deep sense of peace and relaxation. Enjoy fully this place for a few moments. After a couple of minutes when you are ready, begin to return to the present moment. Flex your arms, hands, and legs to reconnect fully with the body. Breathe deeply and open your eyes. Feel deep peace and wholeness throughout your body, mind, and spirit.

Other Considerations When Using Visualization

- For some persons who have suffered overwhelming trauma, closing their eyes may bring great fear. Others have inner images of terror because of living most of their lives in places of violence. To help the person regain a healthy sense of imagination and inner imagery, pictures or postcards of nature can be used with them to create a healing place.
- Some people have a hard time deciding where to go for their refuge and keep changing places during the visualization. If that is the case, you can experiment by using the same refuge for the entire group to create a similar experience. For example, enter the refuge that is a garden, full of trees and flowers. The sun shines overhead, and the birds are singing, etc. Describe in great detail the colors, textures, sounds in the garden. You could also have them draw a picture of their Safe Space.
- At times there are persons in the group who for their own safety frequently dissociate and live outside of their bodies, or who live in a constant fantasy or dreamworld. To help them be more grounded, you can suggest that they raise their hands above their heads and gently take hold of their spirit hovering over their body. Then invite them to pull their spirit back downward into their physical body.
- Each person will have a different experience with visualization. Some have very vivid imaginations and can see great details, colors,



Suggestions for Facilitators

In guiding the visualization process it is important to respect the uniqueness and style of each person adapting the practice to the culture or individual. The Safe Space can be used to empower a person to claim their inner refuge in moments of tension or crisis, and to experience inner safety and security, while at the same time viewing the reality of the moment. The following guidelines are helpful when leading a visualization:

- *Voice quality and timing should be slow and tranquil for the unfolding of the visualization.*
- *The environment should be considered—room temperature, outside noise, odors, contamination, or the energy of the room. Soft music can be helpful to create a healing environment.*
- *In the visualization use all of the senses: sound, smell, taste, touch, sight, hearing.*
- *It is essential to re-establish a connection with the body at the end of the visualization to help the person feel grounded. Breathing deeply and stretching different parts of the body help the person to relax and stay connected and grounded in the body. You can also say: “Say goodbye to the person or place. Return to your body. Feel energized and more relaxed with each breath.”*

sounds, and odors. Others will hear inner messages or have inner sensations. Some participants will experience only light or darkness, or perhaps nothing. If that is the case, reassure the participants that each person uses a different channel of perception, and that they need not feel badly if they do not have a colorful experience. The most important result of the visualization is a deep sense of peace and relaxation.

- Once in a while during the visualization some painful memories may arise for a person. At the end of the session always say to the group, that if anyone had a difficult experience and feels a strong emotion or fear, they should talk with the facilitator or with someone in whom they can confide. If they choose to talk with you, you can return them to their Safe Space to work through the difficult experience so that their inner space can truly be one of peace and security.

Tapping In Positive Images

Just as the Emotional Freedom Tapping can be used to clear states of anxiety and challenging emotions, tapping can also be used to reinforce positive resources, feelings or memories in a person. In work with refugees, positive memories of family, home or ancestors can bring strength and comfort during challenging moments. The work of Laurel Parnell (2008), with her exercises of “Tapping In,” can be adapted to different cultures and used with an individual or a group.

Sit in a comfortable position and breathe deeply. Imagine you are in a Safe Space where you can rest and feel peace. Bring to mind a person or ancestor who represents wisdom and support for you. See them very clearly—their face and hair, the clothes they are wearing, the colors and textures, their fragrance. Touch them or embrace them and feel their strength, love and support. Use all of your senses to feel their presence. When you are ready gently tap your feet on the floor—left—right, left—right, 12 to 15 times (or you can tap your legs or arms). Rest for a moment, again recalling the presence of the person. Then tap again, alternating both sides of the body. Repeat the process several times tapping in the positive resource. In difficult situations, by tapping you can reconnect with the memory and positive support of the person.

Examples of positive images to work with are: images or persons who represent love, strength or support; images of protection; images of wisdom or guidance; images of home and community; images of culture and values; images of self-esteem and dignity; images of healing and blessing; images of the sacred or holy ones.

Once this skill is developed, whenever there is a dangerous or challenging experience, this practice of alternate tapping can be a way to reconnect with positive inner resources.

Healing Images

Working with images of the elements—such as earth or water—can be very healing for refugees, especially those who have come from places where they are deeply connected to the land. Instead of talking about memories of trauma, have a group work with the Earth Element to ground those who are very emotional. Work with the Water Element can awaken energy in those who are deeply depressed. The following meditations can be used.



Lake Kivu—Rwanda

Earth Element

Arrange a bowl filled with rich dark soil in the center of the circle. Pass the bowl of soil so that each participant can take a handful. As they take the handful of earth, invite the participants to run their fingers through the soil, and to touch, smell, taste, and see the earth. This exercise with soil is usually very profound. Participants often remember moments from childhood when they played or worked in the soil. They also see the live components of the earth in their handful of soil—the pieces of leaves and grasses, the small rocks, and even an insect or worm. This can be a valuable exercise for persons who deal with anxiety, strong emotions and traumatic stress. Working with hands in the soil or with plants can be a healing, grounding experience. After work with the soil, ask the group to share how they feel? What healing memories do they have?

Water Element

Place some images of water around the room—pictures of rivers, lakes or oceans. In the center of the circle place a bowl of water. Ask one of the participants to walk around the room with the water and invite each person to slowly run their fingers through the water. Give them a few moments to see, smell, touch, and taste the water. Be aware that some participants may have great fear of water because of hurricanes, tsunamis or natural disasters. This is a time to work with awareness of the life-giving force of water. You can use the following visualization:

Imagine yourself standing beside a warm tropical sea surrounded by lush green trees and flowers. Dive into the warm calm waters and glide gracefully, supported by the life-giving sea. Take a few moments enjoying the freedom you feel gliding and flowing through the warm waters. Feel profoundly connected with the water and the flow of life around you. Take a few moments to splash and play in the water. Feel deep joy and delight in the healing water. Now imagine that you can float safely in the water looking up at the sky, confidently supported by the life-giving waters. Imagine the water that also makes up your body—your cells, blood and lymph. Without water you can't live. Appreciate the gift of life that water gives you. And when you are ready, gradually come back to the present moment and look at the water in the container in front of you. How does your body feel? What healing memories do you have?

BODY MOVEMENT to Release and Balance Energy



The energy and vitality of body, mind and spirit are continuously affected by the energy around us: weather, the environment, daily news, violence and challenges, the moods and struggles of our family and friends, the negative or angry energy in groups. Learning how to be present to ourselves and others, clear and current in the moment, can help us to live full lives with peace and wellness no matter what is happening around us. The following exercises are tools to awaken, focus and boost energy at times when we feel drained, scattered or depressed. The challenge is to build them into our lives and

lifestyle, so they become second nature and can be called upon whenever we are aware of stress, energy drain, depressed feelings or loss of our center. We can easily boost energy by stretching, dancing or moving our bodies, or by using traditional movements of Tai Chi, Pal Dan Gum or the Salute to the Sun. All of these movements serve to open and balance the flow in the meridians or channels of energy throughout the body.

Open to the Heavens

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, hands hanging loosely at your sides. Breathe in deeply and raise your palms outward and upward, stretching your arms upward to embrace the heavens. Breathe out your stress, problems and depression, and breathe in the energy of the heavens. Imagine the light and grace of the heavens flowing down into the top of your head, then flowing throughout your body, filling the tired and stressed parts, cleansing and clearing your cells and your entire being. Continue this exercise until you feel peaceful and full. Then slowly lower your arms, exhale deeply, relax and let go into the moment.

Stretching and Moving like a Tree

Trees and nature are tremendous sources of energy for grounding and healing us. Remove your shoes and place your feet on the ground (or imagine doing so). Breathe in, imagining that your feet are like roots of a tree running deeply into the earth. Breathe up the earth energy into your feet, and breathe out stress, tension and pain. Now raise your arms upward like the limbs of a tree. Stretch upward and outward toward the sun. Imagine the energy of the sun filling your limbs and renewing and energizing your entire body.

You can also move your body like a tree. Imagine that you are a tree flowing with the breeze, moving your limbs and leaves, gently releasing any tension or body pain.

Freeform Movement & Dancing

A simple fun way to boost energy is by freely moving and dancing to some lively music. This also helps to balance all of your energy centers. While moving imagine a time when you were feeling happy and joyful. As you dance you can also sing openly and freely a favorite song.

TAI CHI

Tai Chi is a favorite practice of many refugee groups where Capacitar works. The movements can be adapted to the culture, age and background of participants. These exercises are based on Tai Chi Chih, a simple form developed by Justin Stone (1974). Images, along with the movements, help to release stress, to open and balance the flow of energy and to promote health and wellbeing. The purpose of this kind of Tai Chi meditation is not to master a traditional form, but to empower the person to discover and follow their own energy flow and body wisdom. With regular practice the movements bring healing and harmony to body, mind and spirit. One or two of the Tai Chi movements can be used to start the day, release stress, calm the spirit and focus attention. Different images can be used with the movements. The movements can also be done seated or in a wheel chair by elderly or disabled persons.

What Capacitar trainers have found most helpful with traumatized groups is to use healing images, along with flowing energy. This serves to release congestion and physical pain and to replace traumatic memories with positive images—for example: the Shower of Light, Let Go and Open to Receive Healing, and Flying Freely. After several minutes of movements participants often report that their pain is gone, they are lighter and freer, or they feel peace deep within. In the following section, movements indicated with an asterisk * are those that Capacitar trainers have found most helpful with groups dealing with trauma. Wilander from Honduras is our Tai Chi model.

The Rocking Movement *

Stand with feet separated shoulder-width apart and hands at your sides. Raise your heels and at the same time with palms facing upwards raise your hands to the level of your shoulders. Turn your palms over and move your hands downward while you lower your heels and raise your toes in a rocking movement. Continue the motion, slowly rocking back and forth while breathing deeply. With each move drop your shoulders, relax your arms and fingers. Breathe deeply and imagine that your feet are planted securely on the earth and that your toes are like long roots connecting to the earth. As you raise your hands imagine that you are able to bring down the energy of the heavens to cleanse and fill you. This is a beneficial movement for trauma and depression, and to ground yourself.

Foot Positions

Begin each movement first on the left side with your left foot forward, knees slightly bent, weight balanced between both legs. As you rock forward on your left foot, your right heel comes off the ground. As you rock backward, your toes come upward. Breathe deeply into your center. After each movement is complete on the left side, do the same movement on the right side, placing your right foot forward and beginning the movement in the right direction. On the left side, imagine receiving or bringing energy into your being. On the right side imagine giving your energy to others, giving your compassion and healing to the world.



Honduras



The Circle of Light

With left foot forward and hands facing downward toward the earth, form a circle of light with your fingers. Move the circle of light in a clockwise direction, giving and receiving energy. Repeat on the right side, this time moving the circle of light counter-clockwise. Imagine that you are interconnected with all being, giving and receiving energy.

The Globe of Light

With left foot forward, form a ball of light within your hands at shoulder level. Playfully throw the ball away from your body towards the left side and circulate your hands back around to the chest. Repeat on the right side. Imagine you are a child delighting in play. As you form the ball between your hands, feel the radiance of your being. Freely toss the ball toward the world, connecting with the gift you have to give. Feel a smile on your face and gratitude in your heart for this joyful moment of play.



The Shower of Light *

With left foot forward and palms facing each other, raise your hands up over your head, then move them downward as if showering yourself with light or healing water. Feel the energy cleansing and filling your body and spirit. Repeat on the right side, with right foot forward. Imagine the energy that surrounds you. As you raise your hands breathe in the shower of light, and as you lower your hands exhale and let go of any negativity within you. Feel the light of the heavens cleansing and renewing you. As you do the movement on the right side, get in touch with the violence and negativity in the larger world around you. In the name of the human family commit yourself to healing the wounds of violence around you. Breathe in the cleansing light to strengthen the human community. This is an excellent movement for persons who are depressed or dealing with past wounds of trauma.



The Wise Being

With left foot forward and left hand closer to your face, move your hands in a sweeping circle in front of your face and then in a downward motion. Hands do not touch as they pass at eye level in front of your face. Connect with the sacred center within yourself and remember the wise being you are, with your unique history, gifts, wounds and possibilities. Feel deep gratitude, love, and respect for yourself. You can pause for a moment during this movement to give yourself a hug, compassionately cherishing and caring for your heart and soul. Repeat the move on the other side with right foot forward. When you do the movement on the right side, look around at the others with whom you are practicing Tai Chi. See the unique grace and goodness of each person, as well as their wounds and possibilities. When you see them later in the day, look at them with love and respect and greet them as the wise being they truly are.



3. Capacitar Basic Practices

The Offering

With left foot forward and hands forming an open circle at the level of your abdomen, imagine an open vessel in which to place your life. Move your hands upward in offering and then outward (palms facing outward) in an arc, circling back around to your abdomen. Receive and give the fullness of your life. Repeat with right foot forward. Imagine your life in your hands. As you sweep upward and outward with your hands, give fully the gift of your life. As you do the movement on the right side, imagine your interconnection with all being.



Let Go and Open to Receive *

With left foot forward, palms curved softly outward and hands at chest level, push your hands outward and downward in a gentle arc, letting go of all tension, negativity, and violence within you. Turn your palms upward and draw them back towards your chest, breathing in the goodness and abundance of life. Repeat with right foot forward. Connect with whatever wounds, tension, or violence you may be holding in your heart. As you do the movement on the left side, breathe out the pain and violence. Breathe in peace, grace, and the abundance of life around you. As you do the movement on the right side, connect with the violence and pain of the world. In the name of the human family, let go of the violence that is within each of us, and breathe in the peace and healing needed in our world. This is a valuable movement for persons who have a difficult time letting go or who hold onto past trauma.



Ask and Receive the Grace of Life

With left foot forward, hands at waist level, palms facing upward, move your hands outward in a clockwise circle and then back towards your body. Breathe in deeply and feel the life force of the earth flowing in through your fingertips from Nature. Repeat on the right side, hands circling counter-clockwise.

The Scriptures tell us to ask, knowing that we shall receive. Ask for what you may need, confident that you will be filled with abundance. On the right side, ask for those around you. Include in your prayer all who are suffering from sickness, poverty or violence in the larger world.



Suggestions for Group Leaders

Leaders of Tai Chi can adapt the images and words they use in the meditation to the culture, age and needs of the group. It is important to touch the heart and the reality of the persons in the group, rather than using a set meditation. For refugees and groups dealing with traumatic experiences, images of nature, like water, light or earth, can be very grounding and healing. For children, playful images or animal images can bring joy and fun to their stressed lives.

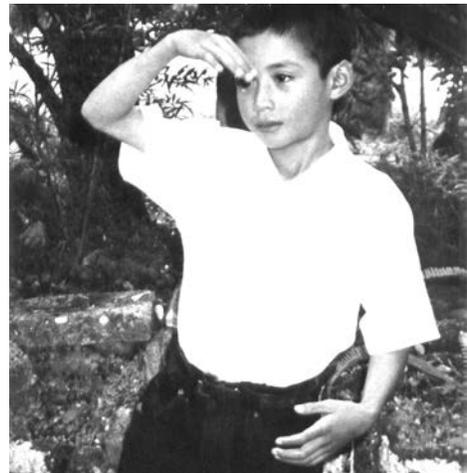


Fly through the Air *

With your left foot forward, your left hand is above your left shoulder, palm outward. Your right hand, palm upward, is level at your right waist. Swim or fly through the warm, energizing air. Enjoy the grace and lightness of your body. The motion should be free and light with arms and shoulders relaxed. Repeat the movement on the right side starting with your right hand above your right shoulder, and left palm at your left waist. Fly freely through the air letting go of all that weighs you down, feeling the liberation of your spirit. Open your heart to all the possibilities and desires you have for your life and growth. As you fly on the right side, imagine all the possibilities for the human family in different parts of the world. Imagine you are able to fly around the planet encouraging and inspiring all those you meet. This is a valuable move to release back, neck and head pain of PTSD.

Passing Clouds

Your knees are slightly bent, with your feet separated shoulder-width. Move your arms in circles at eye level starting with your left hand. Imagine problems, joys, and sorrows all passing like clouds, while you stand in the eternal moment, peaceful, calm, and centered. Breathe deeply and connect with the eternal nature of your being. Your feet are planted on the earth and your head is connected to the heavens. As passing clouds move around you, connect with your birth, life, and death, all in the present moment. Give thanks for the gift of your life and for the wisdom and grace of your being.



Window of Eternity

Lift the heel of your left foot and balance it against your right inner ankle bone. Interlace your fingers, palms facing inward, and hold your hands slightly below eye level. Relax your gaze, looking out over your hands, present to the past, this moment and the future. Enjoy a moment of peace, knowing that you carry the light within you in the midst of it all. Feel your light shining out in all directions around you. Feel at one with all being. When you are ready, slowly lower your hands to your sides, breathing deeply. Carry this peace and light with you during the day.

Namasté

If you practice Tai Chi with others, join your hands and bow to each person saying, “Namasté”. Look deeply and appreciate the unique beauty and goodness of each person. Namasté, the Sanskrit greeting of the people of India, means: “I honor the place in you which is of spirit, of love, of light and of peace. When you are in that place and I am in that place, we are one. Namasté!

3. Capacitar Basic Practices



Juarez, Mexico

The Dance of Tai Chi

Express the Tai Chi of your body. After completing the Tai Chi movements and before finishing, listen to your body, mind, and spirit and begin to move according to your own inner rhythm. Express your feelings and emotions through movement. Look at nature and feel a profound connection between your body and the heavens and the earth. Feel the balance and unity between your body, mind, and spirit, and express this through your movement. Breathe deeply and continue moving and flowing with grace.

Health Benefits of Tai Chi

There are many physical and mental health benefits to the practice of Tai Chi, including greater awareness, clarity and concentration. Tai Chi increases blood circulation to nourish the muscles. It stimulates the nervous system and glandular activity and helps the flexibility of the joints. Tai Chi promotes good posture, lowers blood pressure, and is a healing remedy for anemia, stroke, problems with balance, joint disorders, back pain, weight problems, and gastric disturbances. Regular practice helps to heal anxiety and depression, chronic ill health, insomnia, and other problems related to traumatic stress.



Tai Chi at El Hogar, Nogales, Mexico

Suggestions for Group Leaders

Tai Chi is a wonderful experience to share with groups of all ages and backgrounds. If you use a meditation commentary during the practice, it is important to adapt the vocabulary to meet the needs of the group. Tai Chi is a good way to start a workshop to help participants relax and get centered.

Unless you have worked with a group for a while, never correct movements. Some participants have taken a Tai Chi course where a master constantly corrected them. They often feel like failures after that experience. Capacitar's desire is to open up the experience of flowing with your body. After time and practice the correct posture, breath patterns, and nuances of movement develop, usually without a lot of formal correction. A sign of success in a workshop is if an older woman, abused and put down all her life, can leave a session of Tai Chi feeling the grace and beauty of her body, perhaps for the first time.

If there are physically challenged persons participating, they can do the Tai Chi movements seated in their wheelchairs or standing with their walkers. If they sit at the edge of their chair, they can rock back and forth on their pelvis to simulate the rocking movement, while making movements with their upper body.

If conservative participants reject the name "Tai Chi", just call this practice "healing exercises" or "energy balancing exercises".

PAL DAN GUM

Pal Dan Gum is a series of ancient exercises from China and Korea used for thousands of years to promote health, strength, longevity, and spiritual awareness. The exercises release tension and balance the energy channels or meridians of the body. If practiced regularly they purify and recharge the inner organs and meridians, improve the circulation of blood and body fluids, promote the flexibility and resiliency of muscles and joints, improve posture, and eliminate many chronic ailments. Morning is a good time to practice Pal Dan Gum, as a way to start the day with focus and energy. The exercises are done with focus on the body movements, breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. Practice Pal Dan Gum with gentleness, respecting any place in the body where there is tension or soreness. If you feel tension during a stretch, breathe deeply and imagine the release of the pain or stress. These exercises are excellent for daily use by persons with anxiety, chronic pain, depression or traumatic stress. They are a favorite of men and adolescents who usually prefer more vigorous movements. The Pal Dan Gum model is from Haiti.



Upholding the Heavens

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, arms at your sides. Inhale and slowly raise your hands above your head. Interlace your fingers and turn your palms upward. Stand on tiptoe and stretch toward the sky as if your hands were touching and upholding the heavens. Look upward as you stretch, maintaining this hold for a few seconds. Then breathe out, unlock your hands and slowly bring your arms back down. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

Benefits: Relieves fatigue, improves circulation, strengthens the body, balances the digestive and respiratory systems, helps the reproductive and excretory systems, releases tension in the shoulders, benefits the muscular system, stretches the tendons and ligaments, and helps prevent arthritis.

Opening the Bow

Stand with feet separated more than shoulder-width, knees bent, as if you were riding a horse. Cross your wrists and arms in front of your chest, hands clenched, left arm in front of the right. Extend the index finger of your left hand, and imagine that you are holding a bow. Pull the bow string with your right hand, while pushing out your left arm until it is fully extended. Inhale deeply while turning your head to the left. Focus on your left index finger, imagining energy pulsing out the tip. Exhale and



release the bow, returning your arms to a crossed position at your chest, right hand in front of the left. Turn and repeat opening the bow to the right side. Repeat the movement 3 or 4 times.

Benefits: Increases the elasticity and capacity of the lungs, strengthens the muscles in the chest, arms and shoulders, stimulates the Lung Meridian.

Haiti

3. Capacitar Basic Practices

Touching Heaven and Earth

Stand straight with feet separated, wrists crossed at the level of the solar plexus. Inhale and extend your left arm above the head with the palm touching the sky. Lower your right hand behind your back with the palm touching the earth. Inhale as you push up to touch the sky and down to touch the earth. Exhale and return to starting position. Repeat the exercise this time stretching upward with your right arm. Repeat both sides 3 or 4 times.

Benefits: Stimulates Large and Small Intestine Meridians which flow along the sides of the outer arms. Harmonizes the digestive system and strengthens the spleen.

Looking Behind You

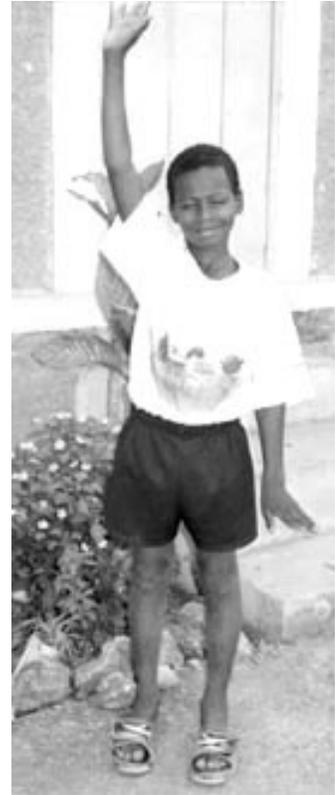
Stand with feet separated, knees relaxed, arms crossed in front of your chest, left hand in front of the right. Breathe deeply while pulling your arms to the sides and back, turning your head slowly to the left, looking back as far behind you as possible. Your chest is arched up and out, while your palms touch the earth. You will be able to feel the stretch in your arms, wrists, neck, and eyes as you look behind. Exhale, return your head and arms to the starting position, with right hand in front of the left. Repeat turning to the right side. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

Benefits: Rejuvenates heart, lungs, pericardium, spleen, pancreas, liver, and kidneys; presses acupuncture points in the upper back, shoulders, and neck to release tension and prevent shoulder and neck pain; strengthens and tones the muscles of the chest and upper back and neck. This is excellent for persons who are grieving or have emotional pain blocked in their chest.

Swinging the Trunk and the Head

Stand straight with feet separated shoulder-width, knees relaxed, hands on your hips. The weight of your body is equally distributed on both sides. Breathe deeply and exhale, as you bend your upper body to the left, feeling the stretch on your right side. Slowly and carefully stretch forward, then to the right, then to the back, as if you were stretching in waist circles. Do not strain yourself doing this exercise. Inhale as you return to the original position. Exhale and repeat 3 or 4 more times starting from the left side. Then change sides and repeat 3 or 4 times.

Benefits: Strengthens the digestive system, stretches abdominal muscles, loosens the back, stretches the sides of the body, eliminates tension, improves circulation in the heart, benefits the nervous system, helps with headaches, stimulates the Gall Bladder, Bladder, and Stomach Meridians.





Stretching Backwards

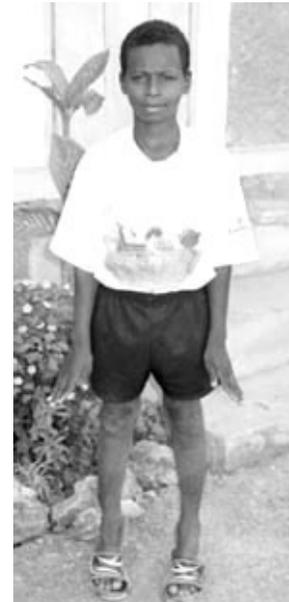
If you have a weak back, skip this movement or do it carefully by tightening the muscles in your buttocks to protect your back. Feet are separated, knees slightly bent. Place your palms on your lower back, fingers downward. Inhale, bend your knees and arch backwards, with your head and eyes arched upward. Exhale and gently straighten up. Repeat the backward stretch 2 or 3 more times.

Benefits: Rejuvenates all of the internal organs especially the kidneys; stretches the spine; increases the flexibility of the back, waist, and legs; stretches the Bladder, Gall Bladder, Stomach, and Spleen Meridians; stimulates the kidneys enhancing the body's ability to eliminate toxins; gives the body fresh energy; increases the circulation of energy to the brain.

Stretching the Legs

Stand straight with feet separated, knees relaxed, hands at your sides, palms down, wrists and fingers flexed upward to feel the stretch. Inhale deeply and raise your heels up slowly, until you are standing on your toes, while you flex your fingers and palms backward. Hold the stretch for a few seconds. Exhale as you slowly return the heels to the ground and hands flexed back to the original position. The exercise can be done focusing the attention on the Hara or Tiantien, the point of equilibrium beneath the navel, breathing deeply from this point. If you feel unbalanced while doing this exercise, imagine that there is a long umbilical cord that flows from your navel, connecting you securely to the center of the earth. Repeat the movement 10 or more times.

Benefits: Strengthens Stomach and Kidney Meridians; strengthens the leg, ankle, and wrist muscles; improves focus, and gives a sense of being centered. Releases energy blocked in the ankles and wrists.



Aida Refugee Camp—Bethlehem, Palestine

3. Capacitar Basic Practices

Punch and Shout with Fists

Stand with feet separated, knees bent. At waist level with palms facing upward, make fists with your hands. Inhale, open your eyes wide, and as you exhale, punch your left fist (then your right) directly forward, turning your fists over so that they face downward when fully extended. As you punch your fists forward, discharge your breath and your inner tension with a loud “Ho” or “Ha” sound. Turn to the right and repeat. Turn to the left and punch again. Repeat this sequence in the three directions another two times.



Roar Like a Lion

Finish with the Lion’s Roar. Pull arms outward and to the sides, extending the fingers to form claws. Pull arms forward, bending forward with a ferocious roar, stretching all the muscles in your face and jaw. As you do the movement, imagine you are able to release all the tension and words that are stifled in your throat and jaw. Roar with a full voice coming from deep within yourself.

Complete Relaxation

Relax the entire body after the Lion’s Roar, bending forward from the waist. Breathe deeply. Enjoy feeling completely relaxed for a few moments. Then slowly raise up your body, feeling the spinal column relaxing back into place. Shake off any remaining tension in hands, trunk, and feet.

Benefits: Releases frustration, anger, irritability, stored emotion; energizes the body; strengthens metabolism; relieves blockages in Liver and Gall Bladder Meridians; releases tension in arms, chest and shoulders; strengthens organs, especially the liver; relaxes face and jaw muscles.



Suggestions for Group Leaders

Pal Dan Gum is an enjoyable and stimulating practice that energizes a group. In using the different exercises, caution participants to do each stretch gently, respecting the limits of their body. If any one has a bad back they should not do the stretches, or do them very gently, imagining the stretches instead of doing them. The movement that involves the Punch and Lion’s Roar is a good exercise to use with persons who have dealt with violence so they can discharge the anger and rage that has been stored up in the body and the throat. Use the Punching and Lions Roar cautiously with persons who can’t distinguish between playful movement and violence. If someone has witnessed beatings or extreme violence don’t use this movement or use it with caution being aware of their possible reactions.

