



STAR

Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience

THE
UNFOLDING
STORY

2001 – 2011

Carolyn E. Yoder
Elaine Zook Barge



THE
**UNFOLDING
STORY**

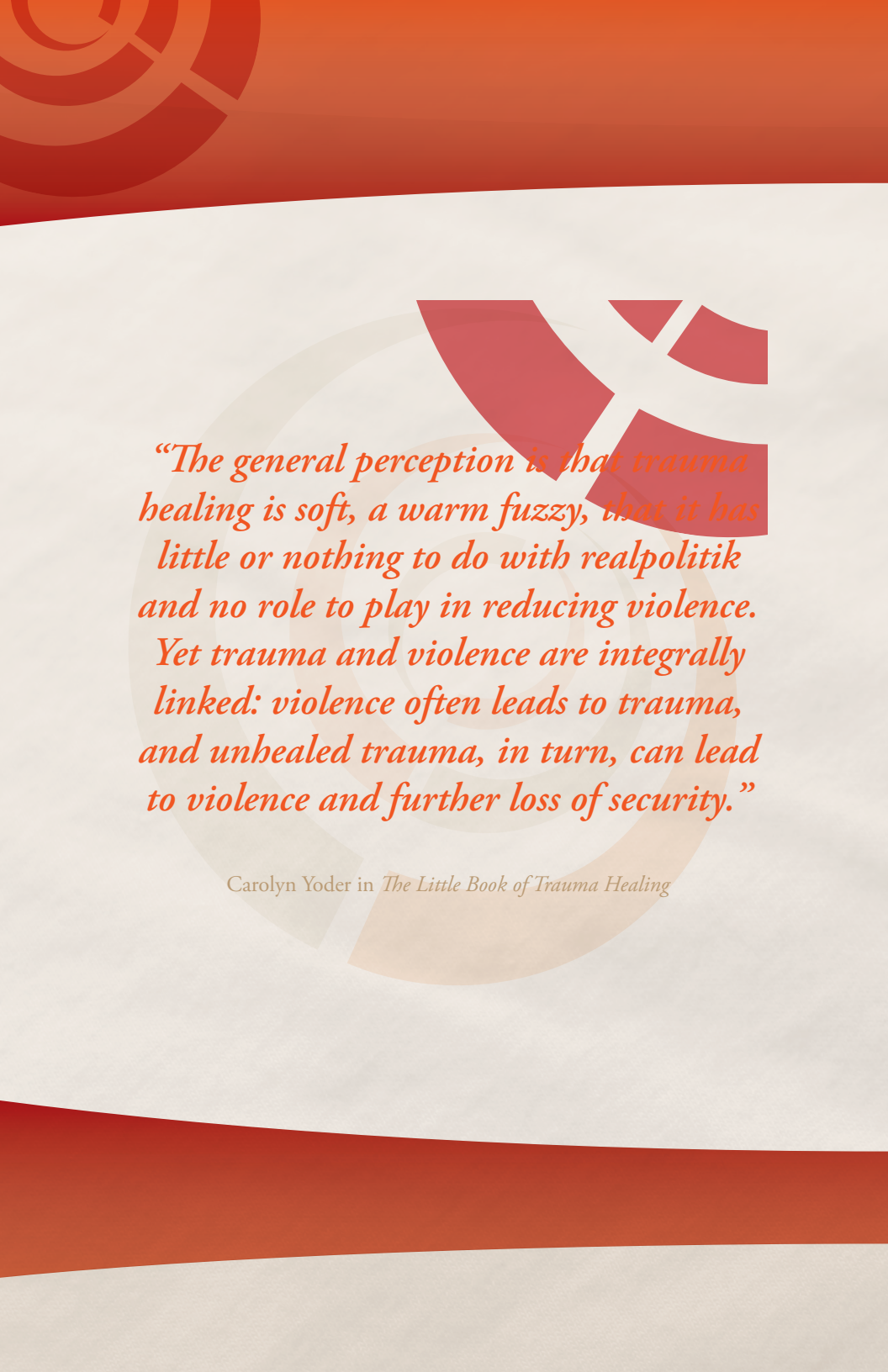
2001 – 2011

CREDITS

Richard Yoder, research section
Jennifer Fawley, administrative logistics
Bonnie Price Lofton, copyediting
Margaret Foth, copyediting
Jon Styer, designer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	The Heart of STAR.....	2
II.	The STAR Story	8
III.	What Difference Is STAR Making?	22
IV.	STAR Services.....	28



“The general perception is that trauma healing is soft, a warm fuzzy, that it has little or nothing to do with realpolitik and no role to play in reducing violence. Yet trauma and violence are integrally linked: violence often leads to trauma, and unhealed trauma, in turn, can lead to violence and further loss of security.”

Carolyn Yoder in *The Little Book of Trauma Healing*

FORWARD

Providing shelter, food, water and medicine... that was the long standing focus of the disaster-response community in reaching out to help individuals and communities impacted by disaster.

September 11, 2001, changed all of that. The needs following that tragic event were deeply traumatic and emotional, not material. It was apparent early on that a new approach, a new resource was needed.

Designed to support community leaders, the STAR program, under the leadership of Jan Jenner and Carolyn Yoder at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), broke new ground. STAR became a unique and impactful opportunity to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of trauma and healing, as well as the broader issues of conflict, justice, and peace.

Moving toward its 10th anniversary, the STAR program continues to be a deep and lasting resource, positively impacting many far beyond the aftermath of September 11th. Through the efforts of CJP, STAR has equipped thousands of community leaders around the world to respond to community or global crises by working through a trauma lens that connects personal and community healing with organizational and societal well-being.

What started as a partnership between Church World Service and EMU-CJP, moved far beyond the boundaries of September 11th, rippling out in so many positive ways to remind us that out of tragedy comes not only healing and hope, but also common ground.

*Rick Augsburg, managing director, KonTerra Group
Former director of disaster response, Church World Service*

I

The Heart of STAR



THE HEART OF STAR

STAR's mission is to strengthen the capacity of leaders and organizations to address trauma, break cycles of violence, and build resilience at the individual, community and societal levels.