SALUTE TO THE SUN

The Salute to the Sun, based on an ancient Indian practice, energizes the body, mind and spirit by connecting us with the cycles of nature. Done in a standing position, the movements involve several simple stretches combined with a visualization. The movement is very inspiring when practiced in a garden or a natural setting. The meditation reflects on the cycles of which we are a part, from birth, through life, death and rebirth. The sun is our source of energy and center of life. Our ancestors celebrated the solar festivals, saluting the sun and praying for its return. In modern times we forget our dependency upon the sun. With this practice we reconnect with the sun and our bodies are nourished and healed by its energy. This is an excellent daily practice for refugees and those who suffer depression.



Honduras



Connect with the Sun's Energy

Stand with your feet separated shoulder-width apart, knees bent. Before starting the Salute, look at your hands and rub them together for a few moments to feel the warmth of your energy. Then join your hands together at the level of your heart in prayer and gratitude.

Meditation: Get in touch with the energy in your body that comes from the sun. Imagine your muscles, bones, and cells that were created from the energy of the sun. Feel gratitude for the gift of the sun. With your hands together, center yourself and feel grateful for your life.



Greet and Welcome the Sun

Exhale and stretch your arms straight forward, palms facing down toward the earth. Inhale deeply and move your arms upward to the sun until they are over your head. Being careful of your back, arch slightly backwards, opening to welcome the sun's energy.

Meditation: As you stretch your arms forward you open yourself to greet the energy of the sun. Reach out to embrace life in its many forms around you. In humility and gratitude, welcome the sun.



Bask in the Sun

Open your hands to the heavens arching your neck and back. Feel energy moving up from the earth through you and into the heavens. Breathe in, receive the fullness of the sun, breathe out all tension and fear.

Meditation: As you bask in the sun, open yourself to be bathed and nourished by its radiance. Feel the light and healing flood through you. Feel fully alive as you bask and delight in the sun. Connect all the vibrant moments of your life with this gift of the sun.

3. Capacitar Basic Practices



Ripening, Maturing, and Harvesting

With arms stretched out slowly bend forward, hands and arms arching downward until your fingers touch the earth. (Be careful of your back and stretch only as far as is comfortable.) Inhale and then exhale as you begin to move toward the ground.

Meditation: With life's cycles come the ripening, maturation, harvest, aging and then dormancy, as the seed falls into the ground. In life we open to the cycles of nature in all of the stages.

Death and Rebirth

As you bend downward and touch the earth, let go of all the tension and stress in your body, mind, and spirit. Breathe out completely all negativity and the problems you may be carrying, letting these be absorbed and transformed in the earth.

Meditation: As you connect with the seed dying in the earth, connect with the moment of complete surrender that you will one day experience through your death and passing. Let go of all the problems, worries, and anxieties of your life as you surrender completely in the moment with deep faith and trust. Like all moments of dying, you hope for a rebirth into the fullness of life.

Rebirth to New Life

From the bent position gradually begin to move back upward, inhaling fully the energy of the earth, filling yourself with new life.

Meditation: As you move back upward feel the new energy pulsing through your body, preparing you for the next part of the life cycle.

Here I Am

Come back to full standing position moving your arms upward and outward until your hands are at shoulder level, palms facing forward. Hold this position for a moment.

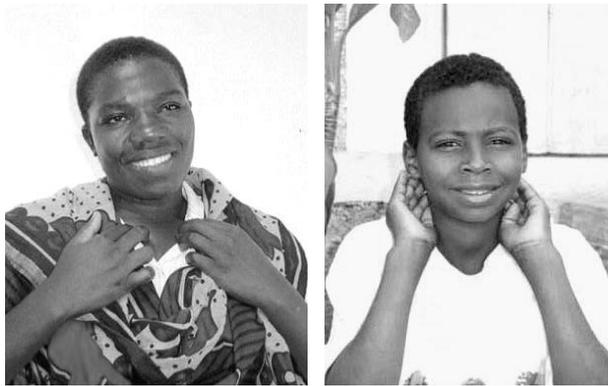
Meditation: As you open to the new life pulsing within you, connect with the unique calling that you have in this lifetime. Open yourself to give this gift in full commitment. Yes! Here I am!

Namasté

Bring your hands back again to chest level, palms together in the posture of prayer. Repeat the Salute several times. Finish the movement with a Namasté bow to the sun and to all the people in the community with whom you are practicing the movement.

CROSS-LATERAL EXERCISES

During the day we have high and low energy cycles that are related to the activity of left and right hemispheres of the brain. When the left hemisphere is dominant, we are better attuned to logic and sequential thinking. This is followed by another period of greater activity of the right hemisphere, when random, creative and spatial abilities dominate. The left hemisphere of the brain controls the right side of the body and the right hemisphere the functions of the left side. The left and right sides of the brain are connected by a bridge of nerve fibers called the corpus callosum that is responsible for communication between the hemispheres. Movement exercises, such as Cross-laterals, create more cross-hemispheric activity, helping us to regulate our energy cycles as well as balance both sides of the brain. Cross-laterals are exercises whereby the left or right limb crosses over the visual field to the opposite side of the body. All of these cross-laterals are energizing and can help us when feeling “off balance” to think more clearly and improve coordination. The exercises are fun and can easily be done in a playful way with children. For refugees and depressed persons they can help re-energize and balance the body.



The Healthy Thump

Tap the points just below the collarbones on both sides of the sternum. This practice assists with energy flow, balance and wellbeing.

Tapping Acupressure Points

Gently tap the acupressure points on either side of the base of the skull behind the ears for about a minute. Tap the right and the left points at the same time for several minutes.

The Cross Crawl

This exercise is like marching in place. Begin by lifting the right arm and the left leg at the same time. As you lower the right arm and left leg, lift the left arm and the right leg. Continue the marching exercise for a minute. Exaggerate the movement by swinging your arms across the front of your body and lifting and crossing your leg toward the opposite side.

Variations

As you march in place tap the opposite knee. Or stand in place and touch the opposite elbow, shoulder, knee, ankle and hip. Repeat on the opposite side.

Scissors

This is done in a seated position. Extend the arms and legs out from the body and simply cross the arms and legs in front of you in a scissors motion. Continue this for about a minute. As arms and legs are crossing, you can also rotate your head from side to side.



DRUM MASSAGE CIRCLE

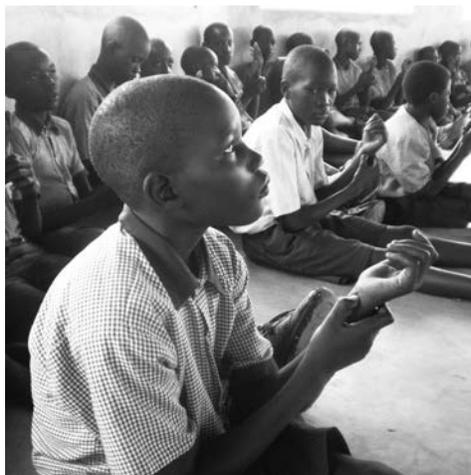
Drum massage on oneself or on another is every group's favorite because it is so energizing and fun. Start with some lively drum or marimba music, or lively music that is appropriate for the culture. Show the group different rhythms they can use on their bodies. If the group is seated, use the fingers and hands to make "drumstick" percussion on the lap—tapping with the fingertips, slapping with the palms, pounding with the fists, chopping with the sides of the hands, cupping with cupped palms, brushing lightly, etc. Each hand position has a different sound. Start drumming with one hand on your arm and lightly tap or cup or slap up and down the arm for an arm massage; then the other arm; then the shoulders, back, hips, legs, bottoms of feet, chest, neck, head, and face, working through all parts of the body. After you have covered the body, then go back and work on the part of the body that most needs relaxation. Depending on the amount of time, you can do this for a couple of minutes or for a longer period. Everyone feels so alive and vibrant with this drumming. It's a good exercise for depression and lethargy. This can also be done on another person, and has remarkable healing effects on all kinds of health problems. One researcher has synchronized the drumming to 90 beats per minute to generate deep states for healing persons with physical or emotional problems.

Drum massage can easily be done in a circle with everyone working on the shoulders of the person in front of them, finishing off with brisk back circles (clockwise for energy, counter-clockwise to relax) down the spine. A Drum Circle can be lots of fun. Use this dynamic if the group is tired and needs to be energized. Within this playful context, most people do not have the fear of physical touch as they might with a one-on-one massage. This is also a good dynamic with youth who might be embarrassed to touch each other in a seated massage. With refugee groups, follow the cultural mores regarding touch between men and women. Or have women work with women, and men with men.



Bethlehem, Palestine

ACUPRESSURE POINTS



Camp for refugees and orphans, Uganda

Acupressure is an ancient art using finger pressure on specific points to unblock, balance or increase the circulation of life force energy in the body. The roots of acupressure date back over four thousand years to traditional Chinese medicine. Hands-on folk remedies were passed down from generation to generation to cure illness and relieve pain. In many indigenous cultures, grassroots people have traditions of rubbing or pressing areas of the body to relieve pain or emotional discomfort.

The points demonstrated in the following section may be done on oneself or with another person. The points chosen are ones that help relieve symptoms of stress: nervousness, anxiety, insomnia, sleep disorders, chronic pain, headaches, back pain, depression, fatigue, memory loss, dizziness and

general body pain. The points can be used whenever symptoms occur, or as a daily preventive practice for maintaining balanced energy flow in the body. Many refugees and internally displaced persons suffer physical symptoms related to trauma. At the same time, few refugees have access to medical or psychological care. Acupressure can be a way to empower refugees in self-care to alleviate many symptoms.

The flow of energy through meridians nourishes and balances the entire body. When this flow is restricted or blocked, physical or emotional sickness or pain result. Tension in the muscles usually indicates a blockage of energy that has accumulated around an acupressure point. The point is located by feeling for tension that is like a tight area or knot in the muscle surrounding the point. When the acupressure point is held, the tension releases, permitting energy to flow more freely through the area, allowing the body to heal and balance itself naturally. Acupressure models in the following section are from Haiti, South Africa, Uganda, Palestine, Afghanistan, Honduras and Mexico.

Self-Acupressure

The following acupressure points may be held while seated or lying down in a comfortable position. The points may also be held while at school, on the job, or wherever you are, whenever there is pain or discomfort. If you are able to, close your eyes and press the acupressure points for two to three minutes. Children need only about a minute for holding the points to clear and balance their energy. Their bodies have fewer blockages than adults. With fingertips slightly curved, press firmly into the point (using the bone inside the finger), then lighten the pressure until you begin to feel a pulsation or energy flow. Don't worry if you can't feel the energy pulse. After a while your fingers will get accustomed to finding the pulse. The energy is flowing whether or not you feel it. Often acupressure points are painful or sensitive. This is normal and is considered to be "good pain" that wants to be released. You know you are finished holding a point when there is a change in the quality of the pulsation. The energy pulse feels clear, strong, and balanced. You can enhance the energy flow by using visualization and deep breathing while doing self-acupressure. When you hold the point imagine that golden energy is circulating through the points and throughout your entire body bringing harmony and balance to your whole being. Breathe deeply and imagine the flow of golden energy. As you exhale, breathe out all the tension and pain associated with the point you are holding.

3. Capacitar Basic Practices

Head Points

Use these head points for headaches, migraines, neck pain, tension, dizziness, depression, anxiety and stress. The points at the base of the skull can also be used to balance left and right (rational and creative) sides of the brain to help focus attention and to think clearly and creatively.

Points at the Side of the Head

Interlace your fingers, place your hands behind your head and with the thumbs press the points at the left and right sides of the base of the skull in the hollows at the side of the head.

Head Hold

Place one hand high across your forehead, the other hand rests lightly at the base of the skull. Close your eyes and breathe deeply, relax completely in the moment. This Head Hold is excellent to stabilize a person with strong emotions or flashbacks.

Hand Points

For Headaches and Migraines

Use these hand points for headaches, head congestion, migraines and upper body pain. Press into the point between the bones of the thumb and the index finger. This point is also good for pain in the upper part of the body.

Contraindication: This point is also used for labor at the time of childbearing, but should not be held during pregnancy because it starts the contraction of the uterine muscles.



Shoulder Points

Use these points for shoulder tension, stiff necks, worry stored in the shoulders, overwhelm, anxiety, nervous tension.

With the index, middle and ring fingers press down lightly on top of the shoulders into the ridge formed by the trapezius muscles. If it is more comfortable the arms may be crossed while holding the points.

Contraindication: These shoulder points should not be used with a pregnant woman or only pressed very lightly.

Immune System

These points help boost the function of the Immune System and strengthen natural resistance.

Elbow Points

With the index fingertips press the points on the outer creases of the elbows.

Chest Points

Press the points under the heads of the clavicles on both sides of the sternum.



Diarrhea

Several different points are helpful for controlling diarrhea or abdominal pain.

Abdominal Points

To locate the abdominal points, measure a distance of two finger-widths below the navel and four finger-widths below the navel, holding both points at the same time.

Arch of Foot

Press the point on the top of the arch of the foot.



Stomach Points

Use these points for stomach pain, tension or a knot in the stomach and solar plexus.

Cheek Points

With the index, middle and ring fingers of both hands press inward and upward under the cheek bones. For support while holding the points you can lean on your lap or onto a desk or table.

Constipation

Use these points to promote regularity and to alleviate pain in the abdomen caused by constipation. This point should only be held for a few minutes.

Press into the point between the base of the index and middle fingers on either hand.



Nausea

These points help alleviate or control nausea, motion sickness, morning sickness, stress and anxiety.

Wrist Points

Locate the points at a distance of two finger-widths away from the wrist joint between the bones on either side of the forearm.



Hiccups

To stop the reaction of hiccups.

Ribcage Points

With the index, middle and ring fingertips press points under the ribcage below the breasts while breathing deeply and relaxing.

Points Behind the Ear

With the index fingertips press the points in the indentation behind the earlobes at the edges of the bone.

3. Capacitar Basic Practices

Back

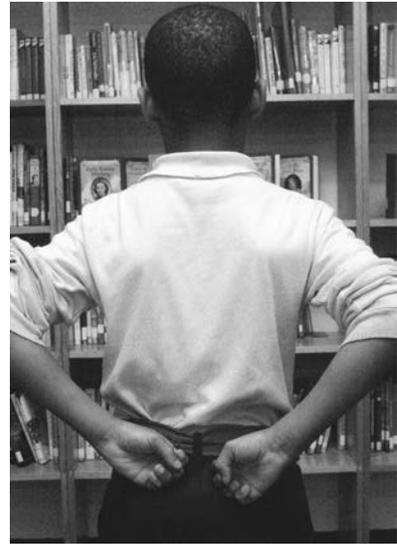
These points help alleviate stress and tension in different parts of the back.

Points on the Back

Make fists and with the knuckles press points on either side of the spine. Avoid pressing on top of the bones of the vertebrae. You can also put two soft tennis or exercise balls into a sock. Separate the balls several inches and lean into or lie on top of the balls to press the region of the back where there is pain. Or you can tie two knots in a towel or cloth to use for pressing the points.

Arch of Foot

The arch of the foot contains reflexology points that correspond to the back—the point at the top of the arch corresponds to the upper back; the center to the arch to the mid back or waist; the bottom of the arch is the lower back. Use a golf ball, a rolling pin, or an empty bottle to press into and massage the arch of the foot.



Lower Back

Back of Knee Points

For lower back pain, press the points in the center of the back of the knee joint. These are called the lower back drain points.

Points in Sacrum

For pain in the sacral area, make fists and with the knuckles press the points on either side of the spine.



Leg Pain and Energy Boost

These points, called Three Miles More, are for pain in the lower body, for leg pain and for boosting energy. Press the points located on the outer side of the leg about a hand's distance below the kneecap.

To find the points, place the heels of the hands level with the knee caps, fingers pointing downward. Slide the hands a quarter turn outwards. Where the tip of the middle finger falls, feel around until you find a very sensitive point. This is the Three Miles More point.



Abdominal Pain and Cramps

These two points alleviate pain in the abdomen caused by menstrual cramps, abdominal tension and diarrhea.

With index and middle fingers of both hands press two points in the abdomen, one is located at a distance of two finger-widths below the navel and the other at four finger-widths below the navel. Hold both points at the same time for several minutes.



Focus and Balance

Locate the acupressure points at the base of the skull in the indentation on either side of the head. These two points balance the rational and intuitive sides of the brain. These points can be held, tapped or massaged. They also help with depression.

Gently hold the two points for several minutes while breathing deeply. Imagine that your mind and spirit are filled with light, clarity and peace.

Insomnia

These points are helpful to relax and promote deep sleep, or can be used when unable to fall asleep.

Points of Forehead and Chest

With the fingertips hold the point in the center of the forehead along with the point in the center of the chest on the sternum and breathe deeply.



Inner Ankle Point

Press the point in the indentation below the front of the inner anklebone.

Point Below Outer Anklebone

Press the point in the indentation behind the outer ankle.

Fingerholds and EFT

The Fingerholds or the Emotional Freedom Tapping are helpful to clear strong emotions and the stress of the day before sleeping.



Sadness, Grief & Emotional Pain

Emotional pain, sadness and grief are often stored in the chest area as a dull achy feeling. The following points can help to release these feelings.

Center of the Chest

With the fingertips of one hand hold the point in the middle of the sternum (breast bone).

Collarbone Points

Hold the points located in the indentation of the lower edge of the collarbone on either side of the sternum.

Arm Socket

Locate the points in the sensitive area in the outer part of the upper chest near the arm socket, the distance of approximately four finger-widths up from the armpit.

Abdominal Breathing

Deep abdominal breathing helps to center the spirit. Put your fingertips together, cross the ankles and breathe deeply into your center to create a sense of peace, protection and connection with the earth and the source of being.



Anxiety, Crisis & Overwhelm

Point in the Outer Wrist

Press the point in the indentation on the outside of the crease of the wrist, down from the small finger.

Point on Top of the Shoulders

With the fingertips of both hands hold the points on top of the shoulders. The arms may be crossed if this position is more comfortable.

Points behind the Heart

Reach over the shoulders and down the back to locate points between the spine and shoulder blades at the level of the heart. You may have to hold one point at a time if you are unable to reach both of these points at the same time.



Depression

The following points are good for depression and heaviness of spirit to bring a sense of peace and inner quiet.

Crown of Head

With fingertips hold lightly the top of the head. There are three acupressure points in this area.

Forehead between the Eyebrows

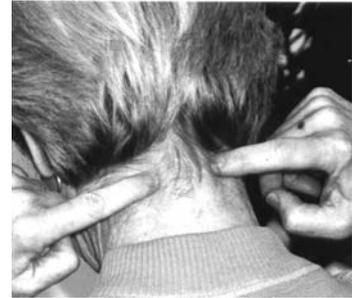
With the fingertips of one hand hold the sensitive area between the eyebrows where the nose connects with the forehead.

Base of Skull at the Sides of the Head

Interlace your fingers and place your hands behind your head. With the thumbs press the two points at left and right sides of the base of the skull in the indentations by the bones of the skull.

Points at the Sides of the Neck

Locate these points halfway down the neck about a half-inch outward from either side of the spine.



Fainting, Crisis & High Blood Pressure

This point can be used on oneself or with another if a person is fainting or in crisis.

Point Below the Nose on the Upper Lip

With the index fingertip or knuckle of the finger, press into the point directly below the nose on the upper lip.

For Eyes & for Calm

The following points around the eyes are helpful for eye strain, headaches, and tension in the face. Press lightly the following:

Points below the eyebrows on either side of the nose.

Points above the eyebrows on either side of the nose.

Points above the arch of the eyebrows.

Points at the side of the eyebrows.

Points beneath the eye on the bone.



3. Capacitar Basic Practices

Sinus

Use these points for congestion, allergies and to open a stopped up nose.

Points at Sides of Nose

With the tips of the index fingers gently press the points in the indentation outside the base of the nostrils.

Fingertips

Press and massage the fingertips to alleviate sinus congestion.



Chest Congestion, Asthma, Grief

Use these points for a tight chest, difficulty with breathing, asthma and for grief and sadness that accumulate in the chest.

Points below Collarbones

With the fingertips gently press the sensitive points under the collar bones halfway between the throat and the arm socket.

Upper Arm Points

With the fingertips press the points in the curve of the upper arm at the insertion area of the deltoid muscle (the area for vaccinations). The palms of the hands can also hold over these points as a self-hug.

Points in Front of the Arm Joint

Cross your hands in front of the chest with your fingers pointing toward the arm joints. Gently tap with your fingertips the sore areas by the arm socket. In working with children you can pretend that you are a butterfly or peace dove flapping its wings as you tap these points.



Suggestions for Group Leaders

Acupressure is one of the favorite practices of many participants because it can give almost immediate relief from pain and anxiety. When people arrive at a workshop they often come filled with pain, worry, and a wide range of stress symptoms. Acupressure can be presented as one of the first practices, along with breathing exercises, to enable participants to let go of the stress they are holding. You can see the changes in their bodies and faces. Sometimes participants even fall asleep while holding the points. With refugees or internally displaced persons, there are often few resources for physical or emotional care. The acupressure points can empower a person to be pro-active with their own health, rather than feeling helpless and dependent on others. Many times refugees can remember practices from their own cultures that include touching or rubbing parts of the body for specific conditions. Encourage comments from participants regarding healing methods from their own cultures.

The acupressure points presented may also be held on another person. Be sure that you protect yourself from absorbing the person's tension by using visualization. Check with the person regarding the amount of pressure they desire. Hold the points until the energy pulse feels clear and strong. The points can also be held several inches off the body if touching is against their culture.

Body Scan

A body scan can be used to start the teaching of acupressure. This helps to get a sense of the participants' pain, stress and bodily condition. You can then better adapt the material to the group.

Close your eyes, breathe deeply and slowly for a few moments. Start by scanning your feet, noticing the condition of each part—your toes, the bottoms of your feet, your ankles and then moving upward, to your legs, noticing any pain, or stress or tension. Continue moving upward, slowly scanning your pelvis, inner organs, back, trunk of your body, shoulders, arms, hands, neck, head, face, throat and chest, etc. Take a few minutes to do this body scan, visiting each part, noticing your body without judgment. Be an impartial observer of the condition of your body to get better acquainted with yourself. When you are ready put your hands on the place (or places) in your body where you feel the most pain or stress or tension. If you don't have pain at this time, place your hands on the part where tension and stress most often accumulate in your body. Breathe deeply, open your eyes and be fully present in this room.

Look at your body and where you have placed your hands. Compassionately observe your own pain. It is important that we see and appreciate ourselves as we are. Often people talk about their aches and pains to get the comfort and attention of others. It is important to pay attention to ourselves and to do what we can to take care of our body, mind and spirit. This is the only body we have for this lifetime and we want to treasure it and not misuse it. Now look at each person in the group and compassionately observe where they have pain. There is a lot of pain in others and we want to be compassionately aware of that. We will now play "NameYour Pain!" Moving around the circle invite each person to briefly name the body part or parts where they have pain or tension.

Choosing Acupressure Points to Meet the Needs of the Group

After completing the body scan and noting the kinds of problems that are most recurrent in the group, you can then choose the acupressure points to best fit the needs of the group. Use soft music while demonstrating and holding the first sets of points, to model how points may be used for deep relaxation or meditation. Teach the group how to hold acupressure points with the fingertips slightly curved and with medium pressure. Demonstrate the location of the points on your own body first, and, if necessary, help participants locate the points on themselves. If some persons are worried about not locating the exact point, tell them not to worry. All that is necessary to balance the energy flow is to be in the general vicinity of the point and to have the intention of unblocking and harmonizing the flow.

Once the points are located the following may be said to the group: Close your eyes and breathe deeply while holding the points. As you breathe let go of all worries and thoughts and be present to your body. Imagine the energy moving freely through the points you are holding to nourish and heal all the pain and tension in your body. If thoughts run through your mind, return to your breathing and the image of the flowing energy. We will hold these points for a couple of minutes. (After a minute or two) Take a moment more holding these two points and when you are ready, breathe deeply, open your eyes, let go of the points, and relax. You might want to shake off your hands or touch your hands to the floor to ground the energy. Often your fingers will feel hot, heavy, and full of energy after holding the points.

This same process can be done for each set of points that you teach the group. After one or two sets of points the group becomes very relaxed and mellow. To wake up the group and save time, and to cover more material, you can demonstrate a variety of points more rapidly and without music.

Holding Pairs of Acupressure Points

Two different acupressure points may be held at the same time to move energy. The following two positions can be done on oneself or with another person.

- **For Anxiety and Depression**

Hold the points at the top of the head with the point in the middle of the forehead, or the middle of the sternum, while breathing deeply with eyes closed for several minutes.

- **To Calm or Stabilize a Person or Oneself**

Place the palm of one hand high on the forehead, and with the other hand hold the points or area at the base of the skull. Breathe deeply with your eyes closed and imagine light flowing through your head calming all your tension. Hold for approximately two to three minutes.

Group Work in Pairs

Depending upon the group, participants can be invited to hold acupressure points on each other. Before holding points on another, guide the group in how to protect themselves with light and clear boundaries. If it feels like the other person's energy is filling your hands, imagine that you can drain this energy down and out of you into the earth, as if through a garden hose.

In holding points, we are facilitators of the person's natural healing process. Our touch can help open the energy flow in another, but we do not want to merge our energy with that of the other person.



Acupressure for Refugee Groups

Often refugees who are dealing with stress and trauma are unable to accept Western approaches to psychology or therapy because of their culture or religious beliefs. Acupressure points can be a positive option. Group leaders can explain how the points help to calm and heal strong emotions, memories and body feelings without the person having to talk about their personal experiences. Fingerholds, Emotional Freedom Tapping and Switching, along with Acupressure can bring relief and healing of many body-based symptoms related to trauma. In working with children, the points are very effective in a short time. The points can be taught as a game to help the children feel better. For example, tapping the points in the chest, children can imagine they are like butterflies flying, or peace doves flapping their wings.

Explain to refugees that the acupressure points are like their portable medicines. Many times people who are poor do not have resources and are unable to buy medications for pain, headaches, anxiety or depression. With the points people are empowered to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

HEAD NECK SHOULDER RELEASE

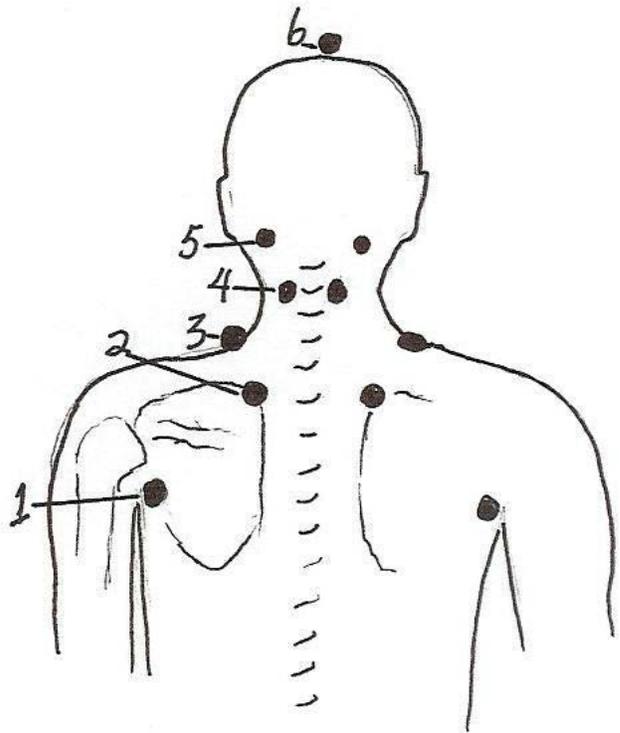
This acupressure practice releases pain, tension and congestion in the upper back, shoulders, neck and head. Often with trauma and stress, energy becomes blocked in shoulders, neck and head. Many of the energy channels or meridians flow through this area, resulting in a “bottle neck” of tension in some people. This practice can be done on oneself or on another person, either seated or lying down face upward. If doing this with another person, be sure that you keep clear boundaries, and if you feel their energy coming into your hands, imagine that it can flow through you and down into the earth, as if through a garden hose.