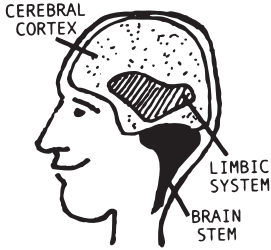
STAR is an acronym for “Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience.” Trauma, pain—and resilience—are universal in a world of disaster, disease, conflict and violence. Awareness of, and strategies to address, this reality are key components of the STAR foundational 5-day training seminar and the STAR specialty trainings.

The trainings provide a multi-disciplinary framework, with tools that can be used by medical and mental health professionals, clergy, government leaders, lawyers, teachers or parents who are working with individuals and communities on the immediate and long-term effects of trauma. But, STAR is more than trainings that can be described in a sound bite. It is also an “experience”—an experience that is often transformational and continues long after the seminar ends.

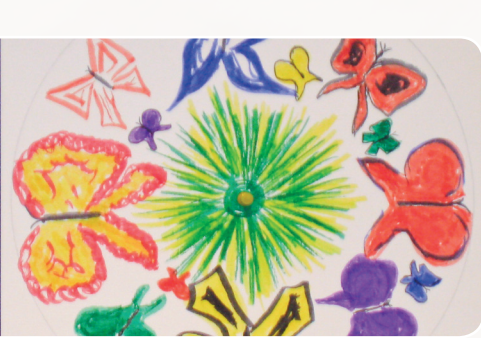
The “snail” model, more formally known as The Trauma Healing Journey: Breaking Cycles of Violence, is the core STAR framework. It depicts the impact of trauma on the body, mind and spirit, the link between unhealed trauma and cycles of violence, and processes for healing and building resilience.

The integrated STAR training consistently received positive evaluations during its first decade of application in various settings and countries. It has been described as dynamic, valuable, and life-changing—even “life-saving.” What makes the STAR approach so dynamic and distinctive is described in the next pages.

STAR DISTINCTIVES



STAR is a multi-disciplinary framework that integrates theory and processes from the fields of neurobiology, psychology, restorative justice, conflict transformation, human security, and spirituality in a format useful for many professions. This bio-psycho-social-spiritual framework enhances healing, breaks cycles of violence, and builds resilience.



STAR is an educational event, with theoretical and experiential components to its curriculum. Exercises are used to illustrate ways of working in communities affected by trauma and are often helpful for the participants' own healing journeys.



STAR is safe space to address trauma, which is often the “elephant in the room” or the topic no one dares talk about. In this space, new connections and supportive networks are often formed.

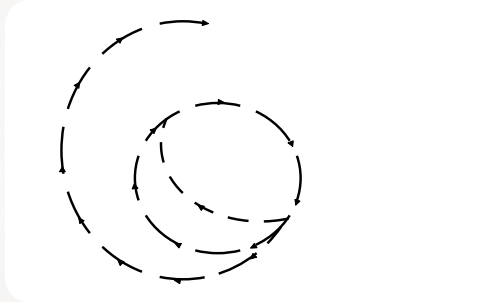
STAR is a multi-cultural, multi-faith gathering. Each person is given the safety and space to interact with the STAR content using the language of his/her own culture and faith tradition, spiritual practice . . . or non-practice.



STAR is a curriculum adaptable to different contexts. The materials have been successfully used in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, Mexico, Haiti and Northern Ireland.



STAR is an invitation for individuals and groups to place their particular story on the model, assess their experiences and identify new healing strategies they may want to pursue.



STAR CORE CONTENT

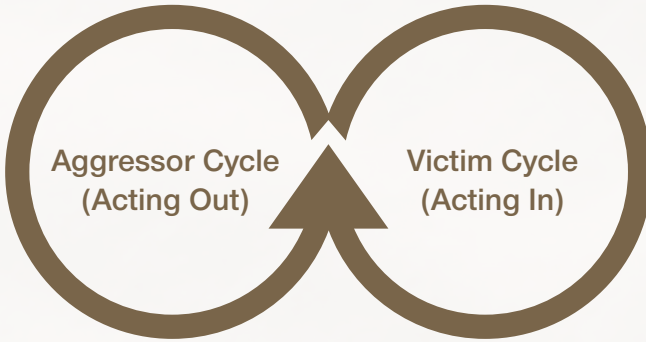


Trauma is an inevitable part of life. Those affected by traumatic events often share common reactions. Healing processes are available for individuals, communities and societies.



Fight, flight, freeze (and befriending) are normal physiological responses orchestrated by the brain to keep us safe and help us survive. Trauma affects the body, brain, behavior and relationships of individuals and groups.

Cycles of Violence



Unhealed trauma fuels cycles of victimhood or violence that are visible in re-enactment behaviors. Current and future generations are harmed by these acting-in or acting-out patterns in families, communities, organizations and nations.



Healing happens through processes that provide safety (human security), acknowledgement (truth telling of our own history and the "other's" history, mourning, rituals), and reconnection (justice, mercy, faith, conflict transformation). These healing processes and self-care build resilience! (See full image at end of Section III, page 27.)

II

The Star Story



FROM THE ASHES OF 9/11 THE UNFOLDING STAR STORY

- ▶ *The place is Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia, USA, the date March 2003. The unsettled atmosphere in the room reflects the mood of the country. The 20 participants are split down the middle in their opinion of the breaking news that the United States is poised to invade Iraq.*
- ▶ *The place is Southern Sudan, the venue a tin-roofed structure brittle with heat. Mid-level government workers and a handful of teachers and clergy watch as fellow participants present a skit depicting the common ritual-like cycle of violence that follows a cattle raid: counter-revenge raid and killing, counter-revenge raid and killing, counter-revenge raid and killing...*
- ▶ *The place is Northern Ireland, the site a stately old home, now an ecumenical conflict studies center. Youth workers, some of whom have lost family members in the 30 years of “troubles,” wrestle with embracing the concept of restorative justice.*

These are scenes from Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) trainings, a program born from the ashes of 9/11.

The beginning

September 14, 2001. 10 a.m. An hour earlier Janice Jenner had begun her new position as director of what is now named the Practice Institute at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). Answering the phone, she heard a man identify himself as Rick Augsburg, director of disaster response at Church World Service (CWS) in New York City. Would the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, with its concentration in trauma healing, design a training program for religious leaders and caregivers whose communities had been impacted? The goals: to provide an understanding of the impact of trauma and how to support traumatized communities; to provide a get-away space for self-care and respite from the heavy demands the crisis would bring. A two-year program, funded by the contributions pouring in from ordinary people across the United States and beyond. Full scholarships for all participants.

Within a short time Jenner, working closely with the graduate faculty, had a proposal together: Week-long seminars held once each month. Twenty participants per seminar, small enough to allow for meaningful interaction. On the EMU campus in the scenic Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

Two twists emerged that were to shape the dynamics of the seminars and long-term program direction in ways no one quite envisioned: (1) the seminars would go beyond the medical model of trauma and include sessions on peacebuilding, and (2) of the 20 fully paid seminar scholarships each month, at least two should go to international leaders living in countries affected by conflict and violence.

The program became known as STAR—Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience. CWS agreed to the plan, and January 2002 was set as the launch date.

The training curriculum

In early January the newly hired director of STAR, Carolyn Yoder, facilitated a meeting with the faculty to plan the seminar content. A psychotherapist, Yoder had spent half of her adult life living and working on different continents. As she interacted with people living in conflict zones or under conditions of systemic injustice, the limits of her formal training became obvious. What lasting good did it do to focus on people's cognitions or on symptoms like difficulty concentrating and sleeping? Wouldn't also equipping them to work constructively for change be an important trauma intervention? Or if a whole community lived in fear, should those who had "symptoms" be diagnosed with a mental illness? How many psychologists

would it take to treat everyone? What if they didn't need a psychologist? Yet there was no denying that people needed something.

Seeking answers to these questions, Yoder and Jenner gathered around a table with EMU-based experts in the broad field of peacebuilding, academicians who were also active practitioners with years of domestic and international experience among them: Dr. Vernon Jantzi, CJP director, a sociologist with experience in development; Dr. Barry Hart, a peacebuilding expert with international trauma experience in conflict zones; Nancy Good, a licensed social worker who was combining her trauma expertise with doctoral studies in the subject; Dr. Howard Zehr, known worldwide as the “grandfather” of restorative justice; Dr. Lisa Schirch, a conflict transformation specialist who would go on to found 3P Human Security; Dr. Jayne Docherty, with expertise in conflict analysis and transformation; and Dr. Ronald Kraybill, specializing in the relationship of religion to conflict and in self-care for peacebuilders.

By the end of the meeting, colorful post-it notes plastered on newsprint identified the proposed topics to be covered: neurobiology and the components of peacebuilding, trauma healing, restorative justice, human security, and conflict transformation. As the faculty left the meeting, someone laughingly commented that the workshop would consist of the “greatest hits” of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding.

The first two workshops, held in February and March of 2002, felt to Yoder like unconnected golden nuggets. The faculty delivered animated lectures in their respective specialties and connected their experiential exercises to 9/11. Participants were offered massage, movement, an art session and a hike in the country. But Yoder felt something was missing: *“Mortar. We have great bricks, but they are bricks without mortar.”*

Even in the absence of “mortar,” the participants expressed appreciation for how STAR addressed trauma and included “the big picture” context though the restor-



ative justice and peacebuilding sessions. They joined in the experiential exercises wholeheartedly, developing a spirit of camaraderie and empathy that opened up a space of safety, one of the foundations of trauma healing. Dr. Kraybill's self-care assessment exercises raised awareness of stress levels. A two-part exercise Dr. Hart had developed during his work in Africa, "Symbols of Trauma," held on Monday, and "Symbols of Hope," held on Friday, gave participants the option of placing an object they had brought with them on a table and telling the group the meaning it held for them. Participants brought chaplain badges from work at Ground Zero, photos of loved ones, poetry, jewelry, special songs.

Though people had come to learn ways to assist their communities, they absorbed the content through a personal lens. Paul Stucky, PhD, a psychologist from Bogotá, Colombia, who along with Elaine Zook Barge pioneered the Spanish STAR in Colombia and Harrisonburg, described it well:

"It was notable how 'work' was going on at two levels. At one level, people were exploring and learning the material in the different topic areas. At another, many began to explore and address trauma in their own lives. So it was both a learning and healing experience. No doubt this combination makes the learning all the more deep and profound."

The seminar was turning out to be more than an intellectual experience. While not designed to be therapy, it clearly was therapeutic, engaging the heart, mind, and spirit. This has continued to be a distinguishing feature of STAR seminars over the years, regardless of where they are held in the world.

"The seminar was an opportunity for me to reflect and share my experience of a serious car accident. By the end of the week, I felt like a very different person from the one who had started just five days before."

A woman, who told of her long-ago rape, reported:

"I slept the past two nights without nightmares. I usually wake up at least three times every night, screaming."

Another participant commented:

"Thank you for all I learned. I felt as if I came to a sanctuary. It will be an experience I will never forget and though it was hard at times, it was a gift beyond what I have words for."

A framework for it all

Listening to the faculty input from the various disciplines each month, Yoder could see the interconnections between the academic fields, the missing mortar. But it needed a visual framework. Olga Botcharova's model, "Seven Steps to Forgiveness," that Nancy Good presented at the workshop was helpful, but didn't cover all the STAR core concepts. And was forgiveness the desired final goal?



Over the next month, Yoder immersed herself in the work of scholars such as Peter Levine, Daniel Siegel, Judith Herman, Vamik Volkan, Joseph Montville, Olga Botcharova, and Walter Wink. Consulting with faculty, and listening to the feedback from participants, she expanded Botcharova's model. Although it took months of further refinement (and has continued to be tweaked all ten years), by the end of the April workshop, much of what came to be called the STAR model was in place. Mortar for the bricks!

Inter-faith, multi-faith

Many programs dealing with psychosocial trauma do not broach matters of faith, spirituality or religion. But religion was a hot issue after 9/11. In addition, most of the initial attendees were clergy or active lay members of religious bodies. Traumatic events hit us where we are most vulnerable, making chaos out of our systems of order and meaning. Issues of faith can loom large. Not to address religion, faith, and spirituality in a trauma program, but especially in the charged atmosphere after 9/11 seemed a form of denial bordering on pathology! *How* to do this in a way that created safety for everyone was the challenge.