With slightly curved fingertips, press into each of the points (1 through 6) for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the energy pulse is clear, strong and flowing. The points will usually be very sensitive or painful. During the practice you can imagine energy flowing upward and out the top of the head. To end the practice imagine that your feet are rooted to the earth to ground you. If working on another person (depending on their culture), you can hold the tops of their feet for a few moments to ground them.

(Based on the work of Aminah Raheem, Ph.D. and Iona Teegarden, Ph.D.)

Sets of Points:

1. About an inch outside the bottom of the shoulder joint where the arm connects to the trunk of the body.
2. At the top of the inside curve of shoulder blades about 2 inches from the center of the spine.
3. On top of the shoulders at the base of the neck in the trapezius muscle.
4. Midway up the neck in the band of muscles on either side of the spine.
5. In the hollows at the base of the skull at the sides of the head.
6. The crown center at the top of the head.



To Finish *(optional depending on culture)*:

Hold the tops of the feet for grounding or if done on oneself, imagine that the feet are rooted in the ground. Breathe deeply and feel peace and harmony in body, mind and spirit.

3. Capacitar Basic Practices

Sets of Points:

1. Outside of shoulders where the arm connects to the trunk.
2. Top of inside curve of shoulder blades about 2 inches from spine.
3. Top of shoulders at the base of the neck in the trapezius muscle.
4. Midway up the neck on either side of the spine.
5. In the hollows at the base of the skull at sides of the head.
6. The crown center at the top of the head.

To Finish (optional depending on the culture):

Hold the tops of the feet for grounding, or imagine the feet are like roots running into the earth.



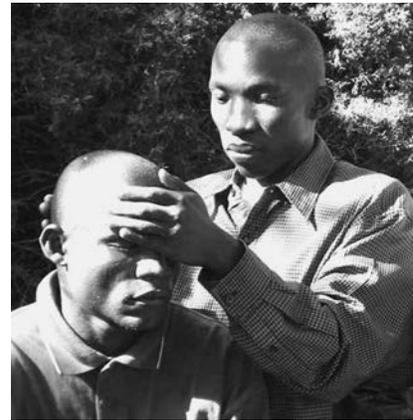
Head, Neck, Shoulder Release for Refugee Groups

The places of greatest tension for many people are the back, shoulders, neck and head. With refugee groups or those dealing with trauma, this area is most often mentioned as the place of pain when doing the body scan. Many people will take medicine for pain relief, rather than recognizing that their pain is the result of stress and held emotion in their back, shoulders, neck and head. If people have chronic pain in this area, they should be encouraged to do this practice regularly to clear and release their pain. If at all possible they should also get a medical assessment of their condition which, if not treated, could lead to disability.

This practice can be done on oneself or on another person, seated or lying down, face upwards. If the person is lying down, you can reach under the back of the person with the fingers and use the weight of their body to press into the different points. The practice can be finished with a head hold.

THE HOLDS

This exercise consists of simple energy holds that may be done on oneself or on another person for anxiety, emotional or physical pain, traumatic memories, strong emotions, such as anger or fear, insomnia and for deep relaxation. Through the energy of our hands we have the power to bring profound peace, harmony and healing to body, mind and spirit. As the practice is used on oneself or on another, hold in mind and heart a deep sense of peace, light and spaciousness. The Holds can be done for several minutes each, accompanied by deep abdominal breathing to promote greater release. The touch is very light, and if someone has suffered abuse and fears touch, the Holds may be done off the body working in the energy field.



Uganda

1. Halo Hold

Hands hold at the sides of the head without touching, to connect with the person's energy field.



2. Head Hold

One hand holds high on the forehead; the other hand holds at the base of the skull. The energy of the hands connects with the cognitive and the emotional brains. The touch is light or off the body.



3. Crown Hold

Thumbs of both hands contact the crown center at the top of head. Fingertips softly hold across the forehead. This hold is used in bodywork modalities to promote emotional release.



4. Shoulder Hold

The hands rest lightly on the shoulders, the place in the body related to anxiety, excess baggage or the burdens of life. The contact promotes the deep relaxation response.



5. Heart Hold

One hand rests lightly above the heart center. The other hand holds the back behind the heart. The heart area often contains emotional pain, grief and resentment. Breathe deeply and imagine the heart pain draining out.



Bethlehem Refugee Camp

6. To finish:

Lightly brush off the body and energy field with the hands. To wake the person rub the back clockwise (Northern Hemisphere) or counter-clockwise (Southern Hemisphere). The tops of the feet may also be held to ground the person.



3. Capacitar Basic Practices

The Holds are a special practice to use with families. Children can do this with their parents. When babies are crying, mothers can comfort their children with one of the Holds. This is a wonderful way to teach children healthy and caring touch, as well as a way to bring comfort to others when they have emotional or physical pain. This is also a way to calm and stabilize a person when they are in crisis.



Sendai, Japan



Goma Refugee Camp, DR Congo



El Paso, Texas—caregivers of refugees



Fukushima mothers, Japan

Suggestions for Group Leaders

The Holds can be done on oneself or on another person to stabilize them. People usually feel calm and nourished afterwards. The Head Hold is especially effective to stabilize someone who is emotionally upset, having flashbacks or feelings of anxiety. The hand on the forehead connects with the cognitive brain; the hand at the base of the skull connects with the emotional brain. Within a few minutes the person usually feels peaceful and balanced.

After the genocide, the Capacitar Rwanda team often used the Head Hold to calm persons when they had flashbacks or were triggered by films or talks about the genocide. In Panama, the Head Hold was used with a woman whose child died during chemotherapy at a center for children with cancer. When the mother became hysterical at the loss of her child, the attending psychologist did the Head Hold with her. Within a few minutes the mother became calm and stopped crying. The psychologist then invited the other mothers present to hold the heads of their children as they received their chemotherapy, to stabilize the entire group.

With refugees the Holds are very helpful to calm children and to help when memories of violence trigger strong emotional states. They can also be used to prepare for legal interviews and hearings to calm and focus a person.

PAIN DRAIN

The Pain Drain can be done on oneself or on another person to relieve physical and emotional pain or tension in the body. If the exercise is done on another person, it is important to protect oneself with a shield of light or energy (or some other appropriate image of protection), so that the tension of the other person is not picked up. If you feel their pain or tension entering your body, use an image of a garden hose to drain the tension down into the earth. Do this practices for several minutes.

(Adapted from: Hover-Kramer, D. Healing Touch: A Guidebook for Practitioners. Albany, NY: Delmar Thomson Learning, 2002)

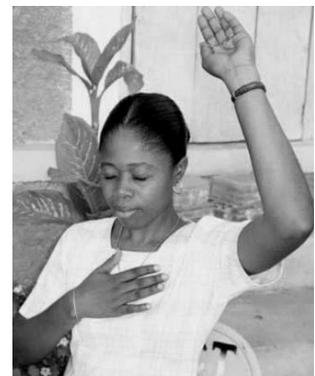
Drain the Pain from the Body

Place the left hand on or above the area that hurts and hold the right hand downward and away from the body. Imagine that you can siphon the pain or tension from the sore spot with your left hand and this can drain out your right hand into the earth. A pumping action with the right hand will speed up the process. Hold this position for several minutes or until any sensation or movement of energy flow stops. After a few minutes the area that was being drained usually feels less painful. The hand that is draining the area may feel heat or electricity as the energy drains and balances. If being done on another person, check in with the person how they are feeling or what is happening to the area being drained. If there is still some congestion, ask if they want you to continue draining the area for a few more moments.



Fill the Body with Light and Healing Energy

Reverse the hands, placing the right hand on or above the area that was painful and hold up the left hand, palm upward, to bring in healing energy from the Universal Energy Field. Fill the area that was painful with light and warmth. After a few minutes the area that was being filled usually feels warm and alive. As the practice is being done on another person, your fingers will become warm and tingling as the healing energy flows and fills the area. Check in with the person to see how they are doing and if they want you to hold longer. When you are finished working with the person, be sure to shake your hands or touch the floor to clear and balance your own energy. Remember that any energy drained off is neutral, does not have negative or positive quality and quickly dissipates into the Universal Field.



Haiti

Suggestions for Group Leaders

The Pain Drain is a valuable practice for releasing emotional or physical pain in oneself or in another. Use the breath to help move the energy, breathing out the pain or emotion through the right hand into the earth. Fill the part of the body that had the pain, breathing in the healing light energy into the body. When using the Pain Drain on another person, it is important to have good boundaries and not merge with the other person's energy flow. In work with refugee groups, often many people have deep emotional pain in their hearts from all that they have experienced. It can be helpful to teach the Pain Drain to use with the heartaches, emotional pain and grief that the refugees hold in their hearts and chest. This is also a valuable practice for use after surgery or with injuries.

IMMUNE SYSTEM BOOST

This practice works to energize and boost the immune system, which helps the body fight off infections and stay healthy. It can be used by a person whenever they feel weak, or on a daily basis to strengthen the immune system. It is also beneficial as a daily practice for those with HIV/AIDS, cancer, trauma or other serious health problems. The hands are used to send energy to three different organs of the immune system: the Peyer's Patches located in the walls of the intestines, the Spleen and the Thymus Gland. Hold each position for 2 to 3 minutes breathing deeply. Imagine light or healing energy filling these parts bringing health and wellbeing to the entire system. At the end of the practice, take a few quiet moments enjoying the feeling of peace and wellbeing.

(Adapted from the work of Sue Hovland and used with permission.)

Position 1

Place the left hand on the lower abdomen just below the navel. The right hand rests above the left hand over the navel. The right hand energizes the Peyer's Patches located in the intestinal wall.



Position 2

Leave the right hand in place over the Peyer's Patches and move the left hand to the Spleen, located on the left side of the body below the breast and beneath the rib cage. This position energizes both Peyer's Patches and the Spleen.



Position 3

Leave the right hand over the Peyer's Patches and move the left hand to the Thymus, located below the throat in the upper chest. This position energizes the Thymus and the Peyer's Patches.



Position 4

Leave the left hand on the Thymus and move the right hand to the Spleen, located on the left side of the body below the rib cage. This position energizes the Thymus and the Spleen.



Suggestions for Group Leaders

Often refugees have a variety of illnesses compounded by the traumas of their life experiences. This practice can help strengthen and boost the body's resistance and improve physical and emotional resilience. The Immune Boost is a valuable practice for those who suffer from insomnia or who are bedridden suffering with pain. This practice can also be done on another person if they are too weak to do it on themselves. If direct touch is not appropriate, the positions may be held several inches off the body, always respecting the person's boundaries.

HAND MASSAGE

The hands, wrists, and arms can hold much tension and pain, especially if a person works a lot with their hands. With five to ten minutes of hand massage you can relax a person and relieve pain and stress in the body. In the palms there are many acupressure and reflexology points that affect internal organs and different parts of the body. Massaging hands, fingers, and joints can relieve many problems, including poor circulation and arthritis. If a person feels anguish or stress, you can give them healing care without any words. Hand massage can be done with people of all ages and conditions—children, teens, adults, the elderly, the sick or dying—anywhere and with or without oil or lotion. Soft music may be used during the massage.

Directions for a Hand Massage

- Place one hand of the person between your hands to create a connection and to peacefully center yourself. At this point you can apply lotion to the first hand, if desired. In colder climates, rub the lotion between your own hands first to warm it before application.
- Open the palm of the person's hand, gently pressing points on the palm with your thumbs. Press the reflexology points covering the entire palm. If the person has sore areas or wounds in the hand, avoid these places.
- Using your thumbs, massage in circles the muscles and tendons of the palm, working between the bones of the hand. Supporting the wrist, massage down toward the fingertips, as well as the sides of the hand. Massage each finger and around the joints visualizing the tension pouring out of the fingertips.
- Gently turn the hand over and massage on the top of the hand. If the person has large veins, avoid pressing on top of veins. Massage the muscles around the wrist and forearm. Massage the forearm up to the elbow, moving down towards the hand and pulling the tension out through the fingertips.
- To finish, place the person's hand between your hands. Visualize warm light and energy entering the person, giving them deep peace and healing.
- Do the same procedure with the other hand.

Suggestions for Group Leaders

When working with groups where there is lack of hygiene, provide some way to wash or cleanse the hands to avoid passing on infections. Hand massage is a positive way to encourage loving care in families with children or between couples.



South Africa

3. Capacitar Basic Practices



Guatemala

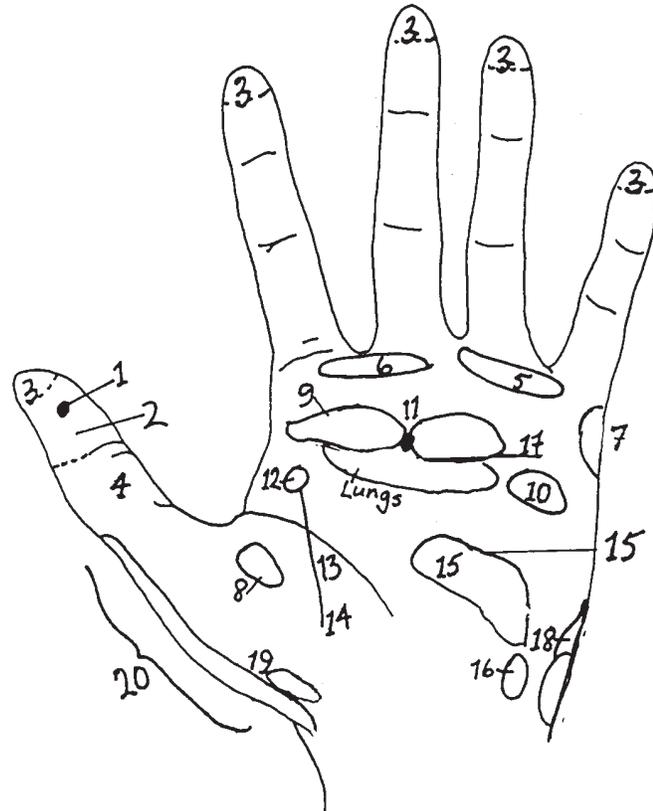


Honduras



Guatemala

HAND REFLEXOLOGY POINTS



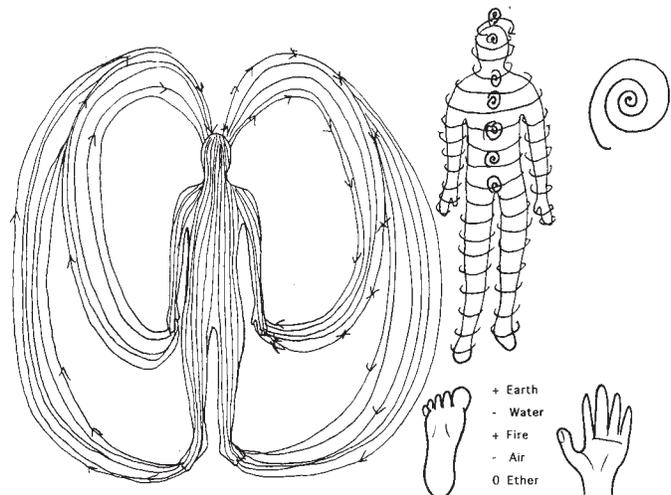
- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Pituitary Gland | 11. Solar Plexus |
| 2. Head | 12. Kidney |
| 3. Sinuses | 13. Urethra |
| 4. Neck | 14. Bladder |
| 5. Eyes | 15. Intestines |
| 6. Ears | 16. Appendix |
| 7. Shoulders | 17. Heart |
| 8. Thyroid | 18. Ovaries/Testicles |
| 9. Stomach | 19. Uterus/Prostate |
| 10. Liver | 20. Back |

POLARITY BODYWORK

Polarity is a natural system of healing developed by Randolph Stone. It is based on Chinese, Japanese and Indian energy theory integrated with Ayurveda, Yoga and other ancient traditions. The name “polarity” refers to energy which, like electricity, has positive, negative or neutral charge, and which flows through the body like an electrical current. Polarity bodywork focuses on unblocking, balancing, and nourishing these energy currents and on addressing the problems caused by energy blocks and imbalances. These imbalances may manifest as physical, mental or emotional pain or discomfort. Paying attention to the pain and discomfort can be a way to learn, change, and transform the way one lives. Gentle rocking and holding movements or contacts (positive and negative poles) in the body are used to promote profound relaxation, harmony, and healing of stress, without strong emotional catharsis. Because of its gentle yet powerful nature, Polarity is an excellent system for use with traumatic stress to alleviate many conditions: insomnia, nightmares, body pain, nervousness, anxiety, lack of energy, head and backaches.

Many cultures traditionally use hands-on contact and rocking movements for comfort and healing. The majority of homes in Central America have a hammock or a rocking chair. Many indigenous women wrap their babies in shawls on their backs or hips, rocking them with close energetic contact and continual body movement. Many village healers traditionally lay on hands to heal physical or emotional illness. So the bodywork elements of Polarity are very familiar to most grassroots people and refugees. The effects of giving and receiving Polarity are almost immediate. Participants often give positive comments such as, “I feel a peace that I haven’t felt for years.” “I can finally sleep.” “My strong emotions are gone.” “I feel peacefully energized.” “My headache and backache are gone!” They often report healing family members or neighbors of pain, depression, anxiety and stress. What is so empowering is their discovery that they, too, have healing power in their own hands. Most live in societies where institutions hold the power and authority to teach, heal and lead. To discover that each person has unique power in their hands, and the capacity to share this with others, is a remarkable experience. At workshops you can see the spark in people’s eyes when they discover their special healing gifts.

Polarity works with energy fields and currents that run through the organs, tissues, and muscles. There are many currents running through the body from the head, to the base of the spine, around the limbs, through the hands and feet as seen in the diagram. Each current runs through a finger and a toe, and corresponds to an organ. The right side of the body is positive and the left side is negative. The head is positive and the feet are negative. In general, a positive center—the right hand or middle finger—pushes the energy and stimulates an area of contact. A negative center—the left hand or index finger—relaxes the area touched. An easy way to give energy to a point is to place the left hand over the area that is feeling pain. Place the right hand directly on the opposite side of the body. Sensitive areas often are places of blocked energy. Using positive and negative hands at the same time helps to move blocked energy. The fingers and toes are areas most frequently blocked. Working with these areas first can send currents throughout the entire body.



Polarity Back Moves

Sacral Rock

Purpose: To relax the back and balance the energy in the muscles. This is very effective with back pain, insomnia and nervousness.

Move: The person is face down or seated on the side of a chair or stool. Stand at the left side of the person. Your left hand is closer to their head. Place your left hand at the base of the neck on top of the shoulders. Place the right hand, slightly cupped, over the sacrum or base of the spine. With the right hand rock the base of the spine for 1 to 3 minutes. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat again, two times. The left hand is an anchor point and does not move. If your hands become tired, release the hold, shake off and reposition the hands, continuing the rocking movement.

Spinal Move

Purpose: To release back tension and pain.

Move: Place your left thumb and index finger on either side of the neck at base of the skull. This hand remains without moving. The right thumb and fingers create a curved contact. Starting at the top of the spine, work downward with the right hand making small circular clockwise movements, massaging on either side of the vertebrae to the sacrum.

Spinal Hold

Purpose: To relieve back pain and blocked energy in back muscles.

Move: The person is face down or seated on the side of a chair or stool. Place your hands on the painful or congested areas of the back, sending light energy into the muscles. Hold until you feel a release and balance of energy.



The work on the spine can be done in a seated position. In work with refugees and those suffering from abuse, it is important to respect the position of the body. Lying down can be a vulnerable position, so it is better to do these moves seated.



Polarity Leg and Foot Moves

Foot Rock *(top photo)*

Purpose: To stimulate the movement of energy through the legs. To relax the back and trunk of the body.

Move: Respectfully separate the person's feet (approximately a foot and a half distance). With hands on the outsides of the feet, begin rocking the feet back and forth like windshield wipers. Stop and hold for a few moments and then repeat the rocking and holding twice.



Flex and Rotate the Foot *(second photo)*

Purpose: To stimulate the flow of energy in ankles and feet. To relax the entire body and legs.

Move: Work standing or sitting at the level of the feet. Hold the right heel with your left hand. With your right hand on the ball of the foot, slowly flex the foot toward the person's head. Gently pull the foot back downward being careful of the pressure. Check with the person regarding the level of pressure. Do 7 to 10 times. Rotate the foot in a circular direction; then change the direction of rotation. Repeat on the other foot.



Knuckle Rub on the Bottom of the Foot *(third photo)*

Purpose: To stimulate reflexology and acupressure points of the foot.

Move: Place one hand on top of the foot for support. Make a fist with the other hand and starting at the base of the toes, knuckle rub down the bottom of the foot. If the person is sensitive, ask them to breathe deeply into the tender areas of foot.



Brush Off the Toes and Connect the Energy Pulses *(bottom photo)*

Purpose: To stimulate the energy channels or meridians that flow through the toes and connect with all the organ systems.

Move: Hold the foot in one hand. Brush the tops of the toes with the fingers. Keep fingers together as you brush, and hold toes securely. Do this move 9 to 12 times.

Finish by touching the tips of each toe with the index finger of one hand while your index and middle finger of the other hand holds a point/pulse beneath the inner ankle of the same foot. Hold each toe for 10 to 15 seconds and then release the contact points. Repeat the move on the other foot.



Polarity Head and Throat Moves



The following moves can be done on oneself or on another person. These are especially good for stress that can manifest as pain or blocked energy in the areas of the head, neck and jaw.

Energy Points of the Head *(top photo)*

Purpose: For headaches and anxiety and to promote peace and focus.

Move: The person is lying face up or seated in a chair. You are working behind their head. Turn their head to one side and imagine 3 points on the eyebrow running from the nose to the temple, and 3 corresponding points at the base of the skull, on the same side. With your index finger (-) at the brow, and your middle finger (+) slightly to the side of center of the base of the skull, aim your fingers toward each other as if a beam of light or energy were passing between your fingers through the head of the person. Often you will feel energy pulsing during this move. After a minute or two, move to the second points holding the arch of the eyebrow and moving over an inch at the base of the skull. Release after a minute or two and move to the points at the side of the eyebrow, and at the side of the base of the skull. Hold each set of points 1 to 3 minutes. To finish, hold the side of the head with your palms, shining energy into the head to bring healing. Repeat on other side.

Energy Points of the Neck *(middle photo)*

Purpose: For neck aches, congestion, stiffness, throat pain.

Move: The person is lying face up or seated in a chair. Working from behind, imagine 2 or 3 points on the front left side of the neck running from under the jaw to the base of the neck. On the diagonal right back side of the neck imagine 2 or 3 other points running from the base of the skull to the base of the neck. Contact the front points with your index finger (-) and the back points with your middle (+) finger. Start at the top of the neck and work your way downwards, holding points and imagining the energy moving diagonally through the neck. Touch very gently at the side of the neck to avoid discomfort. Finish the move with a neck hold forming a collar of energy.

Jaw Tap *(bottom photo)*

Purpose: To relieve tension in the jaw, throat, and face.

Move: The person is face up or seated in a chair and you are behind their head. Place your fingers on both sides of their face and locate the jaw bone. Tap lightly with your fingertips into the muscles and cheeks around both jaw joints for 1 to 3 minutes. You can also do this move on yourself to unblock the tension of the jaw.

Bodywork with the Earth Element—to Ground and Stabilize

The Earth Element, which helps to ground and stabilize a person, works with three areas of the body: neck, abdomen (colon), and knees. The following bodywork strengthens and balances the Earth Element in a person who is dealing with strong emotions or traumatic stress. Each move may be done 3 to 5 minutes with the person lying face upward or seated in a chair.

- **Head Hold and Neck Moves**—Start the session with a Halo Hold and a Head Hold (*page 60*). With your hands cupped, form a head cradle with the tips of your fingers touching the base of the skull. The person can lean their head backwards, resting their head in your hands giving a feeling of security. After a few minutes, gently stretch the neck, and then massage the neck muscles. Two acupressure points halfway up the neck and an inch away from the spine may also be held (*photos 2, 3*).
- **Neck—Abdomen Balance**—If the person is lying face upward: Standing on the right side of the person, place your left hand under the person’s neck while your right is held a few inches above the abdomen. If the person is seated: with the palm of your hand, hold the back of the person’s neck; your other hand holds several inches away from the abdomen. Hold the contact areas for several minutes (*photo 4*).
- **Knee Hold**—Place your hands on both sides of the person’s knee and imagine Earth energy running through the joint. You can also hold away from the knee. (*photo 5*).
- **Earth Finger/Earth Toe Connection**—Gently hold the small finger (Earth Finger) with one hand. With the index and middle fingers of your other hand touch the tip of the small toe (this can be done through the shoe or sock). Hold the contact areas for a minute or until there is a balance in the energy flow. Often you will feel strong pulses or energy flowing (*photo 6*).
- **Move to the Other Side of the Person**—Do the Knee Hold and then the Earth Finger/Earth Toe contacts for several minutes.
- **Finishing Move**—Do the Crown Hold or Shoulder Hold to finish (*page 60*). Brush the energy field of the person. To energize them, rub down their back clockwise. (*photo 7*).



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The Earth Element bodywork can be very relaxing and grounding for refugees or those who suffer from PTSD. As you do the protocol, you can give the person or group images such as: imagine your feet are like long roots running into the earth. Breathe up the earth energy and feel connected.



6



7

Bodywork with the Ether Element

The Ether Element is connected with the neck, throat, and joints. This Ether Session promotes a profound sense of peace and stillness, and is especially valuable for persons suffering from traumatic stress, body pain or anxiety. Do each move for 3 to 5 minutes. Encourage the person to breathe deeply and fully during the session to release any blockages. Often the person will go into a deep state of peaceful sleep with this session.

- **Halo and Head Hold**—Hold the hands on either side of the person’s head while they breathe deeply and connect with a sense of deep peace and inner silence. Do the Head Hold with one hand on the forehead and the other at the base of the skull. Breathe and imagine deep stillness, silence and peace within the person (*photos 1, 2*).

- **Contact Points Across the Joints**—The next part of the move connects the following points on the joints. Use your index finger (air -) for the points above the joint and the middle finger (fire +) for the points below to move energy through the joints. Hold the points in such a way that you can imagine the energy moving through or across the joints. Hold each joint area until you feel a clear pulse. Move down the right side of the person with the joint contacts, and then back up the left side (*Photos 2-9*).

- Jaw Joint (TMJ) with Shoulder Joint (*Photo 3*)

- Elbow Joint with Knee Joint (*Photo 4*)

- Wrist Joint with Ankle Joint (*Photo 5*)

- Thumb and Big Toe—Ether Fingers (*Photo 6*)

- Hold both Big Toes at the same time (*Photo 7*)

- Repeat the sequence in reverse moving back up the left side (*Photos 8-9*).

- **Finishing Hold**—Do the Crown Hold to balance and integrate all of the Elements. Then brush off the body to balance the energy field of the person (*Photo 10*).



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10

SELF-CARE, PROTECTION AND BOUNDARIES

Self-Care

All of the energy practices in this manual can be helpful in caring for oneself. The challenge is to make the commitment to set aside some time daily for self-care. In many cultures women, in particular, have been trained to believe that caring for oneself is egotism or selfishness. On the contrary, caring for oneself is good sense, enabling a person to have more energy and inner strength to live and work well. Daily use of Fingerholds, Tapping, Tai Chi or Acupressure can improve health and wellbeing. Several additional practices are helpful for establishing self-protection and boundaries.

Protection and Boundaries

Learning how to protect oneself and how to set clear boundaries are important skills for all people, especially for refugees, caregivers, those working with others and people suffering from compassion fatigue or secondary trauma. During the day we constantly interact energetically with our environment and with those around us. Some people and situations drain our energy, while others fill and enliven us. Most of this interaction is on an unconscious level. When we become more conscious of our own energy, we can begin to recognize the people and situations that drain us and those that nourish us. With practice we can learn how to protect ourselves energetically from being drained and how to have healthy boundaries with others. There are different images and practices from other cultures that can help us to develop good boundaries and a sense of protection and safety.

Wrapping Yourself in Light

Some of the Mayan people of Guatemala have a traditional practice of protection that has been used for generations. The people wrap themselves and their children in healing light before starting the day. In the Mayan cosmology we are all interconnected with the sacred energy that flows through us and through all of nature. With the practice of protection we make ourselves conscious of the sacred energy that is always with us. The Mayans start in the area of the head and with their hands they brush through the energy field, wrapping sacred light around the body, like a protection of grace.

Radiating your Light as Protection

Stand straight in a relaxed manner with your feet separated shoulder-distance apart and your knees slightly bent. Breathe deeply and imagine that from your navel grows a long umbilical cord that moves down into the earth to ground and connect you. Your back and spinal column are straight like a column of light supporting you between the heavens and the earth. You might want to close your eyes. Place your hands beneath your navel, connect with your center for a moment breathing deeply, exhaling any tension that you may be carrying. Now as you breathe in and out imagine that an egg or circle of light begins to shine out from your center. As the light grows, your energy radiates out in all directions around you—above, below, in front, to the sides and behind you—forming an egg or globe of light that shines and vibrates with the rhythm that is you. Everyone who meets you immediately recognizes you by your unique vibration of energy. Enjoy the experience of your energy field. During the day practice walking around with an awareness of the field of light energy that surrounds you and that gives you strength and protection. Imagine the circle of energy that also surrounds the people you meet, and feel the quality of energy that is their unique vibration. Just as you honor your own boundaries, recognize and respect the boundaries of those around you.

Images for Protection

In different kinds of situations or with people who drain energy, it is important to know how to protect yourself. Usually the person who is negative or who drains another's energy is not aware of what they are doing. If you are exhausted at the end of a day from having to interact with different people who drain you, begin to listen to your body and recognize where you feel tension or sensations indicating that your energy is being pulled. The following visualizations can be used depending upon the situation:

- Imagine that an unbreakable window of glass surrounds you as a protection and to set boundaries.
- Imagine that a globe or an egg of rose-colored light (the color of compassionate love) surrounds you. Nothing can penetrate this shield, but you are able to give off love to others.
- In difficult situations, imagine a strong yet graceful shield of impenetrable material surrounding you to establish your boundaries. Feel strong, secure, and protected.

Shielding with Your Hands

If you feel that your energy is being pulled by a person or situation from a specific part of your body, for example, from your solar plexus, your heart, or your throat, place your hands gently over this area of your body. Imagine that your hands form a shield of protection. If the memory of a situation or event comes to mind, breathe out all the caught painful energy and breathe in loving kindness and compassion toward yourself and the experience. Recognize that you are now living in the present moment, and that what has happened is over. As you breathe out and let go of the memory, look at the wisdom you have gained to live more fully in the present and to not repeat the situation. If you feel chains or cords connecting you with people, past events, or memories, you can visualize cutting the cords that bind you. Use the abdominal breathing exercise to center yourself. When you feel sufficiently ready and finished with a situation or memory, choose some way to cut the ties that bind you—an imaginative scissors, sword, fire, or cleansing light. After the visualization, feel the wholeness and integrity of your self.

Holding your Energy Field

Sometimes when we are with people in conflictive situations, we start out filled with energy and leave completely drained. An effective way to hold your energy so that you are not drained by others in challenging situations at home, at work, or during meetings, is as follows:

Be seated and cross your ankles. On your lap join together your finger tips and thumbs of both hands. Breathe deeply, relax your shoulders, and feel your energy system circulating in a loop through the channels that run through each of your fingers. Rather than losing energy from your body and spirit, with this posture you are circulating your energy in a closed system, containing your energy within. You can be fully attentive to others and focused on the matter at hand, but without being drained.

For those who accompany others, especially refugees, this practice is invaluable. With this posture you can listen deeply as a witness of the pain and struggle of the person, rather than being a sponge for their problems. For refugees, this can help them to stay centered during legal procedures.



Mosquito Net: Screening or Becoming Porous

This is a practice from martial arts adapted by activist Roberto Vargas as a way to deal with challenging persons or experiences that come at us. We often absorb the energy of these attacks as if we were a sponge, and feel beaten up by them. This practice involves becoming completely porous so that the violent energy coming at us flows completely through us. This exercise can be done as a role play between two persons for the practice. It can also be done as a visualization before a difficult situation.

Close your eyes, breathe deeply and connect with your center. It might help to put your hands beneath your navel and take a few slow breaths to ground yourself and center deeply within yourself. Imagine that your body and cells are able to become completely porous, like a mosquito net. Whatever comes at you is able to flow through you without any remnant remaining within you. When you are ready and feel completely porous, open your eyes. The person who is the attacker begins their attack. You are able to stay clear, aware of the attack, but letting it go through you. Often you can see the attacker with compassion recognizing that their violence may come from a wound or personal challenge.

Many times when we experience the attack of colleagues, family members or others we are thrown off guard. It is only afterwards that we recognize how we could have engaged the person or situation in a more effective way. To prepare ourselves for difficult exchanges, it can be helpful to visualize the situation in advance and roll play our response to entrain our body and spirit in other ways of responding rather than just reacting. In some cases the person who puts us down is a family member or sibling. Our reaction can represent a pattern that we have had from childhood that is so automatic that we feel completely frustrated and helpless in the situation. For family or holiday gatherings it can be helpful to prepare ourselves in advance, as if we were building our muscles of resilience and compassion for ourselves and for the person. With practice, a challenging family relationship can be transformed in a positive way.

How I Manage My Energy

This is a walk around exercise that can be done with a group in silence to help them become more aware of how they manage their energy and if they are able to stay in their center. Stand and start walking around the room connecting with other people in the group without talking. As you meet others, notice how your body feels and notice if you are walking from your center. If you are an extrovert, notice what happens when others look at you. If you are an introvert, notice what is happening within you. After a few minutes, stop, close your eyes and notice how your body feels.

Now, place your hands beneath your navel, breathe deeply and imagine that you can rest in your center. Open your eyes and again start walking around, this time meeting others from your center. How does it feel to be with other people who are also connected to their center? Are you able to stay in your center during this exercise? After a few moments, stop, close your eyes and notice how your body feels.

Next, imagine a moment when you are very angry or frustrated. Open your eyes and walk around with an angry group of people. Notice how your body feels. Are you able to connect with others? What does the group feel like? Can you stay connected to your center? Or where do you go in angry situations? Open your eyes and shake off your anger.

Finally, place your hands beneath your navel and imagine that you are in a beautiful place in nature with someone you love. Breathe deeply and fill yourself with beauty and love. Open your eyes and walk in beauty and love. How does it feel to meet others who are filled with beauty and love? What is the group energy like? How did you change so quickly from angry energy to love energy? Time can be taken to share this experience in small groups as well as in the whole group. Notice patterns of how you hold your energy field and if you are able to live and walk from your center.

FIGURE 8 for ENERGY DRAIN

This practice is adapted from the work of Phyllis Krystal from *Cutting the Ties that Bind* (1991). The practice uses the infinity sign or figure “8” to energetically separate oneself from another person, a traumatic memory, negative self-talk, or a strong emotion that can drain energy, and cause depression, anxiety or trauma. It can help a person to create healthy boundaries and recognize the integrity of their own core energy and self. The practice can be very helpful to refugees to disconnect from difficult experiences and traumas in their past.

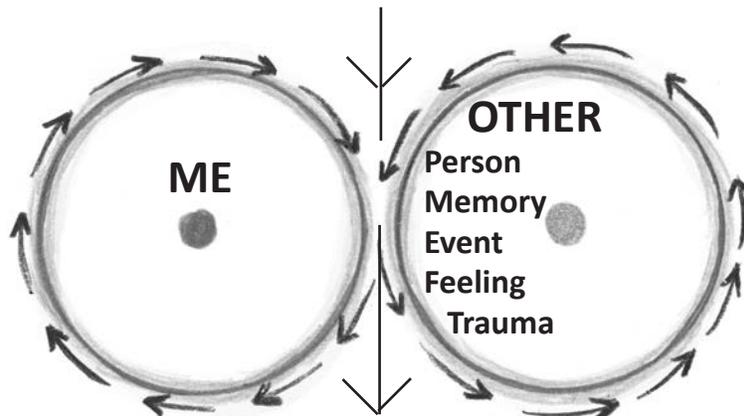
Figure 8 Practice

Using the figure “8” or infinity sign (see illustration), visualize yourself in the center of one of the circles surrounded by a tube or cylinder of golden light. In the center of the other circle, place the person, strong emotion, negative self-talk or traumatic memory from which you wish to separate, and surround them also with golden light. As you start the practice you are energetically connected at the point of intersection of the two circles.

Now visualize a blue neon light that moves around the circles of golden light, following the direction of a figure 8—first around the circle where you have placed the person, strong emotion or traumatic memory, and then around the circle where you are. Continue to visualize this blue light moving around and around the figure 8. The golden light and the blue light help to contain and set boundaries around your energy and to separate you from the other’s energy. Do this practice for several minutes at a time, repeating it two or three times a day for several weeks or a month or two. A good time to do this is when your subconscious is most active: when you first awaken, just after meditation and/or before you go to sleep at night. Slowly the recognition of your core energy, your separateness from the person or feeling you place in the other circle, enters your subconscious mind. In most cases, the other person does not know you are doing this.

After several weeks or months (or it may take years!), and only when you feel ready to do so, cut the tie that binds you. You can do so literally or figuratively, creating your own ritual of separation. Taking a knife, scissors, candle or other implement, sever the energetic tie with great respect for the energy of the other and great respect for yourself. Fully release the person, memory, negative thought or trauma, giving them back to themselves. Stand alone in the fullness of yourself. This practice is especially helpful with relationships or situations that drain energy and should usually be done without the other’s knowledge.

Variation: If you have difficulty imagining the process, you can draw the figure 8 on a piece of paper to help you visualize it, or you can trace the figure 8 in your hand with your finger, thus embedding it in your tissues. You can also draw the figure 8 using your lap and legs. If you work with children you can have them place their feelings or memories in balloons and write or draw their fears. Then when they are ready to separate from their monsters or fears, they can cut the cord or pop the balloon.



THE LABYRINTH

The labyrinth is an ancient symbol of healing and transformation for body, mind and spirit. Walking the labyrinth can be a powerful experience. The energy field of the archetypal pattern, along with the spiraling turns of the path, somehow unblock, harmonize, and heal the whole person. The labyrinth can be a deeply healing practice for people who have experienced traumatic stress from natural disasters, political violence, divorce, abuse, and other wounds. For refugees, the labyrinth can be a metaphor for their life journey. Labyrinths are now found in many places, such as, retreat centers, playgrounds, hospitals, schools and public parks. If there is no labyrinth for walking available, finger labyrinths can be very effective to help calm and center a person who is dealing with strong emotions, flashbacks or trauma.

Preparation and Walking the Labyrinth *(Based on the work of Lauren Artress, [Walking the Sacred Path](#), 1995)*

Generally before walking the labyrinth, it is important to take time to prepare for the experience. However, in work with refugee groups, it may be better to do the exercise of walking first, then explain the background and stages of the labyrinth as developed here. Traditionally, the stages of walking the labyrinth can be thought of as the stages of the spiritual path: purification, illumination and union.

Breathe deeply and center yourself, letting go of worries, surrendering yourself in the present moment. Open yourself to receive whatever may come to you in the labyrinth. You may want to focus on a question or a prayer before you set foot on the path. Wait until you feel ready to enter the labyrinth.

The first part of the path spiraling to the center is the time of purification. Let whatever emerges pass through you without judgment. Body feelings, images, memories, strong emotions, dreams, past wounds, desires, or prayers may arise. Open your heart and surrender to the process. Breathe deeply, walk with attention, and follow your own rhythm, listening to your body and spirit. If you are walking the labyrinth with others and your rhythm is different, you may pass them respectfully along the path, and greet or acknowledge their presence with a bow, an embrace, or just with your eyes. Some people prefer to walk the labyrinth slowly, others rapidly moving like a dance, while others move across the lines without following the design. In walking the path to the center, let everything pass through you without judgment—the wounds of the past, the traumas, the worries, the joys and sorrows—like a great river cleansing and restoring all in your life. Connect with your center and the gift of your life. There is no other being like you, and you are guided and held with love on your unique path.

The center of the labyrinth represents the second stage of the spiritual path—illumination. Take time in the center for meditation, thanksgiving or silence, surrendering, listening to your heart. This is the time to ask for what you need, and to open yourself to receive the abundance that is always around you.

When you feel ready, leave the center and walk the return path spiraling outward to the world. This is the third stage of the spiritual journey, the time of union. Walk this part integrating the inspirations you received. This part of the labyrinth contains the challenge to return to the reality of life with healing and renewed commitment. Feel the energy and confidence of walking with the strength of community.

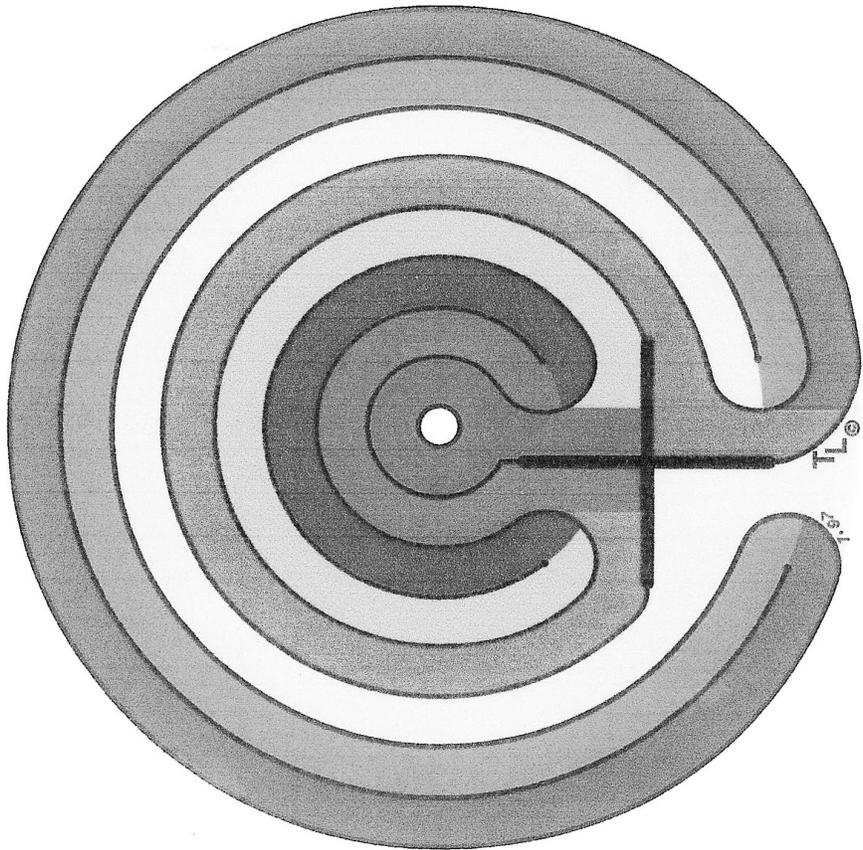
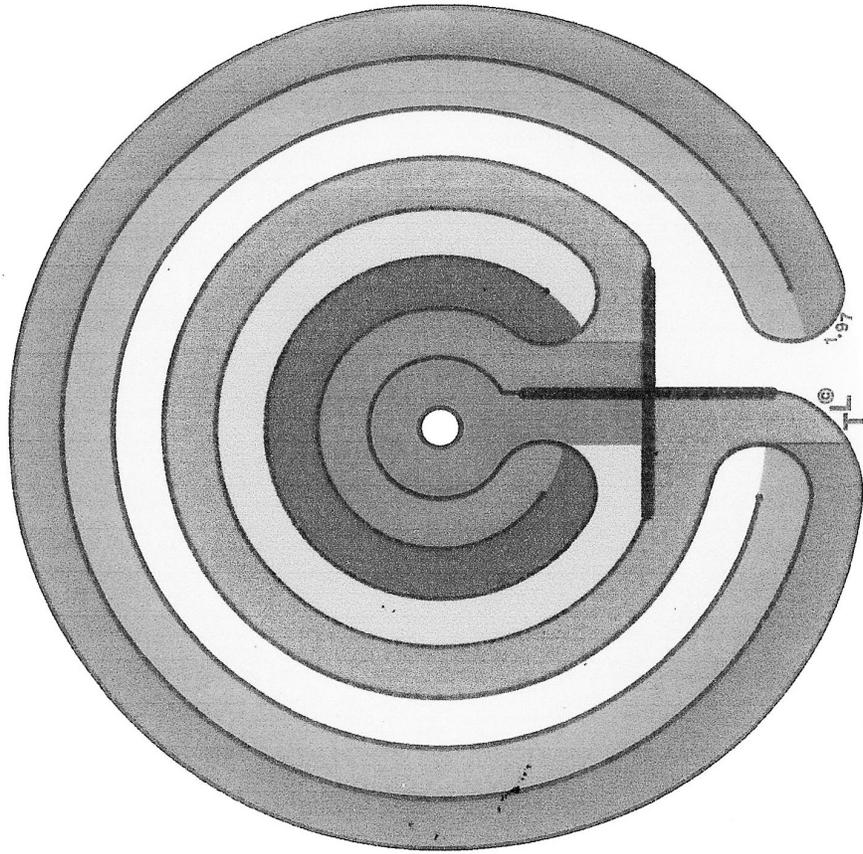
The process of walking the labyrinth can calm the mind, center the spirit, and bring deep inner peace, inspiration and illumination to the person. The unconscious mind is awakened and many times the whole microcosm of life is awakened. Wounds of the past transform into wisdom for the present. After walking take time to write or draw your experiences, images, dreams, desires and commitment for your life and future. If walking with others, invite the participants to share their experiences.



Finger-Walking the Labyrinth

For disabled persons, or where no labyrinth is available, the many healing benefits of the practice can be received through walking with the fingers. With your index finger simply follow the labyrinth path as if you were walking. There are also many Labyrinth Apps available for smart phones or computers.

On these two pages are labyrinth patterns for your use. For the Chartres-style labyrinth (*page 78*), follow the path with one finger. The paths may be colored or painted to your liking. The seven-path labyrinth pattern (*page 79*) represents mirror-image labyrinths. These can be drawn with both index fingers at the same time to calm, center, and relax a person who is anxious or upset, and to balance left and right sides of the brain. This double labyrinth has also been found to be effective for dyslexic children, to calm a person with flashbacks, and for use before meditation. To avoid frustration and to entrain the brain in walking the mirror labyrinth, start first with the dominant hand tracing the path to the center and then back to the entrance; then walk with the non-dominant hand; then with both hands. If you get lost along the way, just move to the center and rest for a moment before tracing the path back to the entrance.



DRAWING AND MANDALAS

Drawing is one of the effective ways to release feelings and connect with inner wisdom. Often refugees are unable to put into words what they are feeling because of the trauma they have experienced. Drawing can be a way to let go of the energy blocked in the mind and the body without having to use words to name inner experiences. Children and youth, in particular, can benefit from drawing their feelings and memories, as well as create positive images for themselves and their future.

Mandalas

One kind of drawing exercise that can be significant to refugees and detainees is the Mandala. Mandalas are circular drawings and designs that are found in many cultures around the world—Asia, India, the Middle East, Africa, and in Mayan and other indigenous cultures of the Americas. The word “mandala” comes from the Sanskrit word meaning, “circle”. Psychologist Carl Jung thought of the mandala as a universal expression of the human psyche. He used mandalas to help people to integrate their rational and intuitive selves. By reflecting on the mandalas we create, we can see more deeply into our intuitive nature and inner wisdom.

Drawing a Mandala

Mandala drawing can be a simple exercise with individuals or groups. All that is needed are some pencils and scraps of paper. You can trace a circle on a clean sheet of paper, or you can draw your own circle. If colored pens or crayons are available you can use a variety of colors to spontaneously compose images to fill in the circle. Use whatever strokes your hands feel the need to express. This practice does not require artistic skill. Often the trained artist has a harder time being spontaneous. Don't judge your drawing or the quality of your work. Your drawing may extend beyond the boundary of the circle to fill the page as you like. Get in touch with colors or shapes that flow intuitively through your hand onto the page. Mandala drawings can also be done with the non-dominant hand.



Mandala drawing—Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

Suggestions for Group Leaders

If you are doing this drawing exercise with a group, have paper and pencils ready for participants. If you are drawing mandalas, you can give the participants paper with a circle already drawn. Soft background music can be used to accompany the process. Give a brief explanation of drawing or describe the meaning and origin of the mandala. After the exercise invite participants to share their drawings or mandalas with the group or with a partner of their choosing.

My MANDALA of LIFE

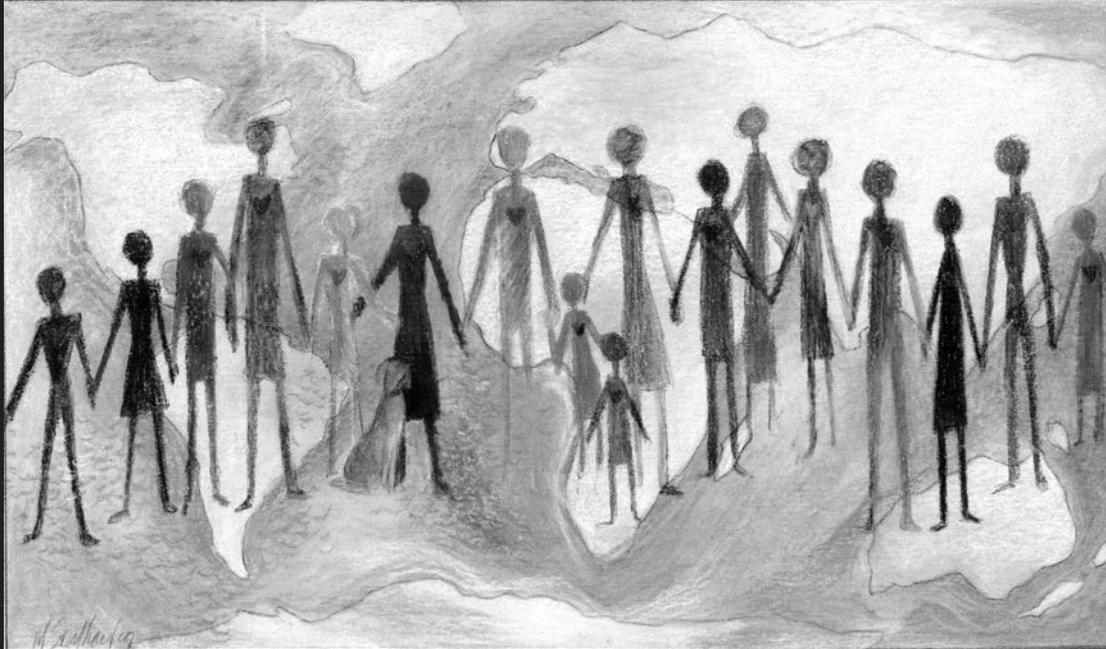


Personal Motto or Vision to Guide My Life

Mandalas to Connect with Positive Resources

Visualization and imagining positive resources can be integrated with the drawing exercise or work with mandalas. The Mandala of Life is a simple exercise that can empower a person to imagine positive possibilities for themselves. The categories listed in this exercise can be changed or adapted depending on the reality or experiences of the individual or group. The drawing experience can be combined with Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*) or Emotional Freedom Tapping (*pages 26-27*) to release and transform challenging experiences and to entrain the mind and body with positive resources (*page 32*).

If this Mandala exercise is done in a group, participants can be encouraged to share their reflections with another person or with the group. Often deep insights are discovered. This is also a way to share feelings in a contained way within a group.



The people that Capacitar serves on both sides of the border are survivors of horrific circumstances of violence. Most come into contact with our programs through human rights centers, women's centers, community groups or parishes. Capacitar multipliers serve those in shelters, detention centers or poor communities. Because many are undocumented, their access to traditional social services is severely limited.



4. Application of Capacitar Practices in Refugee Outreach

Capacitar Context for the Manual

Those served by Capacitar en la Frontera are among the most socially, politically, and economically vulnerable in the El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juarez, Mexico border region. The crisis of drug cartel-related violence since 2008 in Northern Mexico is well-documented: more than 12,000 dead in Northern Mexico alone, tens of thousands abducted, extorted or kidnapped, an unknown number tortured and forcibly disappeared. It has been estimated that tens of thousands of survivors of these collective and horrific circumstances of violence or their family members fled to El Paso and contiguous border communities.

The UNHCR noted that in 2014 the United States of America recorded approximately 121,200 new asylum claims. In mid-2014 in the US-Mexico border, there was an unprecedented influx of children and families from the Central American triangle, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, where violence escalated beyond civil control. While reduced from the mid 2014 spike, the number of children and families migrating to the United States remains higher than has been measured at any other time, flooding the border region with survivors of these collective and horrific circumstances of violence.

The people that Capacitar serves on both sides of the US-Mexico border are survivors of these collective and horrific circumstances of violence. Most come into contact with our Capacitar programs on both sides of the border through human rights centers, women's centers, schools, community centers, and parishes. In El Paso, our Capacitar multipliers serve individuals who live in shelters, refugee detention centers, or very humble colonias. Because many of those whom we serve are undocumented, their access to traditional social services is severely limited. In Ciudad Juarez and other Northern Mexican towns, we also reach the poorest of the poor. Most live in very poor communities; many live under threat due to the experiences of their family members or because of their courageous efforts to work for justice and healing. This complex reality, of course, is superimposed on an already economically depressed border region chronically unable to meet the health, mental health, and educational needs of the population.

We know that our tools are instrumental for self-care in renewing and sustaining the frontline trauma workers who accompany these survivors. We have provided self-care compassion fatigue trainings to frontline trauma workers in agencies and systems throughout the borderlands. The demand for Capacitar wellness practices has never been greater. Access to traditional health and mental health services, already limited, is virtually unattainable for society's most vulnerable and traumatized. Moreover, there is growing awareness that traditional treatment models are not a sufficient response to border context; rather, culturally-adapted body-based techniques effectively respond to the most horrific of traumas, including torture and forced disappearances. Capacitar practices are universally accessible, shared via grassroots as well as traditional service entities, and reach our community's most vulnerable. Our popular-education, self-multiplying modality is empowering and awakens mind and body wellness.

The following section describes the application of Capacitar methods in a variety of contexts: detention centers, legal services, health services, and crisis response centers, among others. These applications and approaches can be adapted and multiplied in a variety of cultures and contexts.

CAPACITAR PRACTICES IN CRISIS RESPONSE CENTERS

Across the globe millions of men, women and children have been displaced from their countries of origin. For most, the journey is long, involves many segments lasting days, weeks, and even months of travel, and is fraught with danger—robbery, assault, abandonment, and detention. Migrants arrive fatigued, hungry, with insufficient possessions and resources, sometimes sick from the journey, and often traumatized. While it is not universally true, many migrants seek to reunite with family in a host country.

Along the US-Mexico border, migrants and refugees arrive to our borderlands both by entering the United States outside a Port of Entry (i.e. illegally crossing the border) as well as by presenting themselves at an international Port of Entry to request political asylum. While some migrants are released on their own recognizance, many are detained for variable lengths of time. Those who have requested asylum and who have passed a credible fear interview can now only be detained for a limited period of time. As a result of variable and ever-changing immigration policies, tens of thousands of migrants end up being released by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) of the Department of Homeland Security, with nothing more than their papers and the clothes on their backs.

In response to this constant pattern of temporary detention and release of migrants along the US-Mexico border, communities of solidarity throughout the borderlands have mobilized to respond to the immediate needs of these migrants. In many areas, churches or communities of faith, nonprofit organizations, and communities of women and men religious have established temporary or emergency hospitality sites. At these sites of welcome, refugees are offered clothes, meals, the ability to shower, and support to contact family members, who often assist them with travel in their final stage of the journey.

Members of our Capacitar solidarity network have been a part of this emergency response in communities such as Tucson, Arizona; El Paso, San Antonio and McAllen, Texas; and San Diego, California. In accompanying refugees in a variety of capacities related to supporting basic human rights, our team members have depended on a number of Capacitar practices to support these men, women, and children in migration.

◆ Refugee Accompaniment

In El Paso, Texas, the South Texas Immigrant Response Network mobilized five emergency hospitality sites in the summer of 2014. As the influx of migrants remitted somewhat, efforts were consolidated into Nazareth Hall, lent to Annunciation House by the Sisters of Loretto, a temporary hospitality center for refugees from Central America and Mexico. As of December, 2015, Nazareth Hall still provides emergency hospitality to several hundred migrants a week.

Prior to their arrival at Nazareth Hall, refugees often have been held in ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) facilities for 12 to 72 hours while they are being processed. Many report that they have stayed in small rooms, kept at a cold temperature, sometimes without beds or adequate food. At these emergency centers, the majority of the guests are women and their children and a small number are men and their children. Sometimes whole families are released to the emergency center, but most often the men and adult children without dependents (18 and older) are held at the detention center.