STAR began operating with an interfaith paradigm, using interfaith language and asking participants to frame their questions, issues and responses in what one participant called "the lowest common denominator faith language." It soon became apparent that this approach missed the mark. Clients processing deep trauma in therapy benefit from being able to speak in their mother tongue. Now it felt like the same dynamic. People needed to be free to use their "faith mother-tongue" while refraining from theological debates or proselytizing.

The change to a multi-faith paradigm, simply “people of different faiths present in one setting,” created a new level of openness. A Muslim leader expressed appreciation, saying it freed him to be himself. A Christian participant wrote: *“The mix of Muslims, Hindus, and various Christian communions contributed to one of the pleasant surprises of the week: quality relationships forged in an open atmosphere of great graciousness, in which there was real respect for the various and different faith traditions present.”*

“I remember being a little hesitant at first. I am not a Menmonite and was not looking to be converted. But by the end of the first hour, I realized that STAR presents a broad and inclusive program.” —Brenda Bowman, independent consultant

“It was so good to meet Christians who take their faith and peace so seriously”
—Muslim imam, Texas

“Through intersections at STAR, I was able to let go of my hatred of Muslims for what happened on 9/11.” —Christian social worker, NYC

As word of the seminar spread, applications came from community leaders impacted by 9/11, both domestic and international, who identified as “spiritual” or secular. Their presence added to the diversity.

The gift—and stretching effect—of international diversity

In spite of the difficult process of obtaining U.S. visas, over 250 international participants have found their way to STAR from more than 60 countries, including Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, Fiji, Haiti, Iraq, Israel, Kenya, Nepal, Palestine, Rwanda, Russian, Serbia, and Uganda. They have come with their stories of surviving genocide, dealing with the aftermath of terrorist attacks, living with war, or under occupation, oppressive regimes, discrimination, and poverty. They have come with symbols of trauma—photos of slain school children in Breslan (Russia), the shoe a husband was wearing when killed by a terrorist blast, devalued currency, the diploma of a son who died in a car accident, bullet casings. A woman from Afghanistan said she had brought no symbol, but if she had it would be raw meat. That’s what was spattered everywhere after her apartment building was hit by a mortar shell and many of her neighbors were pulverized.

Symbols of hope included photos of grandchildren, bullet casings in the shape of crescents or crosses, paintings of flowers, words of scripture lovingly written on parchment. A contingent of Iraqis who wanted to leave a symbol of hope at EMU held a ceremony to plant a magnolia on campus, a tree common both in Baghdad and Harrisonburg. (One of these Iraqis—a psychiatrist—lost his life to assassination not long after he returned to Iraq, a death mourned in Harrisonburg.) With the sharing of symbols, the barriers of race, gender, nationality, class, and religion diminished in the common crucible of suffering. Everyone was just a human being, looking for hope in the cracks, resilient beyond what sometimes seemed fathomable.

The international participants served as a mirror to U.S. citizens, reminders that 9/11 did not come from nowhere, that it was preceded by similar attacks in Africa and elsewhere, and that the effects reached far beyond American soil. They told of the ripple effect on military and economic aid when groups in their country were labeled terrorist, of cut-offs in funding for worthy projects, of the new hurdles to getting visas to study in the United States. Often difficult for U.S. participants to hear: U.S. policies, past and present, especially those bred of fear and vengeance, wreak devastation around the world, harming innocents in a manner reminiscent of 9/11. In spite of, or because of the mirroring, the presence of international participants was consistently identified in the end-of-seminar evaluations as one of the best parts of STAR.

“The number of people from other countries was a big asset; hearing other points of view and learning of other’s concerns, issues and trauma is important, especially for many of us Americans who are often isolated from these kinds of discussions.”—American clergyman



Friendship Tree: In recognition of the love and friendship between ordinary people in time of war. Donated and planted by eight participants from Iraq in STAR and the Summer Peacebuilding Institute, 2004.

Over the years, a number of international participants arranged for STAR to hold workshops in their countries, usually through local organizations. They also adapted and used the materials themselves. A psychotherapist from Northern Ireland wrote:

*“I ran a program using the STAR materials.
It blew their socks off!”*

A Muslim educator reported: *“I am working very enthusiastically since the seminar. I translated most of the material and books and we are teaching it in our schools for widows and orphans, two hours per week of psychology and two hours of peace. The behavior of the children has improved with the teaching of these topics.”*

More stretching: that “peace stuff”

“You’ll re-traumatize people if you talk about peace stuff.” That was the blunt assessment from a focus group in New York City on the proposed curriculum before the first seminar.

Indeed, some participants did find themselves stretched, especially when it came to considering conflict analysis and transformation. Examining the roots of conflict goes beyond sound bites and simplistic notions of peacebuilding as “kumbaya” circles. It challenges simplistic *either/or* thinking, and dangerous *us/them* dichotomies that fuel cycles of violence. It gives a hard push toward *both/and* thinking, which can stretch and challenge long-held world views.

For example, in a conflict analysis session, Dr. Schirch read a letter from Osama bin Laden addressed to the American people written two years before 9/11, stating his grievances with American foreign policy. The point was not to justify his actions, but to show that transforming trauma and violence requires understanding root causes, and that understanding is not the same as agreeing. Dr. Docherty’s fast-paced, humorous and occasionally blunt peacebuilding sessions endeared her to many, and irritated others. Yet the sessions created a safe space for difficult conversations that were marked by civility, learning, and eventually even appreciation by those initially skeptical.

“I have learned so much. I enjoyed our disagreements, and learning about understanding vs. agreement. I saw how important it is taking in the past history of other countries and understanding where they are coming from. Hope and faith are present in me now. My anxiety is low. I feel more at peace with myself.”

— March 2003 seminar participant

Two comments came from participants with opposing views on the invasion of Iraq in the March 2003 seminar:

“I came with an ‘us/them’ mentality. Now I see what I must do: face the trauma so that it doesn’t come out in escalating cycles of violence. We all must work together if we are to be secure and live in peace.”