4. Application of Capacitar Practices

When families arrive at emergency or temporary centers of hospitality, like Nazareth Hall, they are emotionally drained, physically strained, and some, even psychologically traumatized. Our collective experience has taught us that Capacitar practices—which are body-based, culturally-adaptable, and easily multiplied, are optimal tools to utilize in accompanying migrants—men, women, and children alike. We offer here some applications with accompanying examples.

• Abdominal Breathing

Abdominal breathing (*page 20*) can be taught quickly and easily to individuals that workers might encounter at any stage of the accompaniment process. Individuals can be encouraged to breathe deeply while connecting with their inner Safe Space (*page 28*).

Ms. Beth Riehle, a member of our Capacitar en la Frontera Advisory Team, shared her experience in teaching Juana deep abdominal breathing to stabilize her when she arrived at Nazareth Hall shortly after a traumatic experience:

“Juana, her husband and her children had been taken hostage in their home. After family members paid the ransom, Juana and her family fled to the U.S. border. Once the family presented themselves at the Port of Entry, they were immediately detained. Early the second morning of the detention, a Border Patrol officer came for Juana’s husband, telling Juana and the children that he would be detained and that they would be transferred to a shelter. When Juana arrived at Nazareth Hall with her three teenagers, she was devastated—crying profusely, trembling, rambling on and on. I took her to a space away from the other guests, and I began coaching her to breathe.”

• The Holds

For many refugee families, the Holds (*page 60-61*) are also quickly taught practices that immediately serve to stabilize and relax someone in crisis. While some members of our network stated that they did not feel comfortable laying hands on the migrants, many reported demonstrating the Holds on themselves and then encouraging family members to apply the Holds on each other. Beth Riehle, for example, said she often prayed with migrants while utilizing the Halo Hold (done off the body) and encouraging them to breathe deeply. The decision to pray with a migrant should always be made with careful consideration of the individual’s background and preferences together with those of the worker.

Beth Riehle shared her experiences teaching the Holds:

“One day Juan, his wife, and three children were dropped off at the shelter. His co-workers had been killed and he had received several threats on his life. Juan had seen a doctor in Mexico because he had been experiencing panic attacks. He was prescribed a medication, but it was taken away by Border Patrol. When he arrived at the shelter he was stressed, overwhelmed, and concerned that he might begin to experience panic attacks. I took the family to their room and asked if they would like to learn some practices that would help his anxiety. They agreed, and I taught them the Holds. I coached



El Paso, TX, Capacitar en la Frontera

Juan's wife, and then their children (with parents' permission). Once the man was calm, a sense of relief came over the children's faces. Seeing the sadness, weariness and depletion in the eyes of Juan's wife, I also encouraged him to offer the Holds to her."

- **Pal Dan Gum**

After intense and busy periods of welcome, eating, showering, and rest, many migrants must wait for contact with their receiving family members. In the "sala", or communal room, migrants rest, watch television, read, and play games. Volunteers report that they often notice the tension in the migrants' bodies, evidenced by shaking legs, for example, while many complain of different aches and pains. Some volunteers have utilized Pal Dan Gum as a practice to engage the migrants, providing them with a gentle form of exercise and stretching to release blocked energy. An advantage of using Pal Dan Gum, volunteers cite, is that entire families can participate, allowing for the inclusion of family members across all age ranges. See early sections in the manual (*pages 40-43*) for the description of specific movements. It may come as no surprise that many children love the Lion's Roar!



Guatemala

- ◆ **Migrants en route to Family Reunification**

Many of our volunteers have spent countless hours transporting migrants to bus stations or airports after they have made contact with family members in their destination country. Once at bus stations or airports, migrants and their families often endure long waits prior to boarding their transport or renewing the revision of their travel documentation. Volunteers report that migrants—adults and children alike—experience heightened anxiety during these long waits.



Guatemala

Sisters Irma Vargas, DC, and Patricia Connolly, DC, who serve migrants through the Interfaith Welcoming Committee in the San Antonio, Texas area, also frequently transport migrants to airports or bus stations. These migrants, also released temporarily by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), are also en route to reunification with family members. Sisters Patricia and Irma note that many women are forced to travel with ankle bracelets that allow ICE to continue to track their whereabouts. When they travel to airports, these same women and children are often again subject to intense review processes prior to boarding their planes.

Sister Irma related the story of a Guatemalan mother traveling with her four children. One of her sons, who almost drowned on the perilous journey north, carried his first communion ribbon in his pocket. When the family arrived at the airport and the guards began to pat down his mother, the son collapsed to the floor, his continuous experience of

traumatization triggered. Sister Irma described how she was able to utilize Capacitar practices to assist the mother to stabilize her son. She says: “Capacitar has helped us. We need it to be able to minister to these women and children.”

Many Capacitar team members have reported that teaching the Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*) is an accessible and discreet technique that can be used by migrants in transit. In fact, many migrants have expressed such release and calm after learning and using the Fingerholds that they planned to use them on the bus or plane ride itself.

• The Fingerholds

Sister Betty Keegan, FMM, a member of our Capacitar network, illustrates one such application. By teaching Fingerholds she offers the migrants a tool both for relaxation as well as for managing strong feelings as they arise during their ongoing journey.

“I use Fingerholds while sitting with men, women, and children with long waits in bus terminals and airports. We can wait for hours on end, but with the Fingerholds, the migrants feel empowered and can relax.” An adaptation Sister Betty particularly prefers is pairing the Fingerholds with prayer verses (*page 134*). While she uses scripture verses from the Bible, passages from other holy texts or religious traditions can be utilized according to the beliefs and preferences of the migrant being accompanied. Sister Betty also adapts EFT as she accompanies people, tapping only on the hand. “It seems to be more discreet and just as effective as the usual form of tapping.”

◆ Self-Care for Workers and Volunteers

Workers in these emergency hospitality centers report a high degree of satisfaction from doing this important work. While they bear witness to tremendous amounts of suffering, they also speak of the hope they experience walking with another human being on the journey. Many of the migrants who arrive at these temporary shelters, in fact, are close to reunification with loved ones. Their struggle is by no means over; and yet, many demonstrate an incredible resiliency.

Workers who do accompany the migrants and refugees for a sustained period of time know and understand the importance of self-care. With continual exposure to trauma, regular self-care practices are essential to maintain health and wellbeing and to stay centered with healthy boundaries. Moreover, as we well know, healing others requires that we first heal ourselves.



Palestine

When these self-care practices are used regularly as an integral part of one's life, there is less chance of succumbing to secondary trauma while accompanying others. There is more energy, strength, peace, joy, wellbeing and resilience to be present in the moment to deal with daily challenges and to more effectively walk with refugees and migrants in their trauma and healing process.



Capacitar en la Frontera Training, El Paso Texas

In the words of Beth Riehle:

“Getting centered is about being present, allowing the universal energy to move through me as I accompany the other. I believe it has just as much to do with the healing as the modality. It is a connection. But one must be careful not to take on the other’s energy. Setting boundaries is very important.”

◆ **Best Practices for Self-Care**

We summarize here a list of favorite Capacitar self-care practices used by workers in these transitional and temporary settings:

- Daily use of Tai Chi (*pages 35-39*)
- Salute to the Sun upon rising every morning (*pages 44-45*)
- Deep Abdominal Breathing at multiple points throughout the day (*page 20*)
- Fingerholds prior to sleep, accompanied by gratitude prayers or daily inventories (*pages 24-25*)
- Switching as a powerful grounding technique between interviews or following crisis (*page 22*)
- Pal Dan Gum to energize, reinvigorate when feeling depleted (*pages 40-43*)
- Daily use of Emotional Freedom Tapping—EFT (*pages 26-27*)
- Maintaining healthy boundaries and protection (*pages 72-75*)

When these self-care practices are used regularly as an integral part of one’s life and lifestyle, there is less chance of succumbing to secondary trauma while accompanying others. There is more energy, strength, peace, joy, wellbeing and resilience to be present in the moment to deal with the daily challenges and to more effectively walk with refugees and migrants in their trauma and healing.

CAPACITAR PRACTICES IN DETENTION CENTERS

To be imprisoned, incarcerated or detained is an exceedingly stressful and sometimes traumatic reality for an individual. The pain of experiencing physical or sexual assault, witnessing the violent deaths of family members, and being displaced from one's home—experiences all too commonly part of the lived experiences of many migrants and refugees—only amplifies the anguish, and sometimes complicates the trauma reaction in or after detention.

On the US-Mexico border, we have most closely observed and accompanied the realities faced by detained migrants at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Enforcement and Removals Operation and El Paso Processing Center. (We refer to the detention facility as the El Paso Processing Center throughout this manual.) Here Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)—USA accompanies residents by providing chaplaincy services. One of our key Capacitar collaborators, Fr. Richard Sotelo, SJ, has been instrumental in brokering the inclusion of Capacitar practices in accompaniment services provided to refugee detainees. Alongside Sister Kathy Braun, OSF, and Sister Rita Specht, RSM, Fr. Richard launched a “pilot program” in 2011 to provide Capacitar groups to detained migrant women in the detention facility. The response to that “pilot program” was so overwhelmingly positive that Capacitar en la Frontera was given permission to continue this program—through the present day, 2016.

◆ Capacitar Practices with Detained Migrant Men and Women

In DHS federal detention centers, undocumented immigrants await disposition of their cases or deportation. Detainees are from countries all over the world. Many wait months for their cases to be adjudicated—some, even years. Most detainees, because of their separation from home, family and country, exhibit some level of traumatic stress. Most have experienced acute traumas in addition to exposure to chronic trauma. Along the US-Mexico border, the majority of detainees at these facilities are from Latin American countries, however, men and women from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East are also detained in these facilities.

Sister Kathy Braun, OSF, is Capacitar en la Frontera Co-Coordinator and has spearheaded integrating Capacitar practices into services for migrant detainees in the Department of Homeland Security's El Paso Processing Center (EPC). Initial Capacitar workshops led by Sisters Kathy and Rita were tailored to empower detainees through a six-week program. Given the needs of those served, workshops were offered in Spanish.



Sisters Kathy and Rita leading a group at the El Paso Women's Processing Center

Fr. Richard Sotelo, SJ, states that JRS believes in the positive benefits that flow from integrating Capacitar practices in the accompaniment of migrants and refugees: “We believe in Capacitar, having witnessed the transformation of individual lives—not by changing lived experiences, but rather by transforming perceptions of those events.”

According to team members, the Capacitar program in the detention center had to evolve over time. According to Sister Kathy, “The team learned that ‘less is more’ with regard to the content.” Emphasis is to provide sessions in which the participants experience the practices and are encouraged to regularly use the practices to find relief.

Due to detainee turnover, the six-week cycle was replaced with a four-week cycle, and the class time was expanded to two hours. See the curriculum summary (*page 92*) and detailed curriculum in the Appendix (*page 129*). Initially, Capacitar was offered to women only, and then in August 2014, four-week cycles for men were initiated and alternated with the women’s groups. Capacitar trainers have learned to allow the size and characteristic makeup of each group to dictate the amount of content and the pace of each cycle.



Chaplains Richard Sotelo, SJ, and Sr. Kathy Braun, OSF, at the El Paso Detention Center

Trainers report that detainees share not only the techniques with other detainees, but also encourage others to participate in future Capacitar cycles through word of mouth.

Capacitar trainers summarized key learnings based on their work with detained immigrants that might be of use to you and your groups:

- Written pre- and post-evaluations may be of little use, since many participants do not have the literacy skills needed.
- Instead, the consistent evaluation tool used is a drawing. Participants are invited to draw an image of how they feel regarding their levels of energy, and of their physical and/or emotional pain. Images drawn by participants both before and after Capacitar groups are included in this section (*page 91*).
- Using items from nature, including the elements, images or symbols, are useful means for encouraging participants to share.
- Certificates of completion of the Capacitar program recognize the participants’ efforts and are highly valued by detainees.

While each group is unique because of the changing nature of the detainee population, our collective experience has been that participants, on the whole, have reported less anxiety, increased hopefulness (even though they may not be reunited with family or may be deported to a country they never lived in), a greater sense of belonging, reduced physical pain, and an expansion in inner freedom. Some detainees even reported that they used medication for a shorter period of time than prescribed.

Capacitar trainers working in detention centers also stress the need for flexibility. In addition to the transient nature of the population, they note that policies and procedures in the detention centers continue to evolve alongside the socio-political context that shapes the reality of migrants and their detention. Capacitar trainers encourage patience and tenacity in developing a program that is a “good fit” with the center and its population at any given time. As Sister Kathy stated: “We are called constantly to adapt.” She and Fr. Richard both stressed, however, the centrality of multiplying basic Capacitar practices. “The one constant in our detention groups has been that we do not stray far from the Capacitar Emergency Kit (*pages 121-128*). It is our foundational text,” they added.

4. Application of Capacitar Practices

◆ A Note Regarding All-Male Groups

Capacitar trainers in detention centers state that providing workshops to all-male groups of immigrant detainees has added a further layer to their presentations. They reflected on their earliest efforts, that primarily focused on teaching technique (which is important) but gave short shrift to practice. Trainers stressed the feedback they received from the men: when men experience the efficacy of the exercises, i.e. how the practices work to help them feel better, they are more likely to continue to use them.

Capacitar trainers also clarify that, on the whole, men are detained for longer periods of time. So, male participants often repeated the Capacitar courses. Trainers, in turn, structured the groups in ways that increasingly built men's capacity to multiply the practices. The men often took turns leading the practices during the groups. Some discovered that they were natural leaders.

Fr. Richard stated: "In many ways it is no longer Sr. Kathy and I who are the presenters. Rather, we are conveners for the men, who have taken very real ownership of the group. The men have embraced the popular education model in a way that is both humbling and awesome."

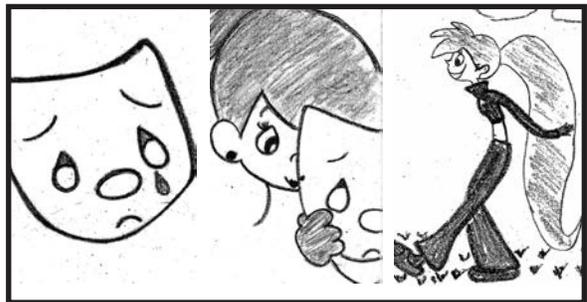
"Capacitar has been a rousing success with the women... While there were qualms about how the men would react to the program in a detention center where the men are macho and tough, the program with the men has succeeded beyond anyone's imagination. Capacitar groups for the men are a safe and neutral space."

"Capacitar is like a living organism. It is born into realities, adapts to the needs and actualities of the participants, and is thereby transformed."

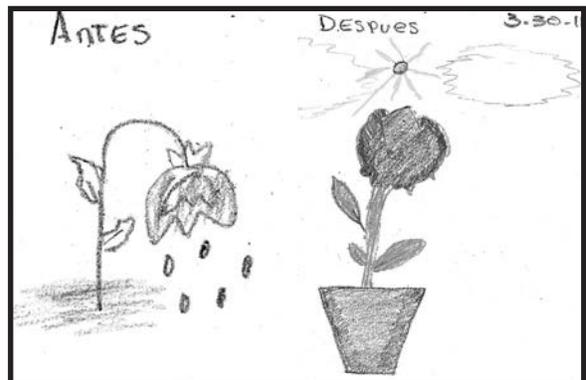
—Sr. Kathy Braun, OSF



Drawing exercise at the El Paso Men's Processing Center



Before and After drawings—Women's Processing Center



Capacitar has discovered that one of the most effective ways to evaluate change in participants as a result of a workshop is to invite them to draw a picture of how they felt before and then after. This drawing exercise is done at the end of a training. When a person first starts a workshop, they usually don't know how they feel since their state of stress or trauma has become the normal experience. It is only after learning a few of the practices that they can truly make a comparison of their physical, mental and emotional states before and after.

OVERVIEW OF SAMPLE CURRICULUM: Workshop for Detained Migrants

See Appendix A for a more detailed version of the sample curriculum (pages 129-130).

Each session is 2 hours in length and conducted by co-facilitators. Our experience has taught us that 4-week cycles are of optimal length, given the turnover rate of detainees, as well as the high demand for workshop participation by detainees.

Week 1

Introduction to Capacitar
Breathwork (*pages 20-21*)
Sign Agency Consent Forms
Tai Chi (*pages 35-39*)
Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*)
Peer Teaching
EFT-Emotional Freedom Tapping (*pages 26-27*)
Homework
Closing

Week 2

Breathwork (*pages 20-21*)
Review
Tai Chi (*pages 35-39*)
Head, Neck and Shoulder Release (*pages 58-59*)
EFT-Emotional Freedom Tapping (*pages 26-27*)
Peer Teaching
Closing

Week 3

Breathwork (*pages 20-21*)
Review
Tai Chi (*pages 35-39*)
Acupressure for Pain and Traumatic Stress (*pages 48-57*)
Pal Dan Gum (*pages 40-43*)
Peer Teaching
Homework
Salute to the Sun (*pages 44-45*)
Closing

Week 4

Breathwork (*pages 20-21*)
Review
The Holds (*pages 60-61*)
Draw Images—self-evaluation of change (*page 91*)
Share in Group
Presentation of Certificates
Closing

◆ Capacitar Practices with Displaced Youth

Members of our team have encountered displaced youth through a variety of systems and organizations. Some displaced youth are in detention, some are seeking social services, including mental health services, case management, etc., and some are served by community health centers both in the borderlands as well as throughout the interior of the United States. While members of our Capacitar network have been able to teach and multiply Capacitar techniques among this population, no member has had success in formally brokering a relationship, such as the one at the El Paso Processing Center. Moreover, team members working with displaced youth have requested anonymity in both their names as well as entities, given the strong parameters of privacy under which their systems or entities operate.

In the United States, many displaced youth are unaccompanied. These minors migrate primarily with the goal of reunifying with their families. Some youth have not seen their parent or parents for many years. An extended family member has raised many of these youth, although some have fallen away from or have never received adequate parental guidance. Many displaced youth have suffered some kind of abuse—emotional, physical, and/or sexual. Some have lived on the streets, many have worked, and others have become involved with gangs or some kind of criminal activity. In sum, they are a group that has experienced many acute traumas and chronic exposure to trauma.

Their journeys north to reunite with family members are perilous. Many pay or are trafficked for exorbitant sums of money by smugglers or coyotes. Some have been abandoned by these coyotes; others travelling in groups are at risk of robbery, kidnapping or rape. Many who are forced to ride “La Bestia”, or trains travelling throughout Mexico, suffer devastating falls, loss of limbs or any kind of cruelty. And then, of course, many must traverse deadly hot and isolated deserts, where they face hunger, dehydration, injury, disorientation or abandonment. Ironically, many displaced youth state that they are most fearful after having crossed the US-Mexico border, for it is here that they remain ever vigilant of being apprehended by immigration.

Many Capacitar team members who encounter these youth report that the youth are highly suspicious of systems, agencies, and protocols for intake and treatment that are intrusive and unfamiliar to them. In light of all of the traumas they have experienced, this type of response is completely understandable. Moreover, team members state that some youth are especially unresponsive because they do not speak English or Spanish, because they are of indigenous backgrounds and speak languages and/or dialects unfamiliar to a worker or volunteer.

In light of these realities, Capacitar practices are an excellent tool for engaging and accompanying these youth. Benefits of utilizing Capacitar practices with displaced youth are:

- Practices can be demonstrated with little or no verbal instruction.
- Practices can be adapted to fit the background of the youth, including age, sex, language or culture.
- Practices help the youth stay grounded in the present, rather than focusing on challenges in the past.
- Practices can be taught in individual or in group settings.
- Practices can be integrated as a complement to standard treatment approaches already institutionalized in a variety of systems.

In some cases, workers have reported reticence on behalf of supervisors or administrators to formally incorporate Capacitar groups or trainings into their programs. Many of these same workers, however, reported affirmation from their peers and supervisors in the individualized manner in which they incorporated the use of Capacitar practices with displaced youth. One said: “As soon as my supervisor saw how much success I was having with the youth, she encouraged me to keep using more Capacitar.”

Among workers who provide services to displaced youth in any number of settings, the Capacitar practices they most commonly report using are:

- Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*)
- The Holds (*pages 60-61*)
- Emotional Freedom Tapping (*pages 26-27*)
- Mandalas (*pages 80-81*)
- Finger Labyrinth (*pages 76-78*)
- Pal Dan Gum (especially in groups) (*pages 40-43*).

One worker described the incredible success she experienced in accompanying her client, a 13-year old Honduran survivor of physical abuse:

“During our time together, we had learned Fingerholds, Tapping, and the use of the Finger Labyrinth. I asked her: ‘How have the techniques helped you?’ She did not answer me directly, because she spoke an indigenous dialect. But this is what she did: She sat down on the floor in a doubled-over position. She began to speak her dialect, and then slowly she began to raise and lower herself. As she moved, she gradually raised herself into a standing position. She was showing me, using the movements, how much she had pulled through in her life. And Capacitar practices gave her the strength to stand up, maintain herself in standing position, and find happiness.”



Demonstration of the transformation of a displaced Honduran youth after using Capacitar practices—El Paso, Texas

◆ Capacitar Practices with Detained Migrant Families

While the practice is controversial, thousands of migrant families are currently being held in detention in the United States. Along the US-Mexico border, detention capacity for families doubled in April 2014 when a federal detention center was opened in Dilley, Texas. This center, which houses approximately 2,000 women and children, was created following the consistently full capacity experienced at a similar family detention center in Karnes, Texas. Prior to the June 2015 decision made by a federal judge, families could be held indefinitely while their case was reviewed in immigration proceedings. Since this past summer (2015), women and children should be detained only 28 days.

The reality of detained families is well known to volunteers, activists and church workers in South Texas, who have been providing emergency response services, including hospitality, to tens of thousands of men, women and children who have migrated across the US-Mexico border in the surge of migrants seen during the summer of 2014. Sister Patricia Connolly, DC, is the co-chair of the San Antonio Interfaith Welcoming Committee, which spearheaded the emergency response to this influx of migrants. Also a key Capacitar collaborator, Sister Patricia has worked diligently to bring Capacitar to the families detained at the Dilley federal detention center.

To facilitate this integration, Sister Patricia simultaneously has been advocating at multiple levels. As a Daughter of Charity, she has continued to seek access to detainees by lobbying prison administrators from within the umbrella of religious services. Meanwhile, she and fellow Capacitar trainer, Sister Irma Vargas, DC, have provided Capacitar trainings to 30 volunteers. Through the provision of multiple taster trainings, volunteers have built their capacity to multiply Capacitar trainings within the detention center.

In late September 2015, Immigration and Customs Enforcement of DHS finally granted Sister Patricia and her team of 5 Capacitar trainers access to the family detention center. The team was able to enter the Center on the feast of St. Vincent. Said Sister Patricia of the team's efforts: "We are taking our spirit and the spirit of Capacitar there."

While Capacitar's presence in the family detention center has just been initiated, the team has immediate plans to:

- Assess the needs of the families
- Learn the policies and practices at this detention facility
- Consider where, when, and how they can gain access to detainees
- Determine which Capacitar practices will be of most use to the families
- And explore how to develop Capacitar groups that will be most effective.

Like many Capacitar teams serving men, women and children in detention centers, much attention has been given to the best way to bring Capacitar practices to detained migrants during short and sometimes infrequent visits. For this reason, we turn to the next section on visitation.

VISITING DETAINED MIGRANTS

In addition to conducting Capacitar groups or working individually with detained migrant individuals and families, many members of our Capacitar network are involved in making visits to detained migrants. These visits take a variety of forms: accompanying some migrants who have been released to visit their detained loved ones, visiting detained migrants, and accompanying detained migrants on an ongoing basis through alternate mechanisms, such as letter writing. Regardless the manner, Capacitar team members have consistently returned to Capacitar practices as valuable tools for assisting migrants to manage anxiety and depression, to stabilize and recover from acute episodes, and to learn tools they can continue to practice on a daily basis to promote wellness, even under the most difficult of circumstances.

◆ Accompanying Migrant Family Visits

As a result of the current U.S. immigration policy, families are often separated before, during, or after detention. Families we serve in hospitality shelters, for example, relate instances in which ICE officials suddenly notify them while in detention that they will be separated from their loved ones. Often, male heads of households or any male over 18 can be separated from family members for detention in another location or for deportation. Women and children, in turn, are either transferred to family detention centers or released to the community, “on their own recognizance.” Many of these women and children are served by volunteers of emergency response networks near large urban centers, such as El Paso, Texas; Tucson, Arizona; and San Antonio, Texas. When our team members come into contact with these women and children, many are devastated following the forced separation from their loved ones. Many are uncertain about whether they should wait in or near the city in which they have been detained with hopes of brokering their loved one’s release, or whether they should travel to reunify with other family members in the interior of the United States. The suffering this forced separation causes only exacerbates the multiple losses and traumas the families have experienced on their long journeys.

Capacitar team members have been on the frontlines of assisting women and children migrants to visit their loved ones still being held in detention. While the visits are extremely short, monitored closely, and do not permit physical contact between family members, migrants describe the relief and consolation they feel at seeing their loved ones.

Capacitar en la Frontera Advisory Team member Beth Riehle has spearheaded local efforts in El Paso, Texas to assist migrants to visit their detained loved ones. Beth will connect with the migrants at the hospitality shelters, drive them to the El Paso Processing Center, wait for them during the visit, and provide them with transportation back to the hospitality center. Beth often waits for extended periods of time with the migrants in the waiting areas. During this time, she often shares Capacitar practices with the women and children. Among those practices she and other Capacitar team members frequently report using with those waiting for visits are:

- Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*)
- The Holds (*pages 60-61*)
- Acupressure Points (*pages 48-57*).

Beth also shared an application of Capacitar practices with a Mexican woman she accompanied for a few months. According to Beth, the woman’s husband was murdered in Mexico, and she and her four children fled to the U.S. border after having received death threats. Upon presentation at the bridge,

her oldest, a 19 year-old son, was detained and separated from the family. Beth described finding the woman overwhelmed one day when she met her to prepare for a visit to her son: “I lightly touched her arm and asked if she would like to learn a technique that has helped me when I have a lot of anxiety. She responded yes. I then proceeded to show her the Switching Exercise (page 22). After repeating Switching three times, she said that she could tell a big difference. I then shared with her a few acupressure points to help her when she cannot sleep at night.”

◆ Visiting Detained Migrants

Rev. Tina Schlabach, a Mennonite Pastor and key Capacitar collaborator who lives in Tucson, Arizona, visits detainees in the detention centers located in Eloy, Arizona. Tina is part of the Casa Mariposa Community, that has developed a circle of volunteers to visit detained migrant women until they are released on bond “on their own recognizance” (i.e. ICE releases them temporarily to reunite with family members), or are deported. Casa Mariposa has currently been allotted two mornings per week for visitation to detainees. The team can consist only of members, and each team member can see only 4 or 5 detainees per visit. According to Tina, the team currently makes about 40 visits per week. Since Casa Mariposa has initiated this visitation ministry, they have found the increasing integration of Capacitar practices into their visit to be of immense help. Tina organized an in-depth Capacitar training for their team members in 2014. She said that the training was essential, so that “...all of us have Capacitar in mind, and we can pass it on when it is appropriate and best for the women.”

When the Capacitar-trained team arrives at the detention center, they are given the “A numbers” or identifying number assigned to each woman who has requested a visit. The team is not able to respond to all the requests it receives. When they meet with women, moreover, each often gives them the names and numbers of other women requesting a visit.

Tina shared the Capacitar practices that their team has found most accessible and useful given the unique constraints they experience:

- Fingerholds (pages 24-25): The team reports teaching Fingerholds at nearly every visit. Now the team has been permitted to bring paper and pencils to the visits, so they often invite women to trace their hands and label the drawn fingers with associated emotions.
- Abdominal breathing (pages 20-21): Breathing, and particularly centering oneself, is also taught at nearly every visit. Sometimes team members report offering women a guided visualization.
- Emotional Freedom Tapping (pages 26-27): With access to cubicles for increased privacy, team members teach EFT to detainees, both to stabilize them and to encourage the use of the practice on a daily basis.

Like most volunteers interfacing with large detention centers, Tina described the need to remain flexible—both in responding to the reality of the system, as well as to the individual needs of the detainees. Once, for example, when a private visitation room was provided to her and her team, she described having been able to use the Holds with some of the women she visited. She said of the experience: “That was a real gift for them. They are not allowed to touch each other in detention, so offering the Holds felt like prayers of blessing for them.”

“The day that I was able to do the supportive energy Holds for the women I visited, the women were so grateful to receive the gift of supportive touch! Several of them expressed their release through tears while receiving the Holds.”

— Rev. Tina Schlabach

◆ Ongoing Accompaniment

Given the stringent and even variable limitations placed on volunteers who visit detained migrants, our Capacitar team members have sought increasingly resourceful mechanisms for connecting with detained women and men through Capacitar. Rev. Tina Schlabach, for example, states that she often includes photocopies of mandalas in the letters she writes to detainees. Because the women she visits have access to colored pencils, Tina says: “Many love to receive them... they help them to calm down and relax.”

Other team members have suggested that including copies of the following items in letters sent to detainees they have previously visited could be useful:

- A list of scripture verses to accompany the Fingerholds (*page 134*)
- A Finger Labyrinth detainees can use for meditation (*pages 76-78*)
- Copies of diverse Mandala designs (*pages 80-81*).

“I always remind the women I visit to take care of themselves, as they wait and work on their own asylum cases in immigration detention. I’m glad to be able to show them specific body-based healing and wellness practices that they can use and pass on to others—even with the very limited freedoms that they have in immigration prison. Learning these practices of self-care is empowering for these women.” — Rev. Tina Schlabach



Finger Labyrinth in Panama

CAPACITAR PRACTICES FOR REFUGEE LEGAL SERVICES

In the United States, as is the case of other countries globally, migrants and refugees do not have adequate access to legal services. In the United States, many would argue that the immigration system is overwhelmed, backlogged, and inefficient, forcing migrants to endure long waits to adjust their status, excessive and unfair detentions, and frequent deportations, often at the cost of separating families.

On the US-Mexico border, the demand for legal aid services for migrants far outweighs the legal assistance available. Colleagues report that migrants in other areas of the United States endure similar challenges. With the surge of refugees to the US-Mexico border in 2014, hundreds of lawyers and paralegals from across the United States came to our borderlands to offer pro bono assistance, especially for detained minors and families. Their generous but brief presence was significant but insufficient to address the need for the ongoing legal aid of detained refugees.

Meanwhile, nonprofit legal entities continue to provide the bulk of legal representation to detained migrants and refugees. Legal aid workers encounter migrants in emergency hospitality centers, detention centers, and in the offices of their agencies. Staffs face a multitude of challenges in attempting to support these migrants.

Capacitar practices have been an invaluable resource for many of these legal aid workers and agencies. Capacitar team members report frequently using Capacitar practices during intake interviews, in coordination with mental health providers conducting psychosocial evaluations, and during ongoing consultations inside or outside of the detention center. In addition, Capacitar practices continue to be used as valuable self-care practices for workers exposed to traumatic content. Agencies depend on Capacitar practices for promoting wellness at a systemic level as well.

◆ Capacitar Practices for Legal Aid Encounters with Migrants

Capacitar en la Frontera team members and collaborators work in a variety of legal settings that afford them opportunities to use Capacitar practices in combination with their legal services. Capacitar practitioners in these roles are attorneys, paralegals, detention specialists, intake workers, and administrators. We describe below some of the diverse settings in which team members have made effective use of Capacitar practices to facilitate the sharing of legal aid services with migrants.

A. Intake Interviews

Workers from legal aid entities most often encounter refugees once they have been detained. On the US-Mexico border, many of these refugees have presented at a Port of Entry to make a petition for asylum. Upon presentation, however, most are detained. In U.S. federal detention facilities, refugees add their names to long lists of migrants seeking pro bono legal assistance to further their asylum petition.

It is in this context that often overwhelmed legal aid workers—intake specialists, paralegals, and attorneys, among others—must attempt to respond effectively and humanely to detained refugees. Intake specialists often have the first encounter with detained refugees; many will only meet once for a limited period of time with a refugee. Their task is listening to and accompanying the survivor while garnering enough information to determine if a client has a viable legal case to be picked up by an attorney.

Several intake specialists from local legal aid agencies are Capacitar practitioners who utilize

Capacitar practices either before, in between, or after these short interviews. An intake specialist for Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, Sister Mary Ann Azar, DC, brings Capacitar to her work in the detention centers. She interviews refugees detained at the El Paso Detention and Processing Center to discern if they have a viable case that could be fought in the immigration court.

Sister Mary Ann shares her experiences: “Each person brings her or his own story, with all its sadness and helplessness in the face of their difficulties. For the interviewer, the stress can be double—sharing in the stressful situation of the detainee, and then trying to work out what help might be available, if any. At times, this just involves letting the person know that there’s someone from ‘the outside’ who is interested in hearing their story and trying to help. Often there is no relief available, and even if there’s an available remedy, the process of immigration is very slow and this produces its own level of stress for the person waiting for ‘something to happen’.”

Sister Mary Ann and other Capacitar trainers summarize the techniques they most commonly utilize during Intake Interviews:

- Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*): can be taught at any point to assist the client to manage strong feelings.
- Acupressure Points (*pages 48-57*): points specifically for panic, anxiety and depression can be especially useful if clients experience hypervigilance, re-experiencing or withdrawal symptoms.
- Emotional Freedom Tapping (*pages 26-27*): can be taught at the end of the interview to help stabilize or ground the client; the client can also learn the protocol for continued practice following the interview.

B. Psychosocial Assessments and/or Affidavit Interviews

Despite extremely large case loads, many nonprofit legal aid agencies courageously and consistently represent migrant clients whose cases appear viable, i.e. likely to have an outcome favorable to the refugee in immigration court. To bolster such cases, the legal aid community collaborates with mental health professionals who can conduct psychosocial assessments of the petitioner and prepare affidavits that describe the refugee’s symptomology and speak to clinician’s assessment of the survivor’s experience of trauma.

Psychosocial assessment interviews are conducted by licensed mental health professionals and can last from 1 to 3 hours on a single or more than one occasion. Multiple variables influence the assessment process—proximity and accessibility of the detention facility, policies that determine clinician access to the refugee, and the availability of the mental health practitioner. These interviews require survivors to retell, and in some cases, relive their experiences of acute and/or chronic trauma. Some refugees must relate their experiences of torture, sexual or physical assault or witnessing of such horrendous acts committed against a loved one. Mental health clinicians, for purposes of preparing a thorough assessment, must often ask detailed, multi-sensory questions that probe the survivor’s experience. While professionals bring their clinical experience to bear in supporting and containing a survivor who is relating their trauma history, it is not unexpected that a refugee experiences symptoms related to trauma (such as flashbacks, hypervigilance, panic, disassociation, among others.) Some mental health practitioners trained in Capacitar methods have related their use of Capacitar practices to stabilize clients in such circumstances.

We describe the application of three specific practices with examples of applications following.

4. Application of Capacitar Practices

Capacitar en la Frontera Advisory Team member Ms. Janine Laskowski Gallinar is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has provided pro bono psychosocial assessments for detained refugees who are pursuing political asylum. She said of her experiences: “It is difficult and unethical, in my opinion, for me to conduct psychosocial assessments of this nature for individuals who have experienced such severe trauma and not offer some sort of intervention or tool for managing symptoms. The amount of information required to support the affidavits for court needs to be detailed and supported by evidence. This process is invasive and extremely stressful for individuals.”

Janine reported that she has also taught refugees some Capacitar practices to help them manage symptoms between successive interviews, to assist them as they prepare for subsequent interviews, and to improve their ability to respond to anxiety, improve their mood, and even improve sleep. She said: “I am extremely grateful for having the Capacitar tools to offer as a simple set of body-based practices to help refugees cope during, after and for long-term use when recounting their trauma narratives.”

* **Fingerholds** (pages 24-25)

Janine described the Fingerholds as a consistently useful practice to share with refugees in the process of conducting psychosocial interviews. She described one three-hour interview with a mother and her adolescent daughter in a detention center. While recalling details of their traumas, both showed signs of distress and anxiety. She explained how she was able to make use of the Fingerholds: “I was able to show them the Fingerholds and how to regulate their breathing during this time. We spoke briefly about practicing the technique daily leading up to their court date to help manage symptoms, but also specifically for use during their hearing to help them stay centered. Their response to the Fingerholds was positive and both expressed their gratitude for the introduction of the skill.”

* **Emotional Freedom Tapping** (pages 26-27) **and Switching** (page 22)

The preparation of reports needed for court often involves multiple interviews. Team members have found it useful to introduce other Capacitar practices that can be taught and practiced across multiple encounters to address ongoing symptoms of trauma. Emotional Freedom Tapping and Switching are two such practices that have been introduced and practiced. Our experience has been that refugees in such intensive interview processes are more receptive to these body-based techniques and show a preference to them over traditional talk therapy models.



Janine taught another woman preparing for her political asylum hearing EFT and Switching to help her manage nightmares, flashbacks and panic. Janine said of the woman’s experience: “She reported using them [EFT and Switching] to manage her anxiety during this time, and she was very grateful for the opportunity to learn and use the practices as part of her healing process.”

“I have witnessed firsthand how these skills have empowered women who felt helpless and overwhelmed with fear. These skills have helped make what can be a very dehumanizing experience humane.”

— Janine Laskowski Gallinar, LCSW

* **Emergency Kit of Best Practices** (pages 121-128)

Some clinicians, including Janine, report that providing refugees with the “Emergency Kit of Best Practices” handout at the time of an interview can be especially useful, allowing individuals to review the practices they have been taught during these very intense interview encounters. Since the Emergency Kit is available in over 20 languages in PDF format on the website www.capacitar.org, refugees can have access to a written and visual guide for techniques in their language of preference. Ms. Gallinar reported that she has often passed out multiple copies of the handout to an individual with whom she has worked: “[I have done so] with the intention of them sharing the technique with other woman and children in detention.”

◆ **Self-Care for Legal Aid Staff**

Irrespective of their specific role, legal aid workers consistently reported challenges in balancing their demanding work with adequate and consistent self-care practices. Some workers reported burnout, while some recognized the early signs of compassion fatigue or secondary traumatization. Many experienced daily and repeated exposure to traumatic content during the process of accompanying migrants and refugees. Most, as employees for committed nonprofits, worked long hours with limited compensation, with extremely large caseloads, and were constantly called upon to balance and fulfill multiple tasks in their roles at the agencies.

◆ **Self-Care Practices for Individuals**

Many staff at legal aid agencies have received training in Capacitar practices. While many entered the training to be of better service to the migrants they accompany, most reported that they depended on the daily use of Capacitar practices to promote their own wellness and to mitigate the potential impact of secondary traumatization.

Sister Mary Ann Azar, DC, talks about her own daily use of Capacitar practices for self-care: “I find the Fingerholds very helpful, especially if I have to meet with one of the immigration officials and anticipate that the meeting will be a hard one. They are also useful if it’s hard to get to sleep after a stressful day. Also, the practice of centering oneself can be done between interviews and this helps to clear my mind so I can give full attention to the person who will be coming in next. ‘Switching’ is very useful because it helps me to be more centered in the midst of a busy environment that often requires a lot of attentiveness.”

Like Sister Mary Ann, other Capacitar team members report regular use of the following Capacitar practices for self-care:

- Centering through Abdominal Breathing (pages 21-22)
- Boundary Protection Practices, such as Switching or “Globe of Light” (pages 72-73)
- Fingerholds (pages 24-25)
- Tai Chi (pages 35-39)
- Emotional Freedom Tapping (pages 26-27).

◆ Self Care Practices for Groups

As our Capacitar solidarity network has increasingly accompanied the legal aid community that serves migrants, we have been invited to provide support for entire agencies or teams providing legal aid. Rev. Tina Schlabach and Capacitar en la Frontera Co-Coordinator Kathy Revtyak, LCSW, both have received invitations and provide Capacitar self-care workshops to legal aid workers and activists. Kathy offers a sample curriculum below for use with nonprofit legal aid or activist entities accompanying migrants.

As with any workshop, it is important to consider multiple factors related to the rightness-of-fit between the content and the audience. In such multi-disciplinary audiences, it is often helpful to consider the effective ordering of the presented practices. Moreover, while it is often useful to include some background regarding the theories on which Capacitar is based, consistent focus on teaching and practicing the skills makes the most significant impact for any group.

When Capacitar has offered self-care workshops to agencies, we always invite the agency or group to send their members to the next in-depth Capacitar training to be offered in the area. Our vision is one of empowerment—strengthening and forming Capacitar leaders and trainers embedded within agencies who serve as training resources for their own staff.

In closing self-care workshops, we remind groups that Capacitar practices can be taught and multiplied individually. They also can be practiced in community, which strengthens the sense of unity and wholeness of any group. So, we remind staff of a particular agency that there are many ways to use Capacitar practices together:

- Practice Tai Chi (*pages 35-39*) or Pal Dan Gum (*pages 40-43*) in a group, at a weekly staff meeting.
- Utilize the Drum Massage Circle (*page 47*) for collective relaxation.
- Gather to utilize the Finger Labyrinth (*pages 78-79*) for collective reflection.
- Offer Hand Massage (*pages 64-65*) in the context of an agency retreat.

In any community, we encourage agencies to continue to build connections and collaborations. We encourage entities to continuously attend to vicarious traumatization at the individual as well as systems level and to seek out means for integrating and healing that trauma. Our own Capacitar solidarity network models the type of healing connections that serve to transform secondary traumatization.

OVERVIEW OF SAMPLE CURRICULUM: Self-Care Workshop for Legal Aid Workers

See the Appendix page 131 for a more detailed version of the sample curriculum.

Curriculum for two-hour workshop

Self-Care Inventory

Body Scan (*page 56*)

Tai Chi Practices (*pages 35-39*) (4 movements)

Protection and Boundaries (*pages 72-75*) (3 practices)

Pal Dan Gum (*pages 40-43*) (4 movements)

Additional practices that can be included—optional, depending upon the length of the training.

Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*)

Acupressure Points (*pages 48-57*)

Emotional Freedom Tapping (*pages 26-27*)

Finger Labyrinth (*pages 78-79*)

CAPACITAR FOR HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

On the US-Mexico border, social service agencies have been supporting the health and mental health needs of the migrant community for many years. In 2010, when violence erupted in Northern Mexico, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled to the United States seeking refuge. While many dispersed throughout the United States, tens of thousands stayed in the borderlands. As most had fled after traumatic experiences—assault, kidnapping, torture, extortion, gang violence, witnessing the murder of loved ones—many came into contact with mental health professionals through schools, hospitals, and community mental health settings. As the number of migrants and refugees landing in our borderlands again spiked in 2014 (and now again in the winter of 2015), our area community social services have been called upon to respond to the mental health needs of this community.

In our efforts to train trainers in multiple systems throughout our community, we have prepared Capacitar trainers who accompany migrants and refugees in multiple settings—schools, community centers, human rights centers, women’s groups and centers, churches, hospitals, community health clinics and community mental health clinics. Since 2010, Capacitar en la Frontera has facilitated the training of nearly 250 Capacitar trainers who can accompany migrants and refugees in these diverse settings.

One of our greatest successes has been partnering with a lead community mental health clinic in El Paso, Texas, Family Service of El Paso (FSEP). This collaboration models the potential for integrating Capacitar into the organizational fabric of a system that promotes holistic health. We present and discuss this example as a way to assist you in exploring ways to best serve the mental health and health needs of migrants and refugees in your community.

◆ Capacitar Practice with Migrants in Community Mental Health Clinics

Family Services of El Paso (FSEP), a nonprofit, community mental health agency in Texas, has responded to the mental health needs of migrant families victimized by violence in Mexico, Central and South America. While the agency provides community mental health services to the broader community, a distinct effort also has been made to serve migrant and refugee families impacted by stress and trauma.

Through a multi-year partnership between FSEP and Capacitar en la Frontera, FSEP has creatively and effectively integrated Capacitar practices into the mental health services provided to their clients. This integration is particularly effective in serving the migrant community, as it allows for the provision of low cost interventions, it demonstrates the use



Family Services of El Paso (FSEP) mental health workshop

of evidenced-based approaches, and it is a culturally-responsive model of holistic healing. In short, the integration best meets the mental health needs of this unique population.

To enhance its service provision, FSEP invested in the training of several of its psychotherapists in the Capacitar Multicultural Wellness Education Training (MWET) and Advanced Formation Training. Based on their formation and with the support of the agency administration, FSEP modified its group space to make it more conducive to Capacitar practices. They also purchased Capacitar materials, including manuals and online meditations, to support therapists' integration of the practices into their treatments.

Ms. Janine Laskowski Gallinar, LCSW, is the Clinical Director of FSEP and a Capacitar en la Frontera Advisory Team member. She believes that FSEP's willingness to integrate Capacitar with the agency's model of care reflects its commitment to holistic health. She wholeheartedly recommends Capacitar to other health and mental health agencies that are seeking an evidenced-based, effective, and culturally-sensitive model of holistic health. She says: "Capacitar has been embraced at all levels of our organization from the executive director to clients and their families as well as by our support staff and student interns."

◆ Capacitar in Individual Clinical Practice

Capacitar-trained mental health professionals utilize many Capacitar practices in conducting psychotherapy and in providing clinical services. Each professional blends his or her practice expertise with knowledge of Capacitar tools to best meet the determined needs of the client served. Many team members have consistently reported the benefit of incorporating Capacitar practices into services provided to migrants and refugees.

Practitioners state that clients tend to prefer body-based practices over talk therapy. They note that many Capacitar practices fit better culturally—or can be culturally adapted—to the unique experience of many refugees. Moreover, not all practices require extensive use of language. Practitioners also describe many migrants' comfort with the accessing of images, symbols, or other elements incorporated into Capacitar practices. They describe the following Capacitar practices as especially useful in clinical work to engage migrants and refugees in a multi-sensory manner:

- Safe Space Visualization (*pages 28-33*)
- Chakra Tai Chi
- Work with the Elements (*pages 70-71*)
- Figure 8 for Protection (*page 75*)
- Finger Labyrinth (*pages 76-80*).

Janine shares the experiences of two women who have utilized Capacitar practices in their therapeutic work to transform the trauma they have experienced:

"*Lourdes, age 46, uses Capacitar to cope with her anxiety. She prefers the Fingerholds (pages 24-25) because they are discreet. Using the Fingerholds helps her to remember to breathe, and she pictures herself in nature when she does this practice. At home, she practices Tai Chi (pages 35-39). Sometimes she manages sadness and anger in addition to her worry. The practices remind her to breathe deeply so she does not panic. Her favorite practices are Emotional Freedom Tapping EFT (pages 26-27), Tai Chi, the Fingerholds and using them all with the psychological intervention known as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.*"

"*Maria, age 26, copes better with her anger through the use of Capacitar. The Fingerholds, EFT and Tai Chi have all helped her with critical self-talk, irritability and stress. She uses Capacitar skills as*

tools to manage her mood. EFT has helped her let go of anger and sadness about several past situations. Tai Chi helps her gain energy in the morning and also helps her transition to calmness at night before bed.”

◆ **Capacitar in Group Clinical Practice**

Under Janine’s leadership, FSEP has created an integrative model for blending traditional group psychotherapy with the practice of Capacitar. The group, “Recovery and Wellness,” meets once weekly to support participants in leading a lifestyle of wellness. The group is an open group, meaning members remain in the group for variable lengths of time. A Capacitar-trained psychotherapist leads each group.

Each group starts with a wellness assessment, in which each member notes his or her beginning stress, energy and physical pain levels. After members note their individual levels, they then share their stress levels in the “group check-in”. In addition to rating their stress and specifying if they are experiencing depression, anxiety, irritability, fear, etc., clients briefly share about the week leading up to group and what is contributing to their distress or stability. Often times, clients report on the Capacitar skills they are practicing to help them maintain this balance.

Following the group check in and at the core of the session is the practice of Capacitar skills coupled with Health and Wellbeing Topics. Each group session typically covers two to three skills. The Capacitar skills practiced include Tai Chi (Basic and Chakra), The Fingerholds, Emotional Freedom Tapping, Pal Dan Gum, Switching, Boundary Exercises (Figure 8, Wrapping Oneself in Light, Holding One’s Energy Field), Finger Labyrinth, Acupressure, and The Holds.

Between Capacitar practices, the group leader often presents a topic on health, wellbeing, or self-care. Some facilitators choose to use an activity, worksheet, or fact sheet to augment the information. According to Janine, topics she has covered in any given group include: sleep, hygiene, medication side-effects, cognitive behavioral therapy, communication styles, boundary setting, diet/nutrition and other creative forms of expression.

The group typically closes with another “check-in”, in which each member again notes his or her ending stress, energy and physical pain levels. The group leader can help the group summarize the gains consolidated through the body-based Capacitar practices.

OVERVIEW OF SAMPLE CURRICULUM:

Capacitar Wellness Groups

- Group “Check-In”
- Capacitar Skill: Tai Chi (*pages 35-39*), EFT (*pages 26-27*) or Pal Dan Gum (*pages 40-43*) for focus and grounding.
- Health, Well-Being or Self-Care Topic: Presentation of Topic
- Activity/worksheet/fact sheet
- Capacitar Skill: Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*), Switching (*page 22*), or Boundary Practices (*pages 72-75*), The Holds (*pages 60-61*)
- Individual “Check-Out”: Assessment
- Completion

Janine describes the groups as especially effective for augmenting wellness in a community-based setting. The testimony she shares regarding Diana echoes the positive experience of many clients:

“Diana, age 25, shared that she likes the way the group flows with the use of skills and topics on health and wellness. She especially benefits from EFT. It has helped her with her anger, focuses her breathing and reminds her to relax. The Fingerholds are also something that help her at home, in school and work. The program and skills have helped increase her overall awareness about her feelings and body.”

Group work with Capacitar builds a sense connectedness among participants. As members return to group and share their continued use of Capacitar practices, they experience a sense of

mutual aid and support. Many experience a sense of solidarity in their efforts to transform their trauma through the continued practice of various skills.

Based on our collective experience, we know that group participants often teach other people in their lives the skills they have learned in group settings. Conducted in a community mental health setting, a community clinic, a school, or an immigration detention facility, these mutual aid groups serve to continue to multiply the practice of Capacitar tools. In this way, Capacitar groups remain an effective mechanism for disseminating these trauma-transforming practices within migrant and refugee communities.

◆ **Self-Care for Health and Behavioral Health Staff**

Much like legal aid workers, volunteers, activists and other professionals accompanying refugees and migrants, health and behavioral health workers consistently reported challenges in balancing their demanding work with adequate and consistent self-care practices. Some workers reported burn-out, while some recognized the early signs of compassion fatigue or secondary traumatization. Many, after all, experience daily and repeated exposure to traumatic content during the process of accompanying migrants and refugees. Most, as employees for committed nonprofits, work long hours with limited compensation, have extremely large caseloads, and are constantly called upon to balance and fulfill multiple tasks in their roles at the agencies.

We share with you here two formats that one community mental health agency has elected to use to support the wellness of its staff through the practice of Capacitar.

- **On-Going Staff Wellness Groups through Capacitar**

FSEP holds a once weekly group at its agency dedicated solely to the practice of Capacitar skills for an hour. This group is not only open to clients and their families, but also to any and all agency staff, irrespective of their role. Each session involves practicing one or more Capacitar skills. Each group also involves the use of an assessment tool that assists participants to measure outcomes related to the impact of the Capacitar practices. At the start of each session, participants rate their level of stress, energy and physical pain; they also respond to three questions assessing understanding, value, and preference of Capacitar skills.

Leadership of the weekly group can rotate when multiple Capacitar-trained individuals work within the same agency, such as FSEP.

- **Staff Capacitar In-Service Trainings**

Some agencies or clinics offer ongoing training and formation in Capacitar practices; these staff in-service trainings are conducted by Capacitar members who have completed advanced formation. FSEP, for example, hosts several trainings per year for staff to learn Capacitar practices and how they can apply them with individual clients. FSEP takes care to always dedicate a portion of the in-service to self-care, where topics and practices related to boundary setting are taught and renewed. Janine said of the trainings: “All are encouraged to incorporate the skills in their life and work for optimal results.”



As Capacitar has walked with migrants and refugees the last three decades, our network of solidarity is committed to impacting systems and to creating healthy organizations and communities that contribute to our healing efforts to transform trauma.



Part 5: Creating Healthy Organizations and Communities

As Capacitar has walked with migrant and refugee communities throughout the last three decades, our network of solidarity has become increasingly committed to impacting systems—that is, creating healthy organizations and communities that contribute to our healing efforts to transform trauma. As you utilize this manual to accompany those in migration, we invite you to consider how Capacitar practices can serve to create healthier organizations and communities. We offer some of our learned experiences, expecting that you will adapt them to fit the unique culture in which you serve.

Creating Places of Wellbeing

Throughout our years of accompanying refugees along the border, we have come to know the reality of functioning in systems, organizations, and even physical spaces that are less than ideal. For many of us, our nonprofit organizations occupy small spaces that can become overcrowded with supplies, shared meeting and work spaces, and less-than-private rooms that function for multiple uses. For those of us in emergency, transitional, or temporary spaces, we often are asked to make due with space and materials made available to us—a church hall offered for makeshift hospitality; cots, blankets and supply packages from local or national emergency services; an office or classroom temporarily cleared for meeting or evaluation space. And for those of us functioning in large systems, too often the physical space can appear sterile, dehumanizing, or even limit and restrict much needed contact between trusted loved ones.

Sister Mary Ann Azar, DC, reflects on the ways that physical space impacts her, the refugees she serves, and the accompaniment process:

“The majority of people who I interview are in the detention center, which is a prison-like atmosphere—guards, locks, restricted movement, little privacy in the living accommodations, and ultimately, many ‘rules’ that regiment almost all of the waking moments. The environment is very stressful for the detained people. For those of us who visit them, the environment has some stressors, too—restricted places to visit, rules regarding what can and can’t be brought to them, and restricted visiting hours even for legal representatives.”

Based on our study and use of Capacitar practices with refugee populations, we offer the following suggestions for creating spaces of well-being—whatever your unique context may be.

◆ Create a safe physical space

Even if it is a small one, the physical space can be one in which refugees and workers can be present and rest in a sense of safety. Trauma healing requires that those involved feel physically safe and protected. As you accompany refugees individually or in groups, evaluate your physical space. Attempt, when possible, to meet privately and/or access a space that is private for modeling Capacitar practices. If no private space is available, consider a corner or edge of a room or physical space that is as far removed from distractions as possible.

Consider arranging your space so that someone can sit near the door, if possible. If there is no door, utilize furniture or other fixtures in space to create a screen for privacy. A curtain or serape can also contribute to a sense of privacy.

Attend to temperature in the room as well. Spaces that are too cold or too hot may impede an individual's ability to relax. Most important, maintain sensitivity to the temperature needs of the migrants you are accompanying. In some of our emergency response centers, for example, we became aware that many migrants were previously detained in cool, air-conditioned cells in federal detention centers. Unaccustomed to such strong, artificial cooling, many migrants who were released to our emergency response centers were very cold or experienced cold-like symptoms immediately upon their release.

◆ Create small islands of beauty

Regardless of the physical space in which you have to accompany migrants, always attend to the small but significant ways in which you can bring beauty and positive energy into the space. While the Capacitar Trauma Healing & Transformation manual contains detailed descriptions about attending to physical space, consider the following suggestions for enhancing positive energy through beauty.

Remember to always choose methods and symbols that are culturally appropriate, such as:

- Elements or symbols that represent air, water, fire, earth
- Plants or flowers
- Candles
- Symbols or images
- A colorful cloth or serape.

Because some of the spaces in which we accompany migrants have multiple limitations on the use of many of the items suggested (in detention centers, for example) we encourage you to be creative in adapting your expressions of beauty.

◆ Construct a permanent or temporary labyrinth to add to your space or facility

As a sacred space that can be dedicated to prayer, meditation or walking reflection, a labyrinth offers many possibilities for use by migrants and those who accompany them. Walking the labyrinth requires little verbal explanation (or it can involve explicit verbal preparation) and transcends cultural



Quiché, Guatemala

differences often inherent in a migrant population. Remember that walking the labyrinth can be done individually by either migrants or by those who accompany them. Walking and praying in the labyrinth also can be done communally as part of an event or day of healing for staff. Please review earlier sections of this manual for specific instructions regarding setting up a

labyrinth and preparing your group to best use a labyrinth (*pages 76-80*).

If your facility is a permanent one, consider constructing a labyrinth that will remain. Entities and organizations on the US-Mexico border have had success in both creating simple labyrinths inside their buildings as well as outside. At Family Services of El Paso, for example, staff has planned the installation of flooring in a large room used for group gatherings and sessions on which a simple labyrinth can be painted. At the Soul Enrichment Center, a labyrinth of only 12 feet in diameter has been painted on the brick patio in front of the building.