“I leave with a feeling of humility. I was challenged by my own feelings of tolerance/intolerance and I grew through the process of facing a dark side of myself.”

Restorative justice, another component of peacebuilding, was often a new concept for participants. Rather than punishment, emphasis is on offenders taking responsibility to “make things as right as possible” for victims and addressing the causes behind their aggressive behavior. It is not uncommon for participants to see the immediate application to their personal lives and during the seminar take steps to re-establish contact with estranged loved ones.

“I have vivid memories of my own ‘aha’ experience during the workshop and then seeing the same ‘aha’ expression of countless workshop and seminar participants. I’ve heard numerous testimonials from workshop participants of their own personal healing that took place as a result of participation in the workshops. —Ivan deKam, Sierra Leone

Living out the full implications of the STAR model, with its intertwined threads of peacebuilding and trauma healing, is not easy. Knowledge alone does not solve complex problems, but it is a start. Peacebuilding processes help people focus their energy on critical questions that need to be asked, basic practices of engagement with others, and creative problem solving. While experiencing healing from past traumas, people come to understand how to avoid spiraling into destructive cycles of violence in the future.

Far from re-traumatizing participants, the “peace stuff” provided new tools and options for dealing with challenging crises and trauma, a significant factor in increasing resilience and restoring hope. In the first years of the seminars, the most

requested topic for follow-up was peacebuilding or conflict transformation skills. As a result, faculty members traveled to New York City, holding sessions for “STAR alumni” (as they came to be called) on peacebuilding skills.

As the seminar focus moved away from 9/11, the conflict transformation sessions were less intense. Trainings held in geographic areas of high tension, however, still can be venues for heated discussions.

“I had no idea what peacebuilding was about. I thought it was too passive, but now I see that it is hands-on and active and takes a lot of hard work. I found it powerful and believe it is a legitimate way of dealing with conflict. I really think it can work.”

— NY pastor

“Don’t think small! Take these ideas and inspire people to live up to the highest ideals of their religious traditions.”

Lesley Karsten-DiNicola, Jewish filmmaker, writer and cantorial soloist

Follow up in NYC and beyond

As the seminar continued to receive top reviews, Church World Service announced it would extend the program another two years as well as fund a STAR office in New York City. The office opened in October 2003 to coordinate follow-up trainings and to be a resource for STAR alumni and their communities on trauma and peacebuilding. Brenda Boyd-Bell, PhD, and Ruth Yoder Wenger, both long-time NYC residents and STAR alumni, were appointed to share the position of program coordinator.

In 2005, the office received a 9/11 Recovery Grant from the American Red Cross, with program objectives of reaching underserved and marginalized communities. Dr. Boyd-Bell and Wenger called on STAR alumni to help them meet the objective of workshops for 5,000 people. Since many of the target group participants were resistant to public or private mental health resources or had little access to them, STAR had a profound impact on the well-being and perspectives of those they reached. The office was closed in 2007, when funding ended, but STAR NYC continues to operate an independent satellite under the auspices of New York Disaster Interfaith Services.

From the Virginia office, STAR trainers traveled to West Africa, Northern Ireland, and Central and South America, while continuing the monthly seminars in English or Spanish at EMU. In response to the many clergy members who said, “I wish I had had this training in seminary,” David Anderson Hooker, a mediator-attorney and an ordained minister, was hired as the seminary liaison to test the visibility of incorporating STAR or STAR-based materials into seminaries.

New variations on STAR

An intermediate level STAR, dubbed Level II, was developed after repeated requests from participants. The training delved further into the five subject areas, then gave participants the opportunity to adapt and contextualize the materials for their specific population. Thus the seeds were sown for four variations on STAR: (1) Youth STAR, (2) Transforming the Wounds of War, (3) Village STAR, and (4) the comedy drama, *I’d Like to Buy an Enemy*.

Youth STAR was an international effort. The concept team was composed of women from Liberia, Northern Ireland, and Connecticut, plus a pastor from Kentucky, who met at STAR II and worked with Vesna Hart, a graduate student and Croatian native living in Harrisonburg. Hart then headed a team of seasoned youth workers and two CJP graduate students, Hedley Abernathy of Northern Ireland and Anne Nyambura of Kenya, in writing and piloting a curriculum. This was supported by grants from Church World Service and the United States Institute of Peace.

Transforming the Wounds of War was developed and piloted by Carolyn Heggen in 2008 for leaders and congregations working with veterans and their families.

Village STAR was an adaptation originally created for semi-literate populations by Elaine Zook Barge. It has turned out to be useful for a variety of contexts and situations including short STAR presentations.

I’d Like to Buy an Enemy, a full-length comedy show, was the brainchild of CJP graduate students who were part of a group, STAR and the Arts. They discussed their ideas with playwright Ted Swartz, who heads Ted and Company. He wrote and produced the play (available for booking) in consultation with the graduate students.

STAR is also a foundational component of Healing Historical Harms, which emerged from CJP’s Coming to the Table project, developed to address with the legacy of enslavement.

Reports continue to arrive at the STAR desk at EMU, describing how STAR is changing attitudes and being internalized, adapted and integrated into many contexts, including: disaster volunteers, homeless people living in hotels, and post-tsunami victims; in reconciliation efforts within native communities (both among humans and with nature); and in discussions on racism.

Some of the testimonials and reports recently received include:

- ▶ Psychologist Donna Minter in Minneapolis found a way to bring three full-length seminars to her city to address violence and says she's only just begun to use and promote STAR.
- ▶ Kelly Branham trains attorneys in trauma awareness in her work as National Victim Outreach Coordinator for the Capital Resource Counsel Project.
- ▶ Jen Harvey and Kerry Saner in Labrador, Canada—both master's degree holders from CJP and Level II participants—created “The Sacred Hoop of Trauma Healing,” an adaptation of the model for native communities.
- ▶ Judge Rafael Crescencio Tan Jr., from the Philippines, used trauma awareness skills to talk to his dying father about his World War II Bataan death-march experiences. He incorporates restorative justice in his work, and his wife Betsy uses the materials in her classes and counseling sessions. “Our attendance at STAR was a great turning point in our lives,” he says.
- ▶ Eburn James in Sierra Leone reports a long-standing dispute was settled using skills from the seminar, and a peacebuilding certificate program was incorporated into a seminary in Sierra Leone.