In Bisbee, Arizona, Sisters Mary Rose Obholz, CSA, and Sister Marilyn Beaver, CSA, have constructed a large labyrinth in the desert sands outside the ALMA Wellness Center where they serve recent migrants. Sisters Mary Rose and Marilyn report that walking the labyrinth has been a healing and nurturing activity that has been abundantly and repeatedly shared in their community.

Creating Safe, Healthy Organizations

Our collective experience accompanying migrants and refugees suggests that healthy systems positively impact the individual and groups within the system. When our systems integrate holistic well-being into the fabric of their organizational culture, we have greater success and longevity in transforming trauma at the individual level. As you accompany migrants and refugees, we invite you to invest in making the systems in which you work healthier. We offer some suggestions to support your efforts to transform trauma at the organizational level.

◆ Create a “Capacitar Culture” in your organization

Members of our Capacitar network report high levels of support for sharing Capacitar practices with those they accompany when organizational support exists. Many Capacitar team members have shared their knowledge and skills with supervisors and administrators, seeking more formal approval for the integration of Capacitar practices into organizational work.

On the El Paso-Mexico border, Capacitar en la Frontera and Family Services of El Paso (FSEP), a community mental health agency, have been successful in building a strong, collaborative partnership. FSEP’s Clinical Director, Janine Laskowski Gallinar, LCSW, who is also a member of the Capacitar en la Frontera Advisory Team, has facilitated administrative dialogue between FSEP Executive Director, Richard Salcido, and Capacitar International Founder/Director, Dr. Patricia Cane. Communication and co-visioning has empowered FSEP to adapt and utilize Capacitar practices in a way that best fits with the needs of his organization.

Mr. Salcido has since shared that: “Capacitar is becoming part of our organizational culture.” The success of FSEP’s integration of Capacitar practices into their organizational model underscores how important the support from individuals in leadership positions is for the successful implementation of a wellness model.

Organizations can demonstrate a commitment to holistic healing and wellness through their:

- Organizational structure
- Policies for staff and for clients/consumers
- Demonstrated cultural competence
- Attention to safe physical spaces in which workers and consumers interact.

As you consider how to create a “Capacitar culture” in your organization, we invite you to engage in these steps:

- Assess your organization’s strengths as well as vulnerabilities.
- Brainstorm ways in which Capacitar practices, methods and principles can fortify your agency.
- Dialogue with other members of the Capacitar international solidarity network, if helpful.
- Decide who should be invited to the table for discussion, planning and co-visioning.

◆ **Dedicate time weekly to staff or team use of Capacitar practices**

Many of our partner organizations report a staff that is stressed for a variety of reasons—large caseloads, low compensation, long hours, stressful conditions of interface with complicated systems, and chronic exposure to secondary trauma, among many other reasons. Our experience in the field has taught us that Capacitar practices can be incorporated into various organizational modalities to heal and nourish our staffs. Be creative with your own staff in developing models of integration that represent a “best fit” with the culture of your system.

At FSEP, the staff meets quarterly to review agency-wide matters. At the start of each of these meetings, Ms. Janine Laskowski Gallinar says: “One or two of the Capacitar skills are practiced as an ‘ice-breaker’ to start the meeting and to help set a tone of centeredness.” Here are other examples of ways team members have built regular Capacitar practice sessions into their organizational routine:

- Open a weekly staff meeting with one or more Tai Chi movements.
- Use one to three Pal Dan Gum movements after returning from breaks at training sessions.
- Acupressure points or EFT can be useful before or during task group or board meetings.
- Create a permanent or a temporary labyrinth to be used at your agency.

Be creative with your use of time and selected practices. Remember that even incorporating a few minutes of body-based practices can bring much needed centering and presence to individual workers as well as to a collective team.

◆ **Use select Capacitar practices to strengthen team unity and nourish team energy**

Remember that as you work to create healing and wellness in your organization, it is important



Drum Massage, Presentation Learning Center—Watts, California

5. Creating Healthy Organizations

to consider Capacitar practices that can be enjoyed collectively. Again, be creative and discerning in creating exercises that are a best-fit with your staff or the current needs of your agency. Here are examples to consider:

- Utilize a large-group drum massage (*page 47*), during which members offer various types of massage (using hands, palms, “karate chops”, circular thumb rotations, etc.) to the person in front of them; then have all the participants turn around to give a massage to the person from whom they have just received a drum massage.
- Create a time for silent walking meditation prior to a staff gathering or retreat using a walking labyrinth (*pages 76-80*). If space does not permit, provide each staff member with a handout on which they can trace a finger labyrinth.
- Use a song to open or close a meeting. Choose the song based on the theme of the gathering or the intent to be inspired, for example, “The Leadership Dance” (*page 132*).

◆ Invest in training trainers who continue to model and mentor the use of Capacitar

During our years of accompanying refugees, many organizations have asked Capacitar to provide wellness groups, short trainings, or to provide self-care workshops and retreats. While our human resources cannot possibly expand to meet all those needs, we return to highlighting the philosophy of Capacitar—empowerment. To that end, we remind you to reflect on the ways in which you can cultivate leadership within a particular organization, entity, or system you encounter.

We ask you to make a commitment to empower indigenous leadership and to train leaders from within the organization. When you train leaders, you strengthen the system and equip them with tools that will allow them to remain sustainable for the long haul.



Capacitar en la Frontera coordinators and team at a Training of Trainers—El Paso, Texas

Creating Healthier, More Whole Systems

Although much of the recent response to the global movement of peoples has necessitated mobilizing informal networks of support, some long-standing work that is done accompanying refugees has and continues to take place within the context of large systems, such as detention facilities. In the United States, for example, Capacitar en la Frontera brokered a relationship with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) El Paso Processing Center in order to begin to reach detained refugees. Under the leadership of Fr. Richard Sotelo, SJ, and Sister Kathy Braun, OSF, a Capacitar team began offering weekly Capacitar workshops to detained women. What began as a pilot project in 2011 has continued through the present (2016) with plans to remain ongoing.

Gaining access and credibility in large systems does not always proceed as smoothly or as quickly as our local experience with DHS. Too often, barriers exist to expanding the reach of Capacitar practices, so that they reach those most in need. Based on our local experience and our collaborative relationship with other Capacitar groups who have attempted or were successful in brokering relationships with systems, we offer the following suggestions.

◆ Think systemically

Remember that change, and the transformation of trauma, happens at multiple levels simultaneously. While we often multiply Capacitar practices from one person to another or one group to another, remember that we can exponentially expand our impact when we think systemically.

◆ Engage leadership

Our collective experience suggests that Capacitar can most fully integrate into a system when the administration or leadership of the particular system is both engaged as well as committed to holistic wellbeing. In addition to the earlier example of FSEP, an El Paso community mental health agency, our early, consistent and ongoing efforts to engage, dialogue with, and seek the support of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) leadership in the El Paso Processing & Detention Center has borne fruit.

As early as 2010, Fr. Richard Sotelo, SJ, with the collaboration of Sr. Kathy Braun, OSF, and Sr. Rita Specht, RSM, spearheaded a proposal to the local immigration officials to offer Capacitar groups for detained female refugees as a demonstration project at the El Paso Processing Center. Fr. Richard engaged in a series of meetings, provided written materials that described the theory and practice of Capacitar, and even invited Dr. Patricia Cane, Capacitar Founder and Director, to make a presentation to the local ICE field office. After several months of dialogue and necessary groundwork, the program was approved by DHS headquarters, and the local Capacitar team was able to initiate work.

Fr. Richard recalled that the female detainee whose traumatic experience engaged the ICE leadership in the process of supporting Capacitar, had already left the detention center when the first Capacitar groups began. This woman witnessed the execution by gang members of her entire family in her home as she hid under a bed. After laying there for hours in stillness, she came directly to one of the U.S. Ports of Entry to seek political asylum. Once detained, she carried the repercussions of this traumatic

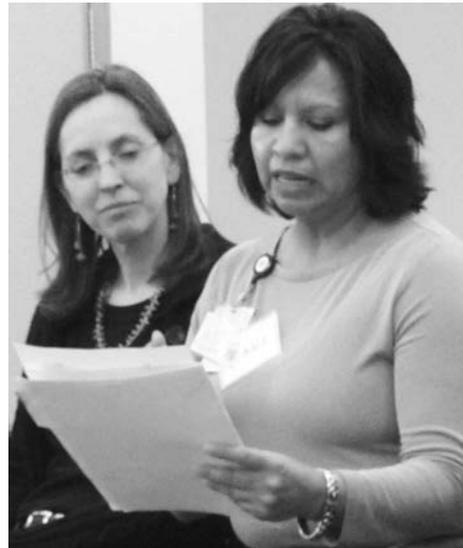
5. Creating Healthy Organizations

experience with her in the form of nightmares, flashbacks, panic attacks and severe migraine headaches.

◆ Invest in training trainers

Finally, we have learned that organizations are best equipped to continue to serve their respective constituencies when their own staff members are trained in Capacitar. As a solidarity network on the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez border, we have only been able to address the immense need of the refugees and migrants arriving in our borderlands by equipping area agencies, social service entities, systems that interface with refugees, and volunteer and activist groups with the capacity to continue to multiply these practices. The primary vehicle for training Capacitar trainers has been the organization of Multicultural Wellness Education Trainings (MWET), facilitated by Capacitar International in distinct regions or urban centers. As your group prepares to host a MWET Training, consider selecting key individuals in systems who are leaders and who are committed to serving as leaders in the multiplication of Capacitar practices in their agencies.

Sister Suzanne Anglim, DC, is an excellent example of a leader who is committed to recruiting other leaders to become trainers for their own system. As the Chief Mission Integration Officer for the Centro de Salud Familiar San Vicente, Sister Suzanne recruited leaders from the agency's health clinics, from among the agency's community-based health promoter team, and from their behavioral health clinic to participate in a year-long MWET. All together, six staff members from her agency, all in leadership of their respective departments, became trained in Capacitar practices. Her strategy of investing in leaders as trainers has provided Centro San Vicente with sustainability in multiplying Capacitar practices.



Sr. Suzanne Anglim, DC (left), counselor Koryna Herrera (center) and psychiatric nurse Ana Rodriguez, RN (right) present their reports on the use of Capacitar in their departments at the Centro San Vicente Clinics in El Paso, Texas.

“With the cartel and drug war violence, the lives of many at the border have been painfully affected by kidnappings, torture and killings. The patients and associates of Centro San Vicente Clinics were not spared. Our health system currently serves over 65,000 people per year. Koryna Hererra is a counselor at San Vicente Clinic and uses Capacitar in the Mental Health Counseling Center. Ana Rodriguez, RN, applies the work as a psychiatric nurse at our homeless clinic. The leadership of our three health care centers has been very supportive of our relationship with Capacitar and we are integrating Capacitar practices throughout the culture of our system.”

—Sister Suzanne Anglim, DC



Capacitar is:

- A spirit of empowerment and solidarity
- A network connecting people on 5 continents
- An organization—Capacitar International
- A team of international trainers
- People in over 42 countries who live with the spirit of Capacitar multiplying the work in their families and communities.



CAPACITAR: Frequently Asked Questions—FAQS

What is Capacitar?

Capacitar is:

- A spirit of empowerment and solidarity
- A network connecting people on 5 continents
- An organization—Capacitar International—based in California
- A team of international trainers
- People in over 42 countries who live with the Capacitar spirit—using practices in their lives and multiplying them in their families, work and communities.

How many people are part of Capacitar?

The Capacitar network includes hundreds of thousands of people in five world areas (North and South America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe) who have learned Capacitar practices and incorporated them into their lives, work and communities. A small staff in California directs the 501c3 nonprofit organization, Capacitar International. Capacitar International has a training team that responds to invitations for trainings and represents the organization in the field. In many countries Capacitar local teams and groups of multipliers have developed their own organizations that sponsor ongoing gatherings, workshops and outreach.

What does ‘solidarity’ mean to Capacitar?

Since its founding in 1988, Capacitar has accompanied grassroots people in places of war, violence, poverty and disaster. We have walked in solidarity with those working for justice, peace and reconciliation in their communities. Because of our two-fold commitment to heal ourselves and heal our world, we have gained the trust of people living in places of trauma and violence. The credibility of Capacitar with so many grassroots people is directly connected to this commitment of personal and societal healing and transformation.

How can Capacitar effectively work with so many different cultures?

Capacitar work embodies a fundamental respect for and sensitivity to cultures and traditions. Using popular education methods, Capacitar develops in its trainers and participants principles of multicultural understanding. In Capacitar workshops facilitators create an atmosphere of respect for cultural systems including: language, boundaries, gender issues, learning styles, mores and customs. When Capacitar receives invitations from grassroots groups or organizations to come to their country or region, trainers work closely with hosting groups to learn about their culture and socioeconomic experience so that workshops and methods meet the needs and reality of the people.

How do people in different cultures react to learning the energy healing practices?

Most grassroots people are sensitive to energy and are grateful to learn ways to connect with the energy in their own hands. The practices Capacitar teaches come from ancient cultures as well as current research. Energy is the basis of most traditional healing systems. In modern times, many people have lost the fundamental connection with their own body wisdom and their capacity to use their energy for healing. In our trainings people are encouraged to reconnect with this source and to ask their community elders what they traditionally did in their culture to heal their bodies and spirits.

Does Capacitar teach ‘New Age’ things?

Capacitar practices (i.e., Acupressure, Tai Chi, Pal Dan Gum, Fingerholds, etc.) do not originate with the “New Age Movement” but come from many ancient cultures. The practices have been well researched by Capacitar for their benefit to body, mind and spirit. Current medical research also shows the positive health benefits of many of these ancient practices, such as Meditation, Breathwork, and Tai Chi. Some newer modalities (Emotional Freedom Tapping, Thought Field Therapy and Polarity) have also been included in Capacitar programs because of their effectiveness. We have field-tested all practices with hundreds of people from different cultures and socioeconomic groups. We evaluate program content, methods and outcomes.

Is Capacitar faith-based?

Capacitar is non-denominational, respecting the faith, religious beliefs and commitments of all people. Capacitar recognizes the spiritual interconnection we all share with the Source of Being. Through its practices Capacitar endeavors to inspire people to recognize the sacredness of life and the goodness and wisdom we carry within our body-mind-spirit, and to make a commitment to create justice, nonviolence and peace in our world. Many people use Capacitar as part of their daily spiritual practice and incorporate some of the practices in their group rituals and ceremonies.

Can anyone be a Capacitar trainer?

Capacitar International has a team of trainers who officially represent the organization and its policies and curriculum. These trainers respond to invitations received by Capacitar International and are responsible for ongoing research, evaluation and development of programs. Participants who have taken Capacitar workshops or trainings are encouraged to informally share as multipliers what they learned with their families, friends and communities in the spirit of popular education. Many professionals, under the scope of their own practice or profession, also incorporate Capacitar practices and methods in their work, outreach, ministry or organization.

What is the meaning of Popular Education?

Popular Education is a dynamic educational method developed by Brazilian Paulo Freire empowering people to awaken to own their wisdom and power. It is used extensively with grassroots people in Latin America and Africa. Popular Education forms the basis of Capacitar’s learner-centered approach. Using wellness practices, such as Tai Chi and Acupressure, Capacitar teaches “body literacy” to reconnect people to their own wisdom and capacity. An important aspect of Popular Education is the multiplier, cascading or spillover effect: what a person learns they are encouraged to pass on to their families and communities, empowering the learner, contributing to the community and multiplying the work.

Does Capacitar do therapy?

Capacitar uses a Popular Education approach, rather than a therapeutic approach. Workshop leaders are educators, not therapists or counselors. Capacitar places skills in the hands of the people so they can do for themselves. In many places where Capacitar works, individual therapy is not culturally appropriate while education is valued and accepted. The Capacitar Popular Education approach is an important way to meet the needs of many traumatized people in places of massive trauma and violence where there are often not enough individual therapists.

What is Capacitar International’s policy of response to disasters?

Until the immediate needs of food, shelter, healthcare and some rebuilding of infrastructure have been met, people cannot begin to address the emotional and physical manifestations of the traumatic events that they have suffered. When people’s lives have been stabilized, the emotional effects of trauma will begin to surface. There will not be sufficient psychologists or grief counselors to reach all those affected. This is the time for Capacitar to respond with its self-help popular education program to empower people with simple skills that enable them to resolve the emotional pain and physical symptoms associated with trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), so that they can rebuild their lives. Capacitar’s response is driven by the needs of the people. We work with partners within the region (organizations who work with the people and respect, as we do, the integrity of solutions that communities develop) and respond to their requests for our program. We train trainers and multipliers within the region so that they can replicate our self-help program. Once people are trained we provide technical assistance, if requested, on multiplication strategies and then exit. We do continue to be available for consultation by email or mail.

What is Capacitar’s emergency response in different world areas?

Capacitar has successfully implemented programs for traumatized victims and survivors of Hurricane Mitch, earthquakes and political violence in Central America, for Hispanic populations in New York after September 11, for the people of Timor Leste and Indonesia, for communities in Chile affected by the 2010 earthquakes and tsunami, for tsunami and Fukushima survivors in Japan, for people on both sides of the conflict in Ireland/Northern Ireland and for victims in other conflict zones, such as Colombia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Israel and Palestine. Since 1988, many thousands of people have participated in primary trainings offered by Capacitar in collaboration with hundreds of grassroots and partner organizations in over 42 countries.

What is the meaning of Capacitar’s logo?

Capacitar’s logo comes from a pre-Columbian design of the lotus symbolizing creativity and empowerment: people coming to life, rooted to the earth, birthing new life, joining hands in solidarity around the world to empower each other.



Rev. Tina Schlabach leading Tai Chi with participants at El Hogar, Nogales, Mexico

**A MULTICULTURAL WELLNESS EDUCATION APPROACH TO TRAUMA HEALING
WITH INDIVIDUALS AND GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES**

Patricia Mathes Cane, PhD

Capacitar International Founder/Director

from the dissertation: Trauma Healing and Transformation, 2000

The Union Institute and University, Cincinnati, OH

ABSTRACT: In response to community trauma resulting from political and domestic violence, natural disasters, genocide, poverty and HIV/AIDS, energy-based wellness practices have been culturally adapted and taught to professionals and grassroots people to promote individual and communal healing. Since 1988 a popular education wellness approach has been researched and developed through workshops in the Americas, Europe (Ireland/Northern Ireland), Asia (Indonesia, East Timor, Sri Lanka) and Africa (South Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Nigeria). Simple wellness practices, adapted from ancient cultures and modern therapies are taught to professionals and grassroots leaders for self-use and for replicating within families and communities: body movement, Tai Chi meditation, breath work, fingerholds and meridian work for emotional release, visualization, acupressure for physical/emotional pain, body tapping, and body holds for energy balance.

Participants include diverse cultures and educational backgrounds, modeling inclusive approaches to community building for healing: indigenous, refugees, prisoners, youth-at-risk, children, abused women, caregivers, doctors, teachers, psychologists, religious and social workers. Outcomes from regular use of the practices by participants show a lessening of physical and emotional symptoms related to traumatic stress and overall positive change in wellbeing. Drawn from Freire's work, this popular education approach to trauma helps participants develop body literacy and empowers them to heal themselves and others.

Through a cascading training model people who have few resources and little access to medical or psychological care can gain skills to deal with ongoing stress and the challenges of life. In areas of war and conflict, it offers skills for dealing with vicarious trauma (VT) and continuing traumatic stress disorder (CTSD).



Mayan children, Nahualá, Guatemala



CAPACITAR Emergency Response Tool Kit

Patricia Mathes Cane, Ph.D., Capacitar Founder/Director

Tools for Wellbeing

The health of body, mind and emotions is continuously affected by trauma, violence, weather, diet, environment, daily news, and the challenges of life. The use of simple ancient healing skills can empower us to live with peace and wellbeing no matter what is happening around us. The following Capacitar exercises are offered to be used at times when we feel drained, scattered or depressed. These tools are for all of us, whether we are survivors of trauma, caregivers working with others or persons overwhelmed and stressed by daily life. The challenge is to build these practices into our lives and lifestyle, so they become second nature and can be called upon whenever we are aware of stress, energy drain, depressed feelings or loss of center. Please copy, distribute and use these yourself and with others. More practices and theory can be found in our manuals and on our website www.capacitar.org.

BREATHWORK

Breath is the source of life, bringing fresh energy into the tissues and cells to nourish body, mind and the whole person. When we breathe out, accumulated stress and toxins are released. Breathing through a stressful time is an effective way to let go of the tension that accumulates in the body. A few long deep breaths at a difficult moment can completely change the way we handle a situation. Breathwork combined with images of light or nature can promote feelings of peace, calm and focus.

- **Abdominal Breathing** Sit comfortably supported and close your eyes. Breathe deeply and center yourself, letting go of all worries and thoughts. Place your hands on your abdomen, breathe in deeply through your nose and imagine the air moving down through the body into your center within your abdomen. Imagine that your abdomen fills with air as if it were a balloon. Hold your breath for a few moments and then exhale slowly through your mouth, contracting the muscles of your abdomen, letting go of all the tension in your body. Continue abdominal breathing for several minutes. If thoughts come into your mind, gently release them, returning to the image of the air moving in and out of your body.
- **Breathing in Nature** Nature is a great resource for healing and grounding. With feet on the ground, breathe in deeply imagining that your feet are long roots running into the earth. Breathe in earth energy, breathe out stress, tension and pain.

TAI CHI ENERGY EXERCISES

Rocking Movement

Stand with feet separated, shoulder-width apart, hands at sides. Raise your heels and with palms facing upwards raise your hands to the level of your chest. Turn your palms downward and move your hands downward while you lower your heels and raise your toes in a rocking movement. Continue slowly rocking back and forth, breathing deeply. With each move relax your shoulders, arms and fingers. Do the exercise smoothly and slowly. Breathe deeply and imagine that your feet are planted securely on the earth. As you raise your hands imagine that you are able to bring down into body and mind healing energy to cleanse and fill you. This is a very beneficial movement for trauma and depression.



Shower of Light

With left foot forward, raise your hands up over your head, then move them downward as if showering yourself with light. Feel the energy cleansing and filling your being. Repeat on the right side, with right foot forward. Breathe in the shower of light, and then exhale and let go of any negativity within you. Feel the light cleansing and renewing you. This is an excellent for persons who are depressed or dealing with past wounds of trauma.

Let Go of the Past and Open to Receive

With left foot forward, palms curved softly downward, push your hands outward in a gentle arc, letting go of all tension, negativity and violence within you. Turn palms upward and draw them back towards the chest, breathing in peace and healing. Repeat with right foot forward. Breathe out pain and violence. Breathe in peace and healing.



Fly through the Air

With your left foot forward, your left hand upward, swim or fly through the air. The motion should be free and light with arms and shoulders relaxed. Repeat the movement on the right side starting with your right hand upward. Fly freely through the air letting go of all that weighs you down, feeling light, alive and free. Open your heart to all the possibilities for your life and healing. This is good to release pain in back, shoulders and head.



FINGERHOLDS TO MANAGE EMOTIONS

The following practice is a simple way to work with emotions by holding each finger. Emotions and feelings are like waves of energy moving through the body and mind. Through each finger runs a channel or meridian of energy connected with an organ system and related emotions. With strong or overwhelming feelings, energy can become blocked or repressed, resulting in pain or congestion in the body. Holding each finger while breathing deeply can bring emotional and physical release and healing.

The fingerholds are a very helpful tool to use in daily life. In difficult or challenging situations when tears, anger or anxiety arise, the fingers may be held to bring peace, focus and calm so that the appropriate response or action may be taken. The practice may also be done for relaxation with music, or used before going to sleep to release the problems of the day and to bring deep peace to body and mind. The practice may be done on oneself or on another person.

FINGERHOLD PRACTICE:

Hold each finger with the opposite hand 2-5 minutes. You can work with either hand. Breathe in deeply; recognize and acknowledge the strong or disturbing feelings or emotions you hold inside yourself. Breathe out slowly and let go. Imagine the feelings draining out your finger into the earth. Breathe in a sense of harmony, strength and healing. Then breathe out slowly, releasing past feelings and problems.

Often, as you hold each finger, you can feel a pulsing sensation as the energy and feelings move and become balanced. You can hold the fingers of someone else who is sad or upset. The fingerholds are very helpful for young children who are crying or having a tantrum, or they can be used with people who are very fearful, angry, anxious, sick or dying.



For Protection and To Center Oneself:

Hold fingertips together and cross the ankles (left over right). Breathe deeply and imagine that you are resting in a safe place deep within yourself.



EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TAPPING—EFT

Emotional Freedom Tapping (EFT) developed by Gary Craig, Ph.D., is very useful for unblocking and healing strong emotions, fears, anxiety, emotional pain, anger, traumatic memories, phobias and addictions, as well as for alleviating body symptoms and pain, such as headaches and overall body pain. The technique is based on the theory of the energy field of body, mind and emotions, along with meridian theory of Eastern medicine. Problems, traumas, anxiety and pain can cause a block in the energy flow of the body. Tapping or pressing acupuncture points connected with channels or meridians of energy can help move blocked energy in congested areas and promote the healthy flow of energy in the body and in mental and emotional fields.

(Adapted with permission from the EFT materials of Gary Flint, Ph.D. Emotional Freedom Technique.)

EFT Practice:

1. Think of an issue to work with and measure your anxiety level:

Choose to work with a problem, worry, phobia, anxiety, traumatic memory or negative self-concept. Using a scale of 0—10, measure the level of anxiety that you feel when thinking about the issue. (0 means no anxiety, 10 means extremely high level of anxiety). If it is difficult to quantify or measure with a number, use a simple scale such as: (none, small, medium, large) or (little to big) or (short to tall).

2. Tap the sequence of Acupressure Points 9-12 times:

Breathe deeply and tap 9 to 12 times with index & middle fingers :

- Points above where the eyebrows begin 1
- Points at the side of the eyebrows 2
- Points below the pupils of eyes on bone 3
- Point below the nose 4
- Point below the lips on the chin 5
- Points below armpits (about 4 inches down) 6
- Points below clavicles on sides of sternum 7

3. Tap point A at side of hand and say:

Tap the Polarity Reversal Point A at the side of the hand while saying 3 times:

“In spite of the fact I have this problem, I’m OK, I accept myself.”
(Wording may be adapted for culture or age of person.)

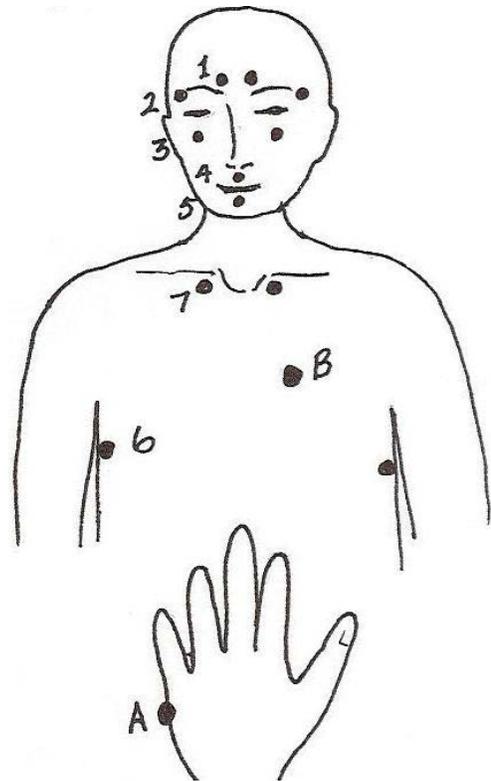
4. Repeat the sequence in #2 & #3

Repeat sequence until anxiety level is down to 0-2.



5. Rub the Sore Spot B:

Rub or press the Sore Spot located on the left side of the chest about 3 inches below the left collar bone and 2 to 3 inches to the side of the sternum.



THE HOLDS

This practice consists of several simple energy holds that may be done on oneself or on another person for anxiety, emotional or physical pain, traumatic memories, strong emotions, such as anger or fear, insomnia and for deep relaxation. Through the energy of our hands we have the power to bring profound peace, harmony and healing to body, mind and emotions. As the practice is used on oneself or on another, hold in mind and heart a deep sense of peace, light and spaciousness. The holds can be done for several minutes each, accompanied by deep abdominal breathing to promote greater release. The touch is very light, and if someone fears touch because of pain or their history of abuse, the holds may be done off the body working in the energy field. Always ask permission when you do any practice involving touch of another person.

Halo Hold

Stand behind the person. Hold palms in the energy field on either side of the head several inches away from the person.



Head Hold

One hand lightly holds the head high on the forehead; the other hand holds the base of the skull. The energy of the hands connects with parts of the brain related to memories and emotions.



Crown Hold

Thumbs of both hands together contact crown center at the top of head. Fingertips softly touch area across the forehead. Along with deep breathing this hold is used in different bodywork modalities to promote emotional release.



Shoulder Hold

The hands rest lightly on the shoulders, the place in the body related to anxiety, excess baggage or the burdens of life.



Heart Hold

One hand rests across sternum high on chest. The other hand touches upper back behind the heart. The heart area often holds emotional pain, wounds of the past, grief and resentment. Breathe deeply and imagine the heart pain draining down into the earth. You can also do this hold several inches off the body respectful of the person's boundaries.



To finish. Lightly brush off the energy field with the hands. The tops of the feet may also be held to ground the person.

HEAD NECK SHOULDER RELEASE

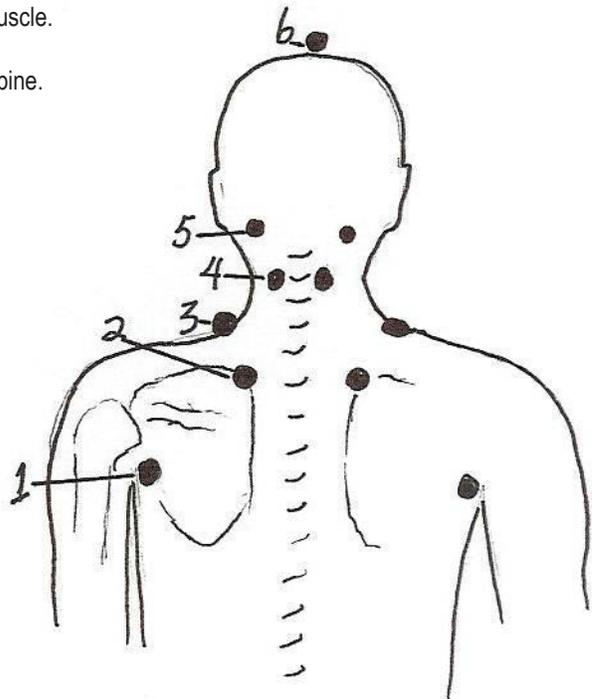
This acupressure practice releases pain, tension and congestion in the upper back, shoulders, neck and head. Often with trauma and stress, energy becomes blocked in shoulders, neck and head. Most of the energy channels or meridians flow through this area, resulting in a "bottle neck" of tension in some people. This practice can easily be done on oneself, or on another person, either seated or lying comfortably face-up. This is a very good practice for anxiety at night or when one is unable to sleep. If doing this with another person, be sure that you keep clear boundaries, and if you feel their energy coming into your hands, imagine that it can flow through you and down into the earth. With slightly curved fingertips, press into each of the sets of points (1-6) for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the energy pulse is clear, strong and flowing. The points will usually be very sensitive. During the practice you can imagine energy flowing upward and out the top of the head while breathing deeply. To end the practice imagine that your feet are rooted to the earth to ground you. If working on another person, you can hold the tops of their feet for a few moments to ground them. (*Adapted from the work of Aminah Raheem and Iona Teegarden.*)

Sets of Points:

1. About an inch outside the bottom of the shoulder joint where the arm connects to the trunk of the body.
2. At the top of the inside curve of shoulder blades about 2 inches from the center of the spine.
3. On top of the shoulders at the base of the neck in the trapezius muscle.
4. Midway up the neck in the band of muscles on either side of the spine.
5. In the hollows at the base of the skull at the sides of the head.
6. The crown center at the top of the head.

To Finish:

Hold the tops of the feet for grounding. Or if done on oneself, imagine that the feet are rooted in the ground. Breathe deeply and feel peace and harmony in body, mind and emotions.



ACUPRESSURE FOR PAIN AND TRAUMATIC STRESS

Depression

These acupressure points are for depression and emotional heaviness to bring a sense of peace and wellbeing.



Crown of head

Hold lightly the top of the head. There are three acupressure points in a line in this area.

Forehead between the Eyebrows

With the fingertips of one hand hold the sensitive area between the eyebrows where the nose connects with the forehead.



Base of Skull at the Sides of the Head

Interlace fingers, place your hands behind your head, and with the thumbs press the two points at left and right sides of the base of the skull in the indentation between the muscles and bones.

Head Hold

Place one palm on the forehead connecting with the cognitive brain, and the other palm at the base of the skull, connecting with the emotional brain. Hold position for several minutes to calm the emotions, alleviate headaches and relax the mind.



Anxiety, Crisis & Overwhelm

Point in the Outer Wrist

Press point in the indentation on the outside of the crease of the wrist, down from the small finger.

Point on Top of the Shoulders

With the fingertips of both hand hold the points on top of the shoulders. The arms may be crossed if this position is more comfortable.



Sore Spot

Locate a sore spot in the left side of the chest about 2-3 inches down from the collar bone and about 2 inches to the side of the sternum.

Fainting, Crisis & High Blood Pressure

This point can be used on oneself or another if a person is fainting or in crisis.

Point Beneath the Nose

With index fingertip or knuckle of the finger, press into the point directly below the nose on the upper lip.



Insomnia

Point in Forehead with Point in Center of Chest

Hold at the same time the point in the middle of the forehead and the point in the middle of the chest.



PAL DAN GUM

Pal Dan Gum is a series of ancient exercises from China and Korea used for thousands of years to promote health, strength, longevity, and spiritual awareness. The exercises release tension and balance the energy channels or meridians of the body. If practiced regularly they purify and recharge the inner organs and meridians, improve the circulation of blood and body fluids, promote the flexibility and resiliency of muscles and joints, improve posture, and eliminate many chronic ailments. Morning is a good time to practice Pal Dan Gum, as a way to start the day with focus and energy. These exercises are excellent for daily use by persons with anxiety, chronic pain, depression or traumatic stress.

Upholding the Heavens

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, arms at your sides. Inhale and with palms up, slowly raise your hands above your head. Interlace your fingers and turn your palms upward. Stand on tiptoe and stretch toward the sky as if your hands were touching and upholding the heavens. Look upward as you stretch, maintaining this hold for a few seconds. Then breathe out, unlock your hands and slowly bring your arms back down. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

Touching Heaven and Earth

Stand straight with feet separated, wrists crossed at the level of the solar plexus. Inhale and extend your left arm above the head with palm touching the sky. Lower your right hand behind your back with palm touching the earth. Inhale as you push up to touch the sky and down to touch the earth. Exhale and return to starting position. Repeat the exercise this time stretching upward with your right arm. Repeat both sides 3 or 4 times.

Opening the Bow

Stand with feet separated more than shoulder-width, knees bent, as if you were riding a horse. Cross your wrists and arms in front of your chest, hands clenched, left arm in front of the right. Extend the index finger of your left hand, and imagine that you are holding a bow. Pull the bow string with your right hand, while pushing out your left arm until it is fully extended. Inhale deeply while turning your head to the left. Focus on your left index finger, imagining energy pulsing out the tip. Exhale and release the bow, returning your arms to a crossed position at your chest, right hand in front of the left. Turn and repeat opening the bow to the right side. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

Opening the Heart—Looking Behind You

Stand with feet separated, knees relaxed, arms crossed in front of your chest, left hand in front of the right. Breathe deeply while pulling your arms to the sides and back, turning your head slowly to the left, looking back as far behind you as possible. Your chest is arched up and out, while your palms touch the earth. You will be able to feel the stretch in your arms, wrists, neck, and eyes as you look behind. Exhale, return your head and arms to the starting position, with right hand in front of the left. Repeat turning to the right side. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

Swinging the Trunk and the Head

Stand straight with feet separated shoulder-width, knees relaxed, hands on your hips. The weight of your body is equally distributed on both sides. Breathe deeply and exhale, as you bend your upper body to the left. Slowly and carefully stretch forward, then to the right, then to the back, as if you were stretching in waist circles. Do not strain yourself doing this exercise. Inhale as you return to the original position. Exhale and repeat 3 or 4 more times starting from the left side. Then change sides and repeat 3 or 4 times.

Punch and Shout with Fists

Stand with feet separated, knees bent. At waist level with palms facing upward, make fists with your hands. Inhale, open your eyes wide, and as you exhale, punch your left fist (then your right) directly forward, turning your fists over so that they face downward when fully extended. As you punch your fists forward, discharge your breath and your inner tension with a loud “Ho” sound. Turn to the right and repeat. Turn to the left and punch again. Repeat sequence in the 3 directions another 3 times.

Roar Like a Lion

Finish with the Lion’s Roar. Pull arms outward and to the sides, extending the fingers to form claws. Pull arms forward, bending forward with a ferocious roar, stretching all the muscles in your face and jaw. As you do the movement imagine you are able to release all the tension and words that are stifled in your throat and jaw. Roar with a full voice coming from deep within. Relax completely, bent over with hands touching the ground. Slowly straighten body to standing position, breathing deeply and relaxing the shoulders.



TRAUMA AND THE INSTINCT TO HEAL

There are many new methods being developed to treat depression, anxiety and traumatic stress. Medical professionals studying the impact of trauma on the body, now recognize that the human brain is composed of a “cognitive” brain responsible for language and abstract thinking, and a “limbic or emotional” brain responsible for emotions and the instinctual control of behavior. The emotional brain controls much of the body’s physiology, autonomic responses and psychological wellbeing. Cognitive psychotherapy and medication are the usual methods used for stabilizing and treating traumatized persons, but in many cases this approach is not enough, nor is it appropriate in many cultures. In his book *The Instinct to Heal*, psychiatrist David Servan-Schreiber, M.D. (2004), says that “emotional disorders result from dysfunctions in the emotional brain. . . The primary task of treatment is to ‘reprogram’ the emotional brain so that it adapts to the present instead of continuing to react to past experiences... It is generally more effective to use methods that act via the body and directly influence the emotional brain rather than use approaches that depend entirely on language and reason, to which the emotional brain is not receptive. The emotional brain contains natural mechanisms for self-healing: ‘an instinct to heal’.” This instinct to heal is the natural ability to find balance and wellbeing in body, mind and emotions.

Capacitar: A Popular Education Approach to Trauma Healing

In working with the traumatized, Capacitar’s methods involve awakening and empowering this “instinct to heal”. Because the experience of grassroots trauma is so vast, Capacitar uses a popular education approach rather than an individual therapeutic approach, placing in people’s hands simple body-based skills they can use for themselves to release stress, manage emotions and live with balance in the midst of the challenges of life. A key to this approach is the inherent “instinct” or wisdom in the organism to return to balance and wholeness. Healing occurs through the release of undischarged energy as well as through a strengthening of the natural flow of energy. With the renewed flow of energy the person returns to a state of balance and wellbeing.

Living in Wellness

Living with wellbeing is a very different experience of health than stabilizing symptoms or curing mental or physical disease. In contrast to a scientific worldview of health that involves “fixing or curing”, wellness in Eastern and indigenous models is based on wholeness and harmony in the energy or life force of body, mind and emotions. When energy is flowing freely and without obstruction through the channels and energy centers of the body, the person experiences good health, emotional balance, mental clarity, and overall wellbeing.

The practices offered in this Capacitar Emergency Tool Kit help to awaken this state of wellbeing, providing tools for the healing of past wounds and for the recuperation of inner strength and energy in the person. The practices have been used with many thousands of people in over 42 countries and many different cultures. They have been found to be helpful for persons with traumatic stress, as well as for self care for those working with others. These practices are meant to be used as part of daily life to help rebalance depleted, congested or excessive energy, as well as to nourish and build core energy. Regular use of practices such as Tai Chi, acupressure, and breathwork help to alleviate traumatic stress symptoms manifesting as headaches, body pain, stomach disorders, diarrhea, insomnia, anxiety, and chronic fatigue. But it is not enough to only alleviate physical or emotional symptoms. Healing involves a deeper change in the whole system—from the person, their relationships, and their environment, down to cellular and energetic levels.

The way traumatic experience is handled can be a catalyst for growth and transformation. Past wounds can be transformed into wisdom to live more fully. There is a return to balance and wholeness, the natural state of the person and the community. As individuals heal they in turn are able to reach out to their family, community and the larger world to bring health and wholeness to the human family.

For other resources, manuals and CDs of practices, see our Capacitar website: www.capacitar.org.

*We join with the earth and with each other
With our ancestors and all beings of the future
To bring new life to the land
To recreate the human community
To provide justice and peace
To remember our children
To remember who we are.
We join together as many and diverse expressions
Of community and empowerment,
For the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.*

—Capacitar Vision from the UN Prayer

SAMPLE CURRICULUM

Capacitar 4-week Workshop Cycle

Piloted at the DHS El Paso Detention Processing Center

(Each of four sessions lasts two hours)

Week 1

- Context: Why here? Present that participants can benefit from stress reducing activities; that your reality may not change (detention) but you can increase your sense of wellbeing.
- Introduction to Capacitar: What is Capacitar, history, etc.
- Breathwork: As you breathe in, find a place within you that you recall where you find peace and feel safe. *(Page 1 of Capacitar Emergency (ER) Kit)*
- Sign Agency Consent Forms: Participants acknowledge that they attend of their own free will and can leave at any time.
- Tai Chi: (1-women) 4 movements (Rocking, Shower, Push-Pull & Flying) – incorporate breathing. *(Page 1 ER Kit)*
- Finger Holds (1-men; 2-women): Use imagery of breathing out the feeling/emotion connected to each finger. *(Page 2 ER Kit)*
- Peer Teaching: Pass out the ER Kit; use:
 - Dyads – take turns teaching Fingerholds or breath work, etc. to the other person, or
 - Triads – one participant is teacher, one is student, one is coach *(coach uses the ER Kit handout)*
- EFT/Emotional Freedom Tapping: (2-men, if time). *(Page 3 ER Kit)*
- Homework: remind them to do exercise during the week and to teach exercises to others in the barracks.
- Closing: Women: Leadership Circle Dance; Men: Tai Chi as above or none, depending on group

Week 2

- Breathwork: As you breathe in, find a place within where you find peace and feel safe.
- Review: Did you do your homework? How was it for you? What was most helpful? Did you teach it to others? If new participant(s) join, ask alum's to explain, & teach what they learned
- Review breathing, Finger Holds, EFT, etc. *(Page 1, 2, 3 ER Kit)*
- Tai Chi: (1-women); add 2-3 movements. *(Page 1 ER Kit)*
- Head, Neck and Shoulder Release (1-men). *(Page 5 ER Kit)*
- EFT/Emotional Freedom Tapping (2-women). *(Page 3 ER Kit)*
- Peer Teaching: see week 1
- Closing: Women: Leadership Circle Dance; Men: Tai Chi, adding 2-3 movements or none.

Week 3

- Breathwork: As you breathe in, find a place within you that you recall where you find peace, and feel safe.
- Review: Did you do your homework? How was it for you? What was most helpful? Did you teach it to others? Review breathing, Finger Holds, EFT, etc.
- Tai Chi (1-women): all movements
- Acupressure for Pain and Traumatic Stress: (1-men). (Page 6 ER Kit)
- Pal Dan Gum: (2-women; 2-men); (Page 7 ER Kit) or handout from “Living in Wellness: Trauma Healing Manual; shouting “Ho Ho” or “Ha Ha” and the Lion’s roar is allowed in class, but not in the barracks.
- Peer Teaching: see week 1
- Homework:

1) Think about an image or symbol of yourself before you began Capacitar and another one of how you feel now. How do you feel regarding your level of energy, of physical or emotional pain? Have there been changes in your person? You can use something from nature or a drawing of a person for your image or symbol. During the next class we will allow time for you to draw, using crayons. If you feel comfortable sharing with other in the group, you are invited to do so. 2) We also invite you to prepare to teach to your classmates your favorite exercise. You can use the handouts; bring them.”

- Salute to the Sun: (3-women; 3-men), handout from “Living in Wellness: Trauma Healing Manual”; use if time.
- Closing: Women: Circle Dance E Malama; Men: Tai Chi, add movements

Week 4

- Breathwork: As you breathe in, find a place within you that you recall where you find peace and feel safe.
- Review: How was your week in regard to use of Capacitar? Invite participants to guide their favorite exercise, reviewing for 30-40 minutes.
- The Holds: ER Kit; can teach participants to do on themselves or in pairs, detainee to detainee. Begin with personal protection and asking permission to touch, or not. Feel the light coming from your hands to the person, to whom you are giving. (Page 4 ER Kit)
- Draw Images: see Homework in week 3;
- Share in Group: as each is comfortable; drawing become part of permanent evaluation records.
- Presentation of Certificates
- Closing: Women: Circle Dance “E Malama”; Men: more Peer Teaching or Tai Chi.

SAMPLE CURRICULUM

Capacitar Self-Care Workshop for Legal Aid Workers

- **Self-Care Inventory:** What are the practices you currently use for self-care? On a scale of 1-10, how effective is your current self-care plan or strategy?
- **Body Scan:** Take a moment, and, as you breathe deeply into your abdomen, pay attention to your body. Where do you feel pain, discomfort or tension?
- **Tai Chi Practices** (*pages 35-39*)
 - Awakening
 - Rocking Movement
 - Push-Pull
 - Shower of Light
- **Protection and Boundaries** (*pages 72-75*)
 - Containing Your Energy
 - Visualizing & Wrapping Yourself in Light
 - Energy Balance (or Switching)
- **Pal Dan Gum** (*pages 40-43*)
 - Upholding the Sky
 - Connecting with the Earth and the Sky
 - Opening the Bow
 - Complete Relaxation

Depending on available time, the group can either be made aware of other relevant practices to pursue with their own Capacitar-trained staff members or volunteers.

- **Additional Individual Practices**
 - Fingerholds (*pages 24-25*)
 - Acupressure Points (*pages 48-57*)
 - Emotional Freedom Tapping (*pages 26-27*)
 - Finger Labyrinth (*pages 76-79*)
- **Additional Communal or Group Practices**
 - Walking the Labyrinth (*pages 76-79*)
 - Shared practices (e.g. Tai Chi), Drumming Circle (*page 47*), Hand Massage (*pages 64-65*)
 - Organizational Assessment of Vicarious Traumatization
 - Creating community connections to address trauma on our border

Capacitar Songs

Leadership Dance

(Music: *Kawaipunahēle*—Keali'i Reichel)

Patience, patience.

Brush down the arms with the hands

Live with peace in the moment.

Hands move slowly downward at the sides

Open to listen to yourself and to others.

Hands open outward to others

Fill yourself with love and compassion.

Roll hands clockwise toward your heart

Give love and compassion to others.

Roll hands outward to others

Celebrate life and the diversity of all people!

Raise hands upward, and turn in a circle celebrating all people.

E Malama

(Music: Barbara Svetlana, *Garden of the Goddess*, Findhorn Community Singers)

E Malama i ka hayee ow

E Malama i ka hayee ow

E Malama pono i ka hayee ow ee. (2 times)

Earth and sky, Sea and stone,

Hold this land in sacredness. (2 times)

Movements: (The group forms a circle with hands in front at waist level, palms toward the earth)

1. E Malama i ka hayee ow. . . Take steps to the right while moving the hands in a clockwise direction in circles toward the right

E Malama pono i ka hayee ow ee.. .With the word 'pono' raise hands and take a circular turn to the right

2. E Malama i ka hayee ow. . . Take steps to the left while moving the hands in a counter-clockwise direction in circles toward the left

E Malama pono i ka hayee ow ee.. .With the word 'pono' raise hands and take a circular turn to the left

3. Earth and sky . . . Take a step toward the center of the circle, palms move toward the earth; then hands are raised to the heavens.

Sea and stone. . . Move hand like waves; then form a fist with hands interlaced in front of the body.

Hold this land in sacredness. . . Take a step backward, hands at the sides, palms upwards.

(Spanish)

Tierra y cielo, Mar y montaña, Sostener la tierra tan sagrada.

Shalom

Sha-a-a-a-lom, Sha-a-a-a-lom, Sha-a-a-a-lo-o-om, Sha-a-a-a-lom (Shalom—Hebrew)

Sa-a-a-a-laam, Sa-a-a-a-laam, Sa-a-a-a-la-a-am, Sa-a-a-a-laam (Salaam—Arabic)

Refrain: La La La Lai Lai Lai, La La La Lai Lai Lai, La La La Lai Lai Lai Lai,
La La La Lai Lai Lai (Repeat)

A-a-ma-a-ni, A-a-ma-a-ni, A-a-ma-a-ni-i-i, A-a-ma-a-ni (Amani—Swahili)

Sha-a-a-an-ti, Sha-a-a-an-ti, Sha-a-a-an-ti-i-i, Sha-a-a-an-ti (Shanti—Hindu)

Refrain: La La La Lai Lai Lai. . .

La-a-a-a-pé, La-a-a-a-pé, La-a-a-a-pé-e-e, La-a-a-a-pé (Lapé—Haitian Creole)

Pa-a-a-a-az, Pa-a-a-a-az, Pa-a-a-a-a-az, Pa-a-a-a-az (Paz—Spanish)

Refrain: La La La Lai Lai Lai. . .

U-ku-thu-u-la, U-ku-thu-u-la, U-ku-thu-u-la-a-a, U-ku-thu-u-la (Ukuthula—Zulu)

U(click)-xo-o-o-o-lo, Uxo-o-o-o-lo, Uxo-o-o-o-lo-o-o, U(xo-o-o-o-lo (U (click) xolo—Xhosa)

Refrain: La La La Lai Lai Lai. . .

Da-a-ran-gi-lou, Da-a-ran-gi-lou, Da-a-ran-gi-lou-u-u, Da-a-ran-gi-lou (Garifuna-Carib)

Chi-li-bi-chi-i, Chi-li-bi-chi-i, Chi-li-bi-chi-i-i-i, Chi-li-bi-chi-i (Chilibichi'—Ixchel Mayan)

Refrain: La La La Lai Lai Lai. . .

Su-u-u-ve-ness, Su-u-u-ve-ness, Su-u-u-ve-ne-e-ess, Su-u-u-ve-ness (Suaimhneas—Irish)

Pe-e-e-e-eace, Pe-e-e-e-eace, Pe-e-e-e-e-e-eace, Pe-e-e-e-eace (Peace—English)

Refrain: La La La Lai Lai Lai. . .

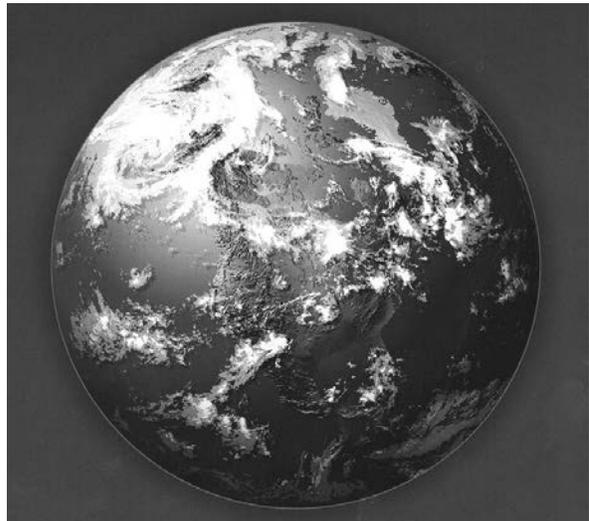
(Learn how to say “PEACE” in some other languages, and make up your own verses to the song!)

As One We Walk This Earth Together—

(Music: Denean, *Fire Prayer*—*As One We Walk*)

As one we walk this earth together
As one we sing to her our song
As one we love her
As one we heal her
Her heart beats with our own as one.

As one we join with her our Mother
As one we feel her sacred song
As one we touch her
As one we heal her
Her heart beats with our own as one.



Prayer or Scriptures for Fingerholds

Prayer or appropriate passages of Scripture or sacred books can be used with each finger. Check with the person or refugee regarding their beliefs or preferences. The following is a suggestion using Old and New Testament Scriptures. Passages from spiritual books of wisdom may also be adapted for meditation using the Fingerholds.



Thumb (comfort)

"And God will wipe away all my tears."

Rev. 21:4

Index (fear)

"Be not afraid, I am with you always."

John 14:27, Isaiah 43:2

Middle (rage)

"Do not let the sun go down on your anger."

Ephesians 4:26

Ring (anxiety)

"Come to me all who labor, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

Little (self-esteem)

"You are a child of God, you are precious in my sight."

Isaiah 43:4; Romans 8:16; Galatians 3:26



Guatemala



Capacitar: Manuals and DVDs

To buy the different resource materials, visit the Capacitar Store on the website: www.capacitar.org

Refugee Accompaniment:

This manual (140 pages) offers a series of wellness practices and self-care methods for refugees and for those who walk with them. The manual offers suggestions for use in a variety of settings, including: detention centers, legal aid centers, etc. English.

Capacitar for Kids:

This manual (120 pages) offers a series of practices and methods for teachers, children, students and parents for use in the classroom, at home or for daily use. The practices may be used in programs at school, with parents and with groups in the community. English, Spanish.

Trauma Healing and Transformation

Trauma Healing and Transformation (300 pages) offers a variety of wellness practices for professionals, leaders of groups and communities that work with stress and trauma. The book contains photos, personal experiences, theory, resources and suggestions for facilitators and group leaders.

English, Spanish.

Living in Wellness: Trauma Healing

This manual (80 pages) offers simple practices to live in wellness in the midst of the challenges of trauma, stress, compassion fatigue or secondary trauma. Individuals and professionals can use the practices for their own self-care and with groups. Available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Hebrew, Setswana, Kinyarwanda, Haitian Creole, Indonesian and other languages.

Living in Wellness: For Caregivers and Persons with HIV/AIDS

This manual (50 pages) teaches simple healing practices for people with HIV. The practices can be used by caregivers and family members for self-care and to support persons with HIV. English.

Living in Wellness: For Caregivers and Persons Living with Cancer

This manual (55 pages) offers simple practices to help people live in wellness with the challenges of cancer. The practices can be used by caregivers and family members for self-care and to support the person with cancer. English, Spanish.

DVD: Capacitar Practices

This DVD, produced in South Africa, contains all of the basic practices taught by Capacitar Founder Pat Cane. English, Spanish.

DVD: Capacitar for Kids

This DVD, produced in Cincinnati, Ohio, contains the vision of the program for schools, children, students, teachers and parents. Three basic practices are demonstrated by students and teachers. English.

Webpage: www.capacitar.org

The webpage contains many other resources, descriptions of programs, and examples of the application of Capacitar practices in a variety of settings and groups.

YouTube: Capacitar International

There are a variety of interviews and videos about Capacitar on YouTube: Capacitar International.

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CAPACITAR

*Healing Ourselves
Healing Our World*





Refugee Accompaniment: Capacitar Practices of Self-Care and Trauma Healing is a program focused on supporting refugees and those who walk with them. The manual teaches simple healing methods that can be used in challenging moments by individuals and groups to stabilize and balance strong emotions, flashbacks and other reactions resulting from traumatic stress. The program offers a tool kit for professionals and grassroots for self-care and for use with others. The manual also includes applications of Capacitar methods in a variety of settings.



Patricia Mathes Cane, PhD, is Founder and Director of Capacitar, an international project of empowerment and solidarity. Pat has taught trainings in more than 40 countries with thousands of grassroots and professionals in the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. She has a BA in Biology, an MA in Psychology and a PhD in Multicultural Wellness Education. Pat has developed programs in healing and self-care for persons impacted by trauma, disasters, violence, forced migration, poverty, HIV and cancer. She is author of Trauma Healing and Transformation and eight Capacitar manuals.



Kathryn L. Revtyak, MA, LCSW, has served as Co-Coordinator of Capacitar en la Frontera, a solidarity network on the US-Mexico border since 2008. She resides in El Paso, TX, where she accompanies the immigrant and refugee community as a clinical social worker, as well as a facilitator of Capacitar trainings. Kathy has an MA in Social Work and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She has worked in Central and South America and Mexico since 1995 in a variety of projects and leadership roles. Her solidarity efforts include community activism and advocacy, psychotherapy, and teaching at the University of Texas El Paso.



CAPACITAR INTERNATIONAL

www.capacitar.org