“Many resources have flowed into Haiti since the earthquake but most just flow out. STAR came and it will stay here because it is inside us.” —Haitian community leader

The ripple effects these anecdotes describe continue years after the seminar ends, according to preliminary research findings. (See “What Difference Is STAR Making?” page 22.) A participant in the very first STAR at EMU, Bronx community educator Susana Rodriguez Albo Baker, says, “I use STAR every day of my life. I need it—my community is violent. STAR gives me the tools.”

In spite of the successes, contextualizing STAR can be a challenge. Making it suitable for Buddhist communities in Myanmar (Burma), for example, is still a work in

progress. Another challenge is designing a quality training-of-trainers program that provides a solid foundation in the multiple disciplines included in STAR. To fill the gap for trainers, a handful of qualified participants have been individually mentored. A program to certify trainers is envisioned.

Major transitions

In 2005, Church World Service funding for seminars ended. Through the generosity of CWS, 792 leaders and caregivers from 38 states and 63 countries benefited directly from the early STAR seminars at EMU—plus untold numbers whose lives they, in turn, touched. A CWS grant covered STAR staff salaries for 2006 as the program transitioned to a fee-for-service system.

In 2006, Yoder was ready for respite from STAR's intensity and handed the reins and challenge to Elaine Zook Barge, before following her husband to a development post in Asia. Zook Barge, a master's degree graduate of CJP, had long experience working in war-torn Central America and knew STAR intimately through her key role in Spanish STAR. Margaret Foth, who had co-facilitated the seminars, served as a bridge between directors.

By 2008, more seminars were held off-site than on campus. Zook Barge and colleagues traveled to California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Southern Sudan, Mexico, Dominican Republic, and beyond, finding the same hunger and desire for healing and building resilience.

From the ashes

The aftershocks of 9/11 have reached around the world. In quiet ways, so have the healing ripples of STAR. Even if STAR at Eastern Mennonite University ceased to exist tomorrow, its impact would go on. *Deo gratias.*

*“I use STAR every day of my life.
I need it – my community is violent.
STAR gives me the tools.”*

Susana Rodriguez Albo Baker, Bronx community educator

III

What Difference is STAR Making?

FOR THREE STORIES ON HOW STAR MADE A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLES' RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE, SEE THE ARTICLES LISTED BELOW.



Virginia Foley's husband, a U.S. diplomat, was assassinated outside of their home in Jordan in 2002. Virginia chose to advocate for a restorative justice approach. Even though this was not possible, there were other STAR strategies that helped her move forward in positive ways. Read her story at: <http://www.emu.edu/peacebuilder/summer07/foley.html>



Paul Nantulya served as the main liaison between Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Sudan program and EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding for the "Leaders in Peacebuilding" program in Eastern Equatoria, a region wracked by more than 50 years of war. Read more about his story at: <http://www.emu.edu/peacebuilder/winter08/sudan>



Two of David Works' four daughters were gunned down in front of him at a church in Colorado. Also shot, he woke up in an intensive care hospital room and "saw" the cycles of violence he had learned at STAR. Immediately, he knew that he wanted to choose a different path. Read more about his story at:

<http://emu.edu/now/news/2009/09/colorado-man-chooses-forgiveness/>

WHAT DIFFERENCE IS STAR MAKING?

Is STAR making a significant difference? Four studies of this relatively young program have been carried out that address the “difference” question. While none of these studies represent the “gold standard” of double-blind controlled research, they do give indications of effects.

The most systematic study was for a PhD dissertation in 2008.¹ The objective was to assess the impact of the five STAR components (trauma healing, peacebuilding, restorative justice, spirituality, security) on two immediate outcomes (change in participant knowledge and attitudes) and two longer-term outcomes (decreased psychological distress in participants and increase in use of STAR-related skills).

Data were collected from two sets of questionnaires. The first set was given to all 42 participants before and after each of the four seminars of 2007, with all 42 responding. The second set was emailed to 293 STAR participants who took seminars from 2002 to 2006 (58 responded) to determine how the insights and skills learned were used one to five years afterwards.

¹ Matthew Stephen Yoder, *Evaluation of an Ecological Intervention Targeting Helpers in the Aftermath of Disasters*, (PhD dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2008)

The researcher found that STAR participants experienced statistically significant increases in knowledge and attitudes related to trauma healing, justice and spirituality, along with significant decreases in psychological distress. Participants expressed the view that they would use STAR-related skills upon returning to their home communities. The follow-up surveys lent support to this view. They found significant increases in use of STAR-related skills up to five years post-STAR. Pre-STAR assessment of psychological distress found that many STAR participants came to the training with moderate to high levels of self-reported symptoms of depression and anxiety. When the same indicators were assessed at the end of the STAR week, statistically significant reductions in distress were reported. Reductions in indicators such as burnout and compassion fatigue were notable but not statistically significant. An important limitation of the study design was the absence of a control group (people who did not take the STAR seminar), which would have allowed changes to be attributed more directly to STAR.

A second study was an analysis of STAR seminar evaluations completed by STAR participants between 2002 and 2006.² Unlike the above study, questionnaires for this evaluation were given only at the end of each seminar. Rating data from six questions, generally on a 1-7 scale, were collected from 549 participants, along with 17 open-ended questions to which 451 participants responded.

In general, the evaluations were very positive. For example, the rating data showed that participants were highly satisfied with their “overall STAR experience.” Ninety-five percent of the participants rated the training 6 or 7 on a 1-to-7 scale and 97 percent stated that the training would have substantial impact on their future trauma work. Comments from the open-ended questions supported their highly positive ratings. For example, most participants stated they would be able to use what they learned when they returned home and gave numerous examples of where and how they would do this. Interaction with other participants of diverse backgrounds

² Ann McBroom, *Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience [STAR], An analysis of evaluations returned by STAR participants, 2002-2006*, report submitted to STAR, Eastern Mennonite University, December 2006



but who shared a common experience was valued. Most participants felt they had gained new knowledge and new ways of helping themselves and others. The analysis also found that STAR was viewed as having increased participants' motivation, commitment and confidence and their belief that positive change is possible. Previous biases and prejudices were acknowledged; they expressed strong support for the distinctive view that listening to the enemy is important. Participants generally left with a better appreciation of the need to take care of themselves and with very specific plans on how they would do that. Some obstacles were identified, such as lack of resources or time in their home settings.

A third study was a formative evaluation done by students in a research and evaluation class of the master's degree program in conflict transformation at EMU during the spring of 2004.³ Forty-two participants were randomly selected from a sample of 105 who had participated in a STAR seminar between February 2002 and January 2004. The questionnaire had 10 questions that were a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions. While this study did not have a comparison group, it did have the advantage of assessing the knowledge, attitude and practices of participants up to two years after they had the STAR training.

The responses were overwhelmingly positive with respect to the seminar content and methods, its personally transformative potential, its applicability to participants' work and their desire to stay connected to the program. More specifically, participants experienced changes in both their personal (100 percent) and professional (93 percent) lives. Many described the seminar as a life-changing experience. Ninety-three percent implemented different aspects of their STAR training when they returned home; 43 percent reported creating new training programs or integrating STAR materials into their existing trainings. Others started support groups, wrote articles, produced radio spots, incorporated materials into their sermons or started dialogue groups. Participants stated that, were another traumatic experience to occur, they would have new tools to help address it. There was a high level of

³ Amy Potter and Vernon Jantzi, *STAR Formative Evaluation Report*, report submitted by the Institute for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, April 2004.

support for the seminar (9.5 on a 10 point scale) and how the trauma model relates to peacebuilding and justice. Appreciation was also expressed for how the seminars normalized their personal experiences and created a safe and nurturing space for learning, interacting, renewal and healing. Suggested changes included things like having a longer seminar (or covering less material), further contextualization of the content and methods, and greater diversity of faith traditions and points of view.

The fourth evaluation done was of the Youth STAR training in Sierra Leone, Palestine, Croatia and Kenya.⁴ A total of 169 participants completed the 26-item questionnaire that was given to participants before and immediately after completion of the seven workshops. The facilitators also completed a detailed questionnaire. The author of this study emphasized the need for exercising caution in interpreting the results due to reliability and validity issues.

The results strongly suggested that the workshops were effective in achieving their goals. Both participants and facilitators judged that the workshops instilled knowledge, skills, optimism, and a commitment for participants to become positive agents for change. The participants clearly benefited from the training components dealing with communication skills, peacebuilding and justice, and they gained tools that allowed them to better deal with past and future traumas.

In summary, and within the context of the research limitations noted, the studies found that positive changes occurred among STAR participants, with new knowledge, attitudes and skills generated and that these were maintained years after participating in the training. Additional studies will be valuable, using more rigorous designs and methodologies, especially studies that focus on the longer term impact of STAR and specific changes at the community level.

⁴ Ann McBroom, *An evaluation of Youth STAR training, based on pilot workshops in Sierra Leone, Palestine, Croatia and Kenya*, report submitted to STAR, Eastern Mennonite University, May 2007.



Healthy Individuals and Societies



Trauma Healing Journey: Breaking Cycles of Violence

*This does not apply in all cases; for example, it does not apply to child sexual abuse.

Adaptation of model by Olga Botcharova
 Copyright © 2011 Eastern Mennonite University, <http://www.emu.edu/star>

IV

STAR Services



STAR SERVICES

“You have no idea how you have helped our communities. The work you do resembles that of throwing a stone into the water; you see where it falls, but the waves it generates travel to far places.”

Elvia Gonzales, Mexico staff person, quoting a STAR II participant

More than 7,000 people have taken STAR over the last decade. Many others have been touched by the **multiplier effect** as participants return home and share knowledge, skills and new behaviors with families, friends, and co-workers. In the next decade, we aim to enhance STAR’s **exponential impact** through increased work with non-government and government organizations to institutionalize STAR in their agencies and communities.

STAR offers consulting services and Level I and II trainings in English and Spanish. Level I training includes the foundational theoretical frameworks as well as analytical, process and practice skills needed to work from a “trauma sensitive” perspective. Level II trainings focus on deepening and applying STAR concepts in specific contexts. Specialized STAR applications include youth, natural disasters, historical harms, conflict, wounds of war, seminaries and religious education. These specialties are the focus of this section.

Our Services

Trainers with STAR credentials are prepared to lead seminars on location worldwide. They are equipping a cadre of leaders and laypersons who:

- ▶ Recognize the signs of unaddressed trauma in individuals, families, communities, and societies.
- ▶ Educate others on how unhealed trauma undermines resilience and fuels cycles of violence.
- ▶ Promote processes such as restorative justice and conflict transformation that support healing, break cycles of violence, and reconnect people.
- ▶ Recognize the value of partnering with other organizations whose expertise complements the STAR model to create healthy individuals and communities.

The following is a sampling of places and persons (with their testimonials) who have used the STAR curriculum for specialized applications.

STAR for Youth

This youth-based version of STAR is for adults who want practical skills to work with youth in addressing trauma, resolving conflict and preventing violence. It has been piloted in Palestine, Kenya, New Orleans and Northern Ireland. It is part of the curriculum in 57 high schools in Nairobi, Kenya.



“Really, I didn’t know that a lot of my actions were violent. After this training, I feel that I can control my actions more effectively.”

— Teen from Palestine

“I attend every training/seminar/conference I can find on working with children post-Katrina, and the Youth STAR training provided by far more hands-on activities for assisting our children in their recovery.” — Social worker from New Orleans

“Throughout eight weeks of sessions with the group of youth from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds, it was particularly interesting to see how relevant the material was to the historic and ongoing issues of conflict and sectarianism that are still present in Northern Ireland.” —Emily Stanton, Northern Ireland

“After STAR, I re-oriented my middle-school youth ministry. The questions I asked and the resources I provided started to change. The results were positive.” —Lee Yates, youth pastor, Missouri

STAR for Healing Historical Harms

This specialized STAR curriculum deals with injustices and traumas rooted in history, including legacy and aftermath that continues to be toxic if left unaddressed. It also helps affected peoples to identify processes for healing, connection and action.

Coming to the Table (CTTT), a project launched by Amy Potter Czajkowski of EMU’s Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, uses this approach to address one of the historical harms in the United States—the wounds of enslavement. As Thomas N. DeWolf of Oregon explains:

“Just as 2001 marks the tenth anniversary of the horrors of 9/11, it also marks the tenth anniversary of the journey that members of my family and I embarked upon to retrace the triangle trade route of our slave-trading ancestors from Rhode Island to Ghana and Cuba and back. We made a film (“Traces of the Trade”). I wrote a book (Inheriting the Trade). I had faced the horror of slavery and racism, but what to do with this information weighed heavily on me.

“In January, 2005, at the first gathering of Coming to the Table, two dozen people, black and white, gathered to consider our connection to historic slavery in the United States. We committed to a path of healing together.

“At the foundation of CTTT rests STAR. I’ve taken both levels of STAR training, and I incorporate what I have learned into the workshops I lead, the presentations I give, and my writing. My life has been blessed and transformed by STAR and the people that entered my life as a result.”

STAR for Transforming Wounds of War

The goals of this specialized training are to strengthen the capacity of the community to provide support, to empower combat veterans and their families in their own healing process, and to reduce the destructive consequences of combat trauma within U.S. society.

The Brookfield Institute in Massachusetts has used these materials in Chile, South America, and the United States for processing their respective national traumas of September 11: for Chile, the year was 1973, and 9/11 marked the date the military violently overthrew the elected government of President Allende; for the United States, the year was 2001, and the 9/11 attacker was al Qaeda.

“Thank you,” he whispered to me after a long hug. “I had never talked about being arrested and tortured before in my church. I was afraid they wouldn’t understand. For the first time, they all listened.”—Beverly Prestwood-Taylor, quoting and referring to an ex-prisoner in Chile

“We all feel more confident now about talking to veterans and their families. The STAR training taught us things not to say to veterans as well as things to say.”—Brookfield Institute participant after U.S. training

STAR for Seminaries or Congregations

In times of crisis, people frequently seek help from religious leaders; however, there often is little focus in seminary curricula on how to work over the long-term with events that traumatize individuals as well as communities. Integrating STAR curriculum into existing seminary or congregational programs (weekend trainings, continuing education, or religious education), strengthens the capacity of future clergy and lay leaders alike to lead their communities.

“Thanks again for making this directed STAR study possible. It has become a crucial part of my seminary education that I didn’t even know I needed.”—Seminary student in Virginia

“During STAR II, we had a practical application assignment. I used the biblical book of Job as a framework for understanding trauma and how to help others. I now use the Job story in many of my trainings.”—Hugo Monroy, pastor in New York

“I think the kind of vision STAR has inspired, together with its practical and engaged training, is of central value for the formation of the next generation of religious leadership.”

Rodney Peterson, PhD, executive director of the Boston Theological Institute

STAR for Post-Disaster

After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, six religious denominations, some of which were original donors to STAR after 9/11, formed a coalition to fund a three-year STAR initiative for community leaders.

“Of the many things that have come to Haiti following the earthquake, STAR is the best of all of them.” —Church of the Brethren leader in Haiti

“Thirty-one more leaders have been trained and they are very satisfied with the training. In the STAR seminar, people feel respected and accepted regardless of their level of education, their background or their religious perspective.” —Twomatizasyon ak Wozo, staff person in Haiti

STAR was also used with teachers, youth, and pastors in New Orleans following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

“What distinguishes STAR from the many other trauma programs that inundated the city after the hurricanes is the focus on violence as a root of trauma. The cycles of violence model helps to identify the different levels of response to violence.” —Lou Furman, New Orleans

STAR for On-going Conflict, Violence and War

In Mexico violence is so high, thousands have been slain—it amounts to an undeclared war in certain regions. In 2009, STAR collaborated with PRODERECHO, a USAID contracting agency working on national judicial reform, to implement STAR trainings in five states and Mexico City. The ten seminars primarily involved personnel from the victim-support offices established in the state and federal court system as part of judicial reform, though other civil society leaders also participated in the trainings.



“STAR is a kind of ‘cure’ for that cancer of violence we are experiencing as citizens of the world.” —Level II participant, Mexico

“I am in charge of a team of more than 350 people. Many of them offer resistance in their daily dynamics, are constantly unhappy, make the minimum effort, create conflicts. I see that many come with unresolved trauma, multiple sorrows and blame others so that they can evade their own responsibility for what they experience. STAR insights have helped me to be a better leader, to understand and motivate them to resolve their conflicts so that they may find satisfaction in the activities they perform.” — Level II participant, Mexico

“After I had been trained by STAR in Levels I and II, I came back home to Gaza taking seriously the matter of trauma healing as a way and condition for tolerance building. I believe each religion is full of values and teachings which make clear how to break the cycle of violence. All these values are being ignored during times when there is conflict. So the most important thing for us was to figure out how to use what Islam teaches in order to help break the cycle of violence and then heal traumas.”—Hisham Kullab Khan Yunis, Gaza

“I live and work in an inner city where people have experienced multiple layers and kinds of trauma. The youth are very angry and frustrated. All the STAR materials have been helpful in my work. The most helpful in my community is the understanding of ‘abnormal becoming normal’ and how we just come to accept that and don’t realize we can be set free.” —Sheila Holmes, pastor in New Jersey

STAR for Post-Conflict /Fragile Peace

An “expanded” STAR was offered in Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan, in 2007 and 2009 in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services. This was a nine-month, six-workshop series to develop governmental and religious representatives to become “leaders in peacebuilding.” Village STAR was first used here, along with week-long seminars on restorative justice, conflict transformation, and leadership. Teams made up of local, regional and international facilitators led these seminars, as seen in the picture below.



South Africa

“The STAR model is really exciting.... I particularly hold onto the links to peacebuilding, spirituality, justice and human security. I see the value of this full STAR model in terms of the work needed in South Africa. I use it in my thinking about the possible strategies for catalyzing change here. It is so clear that the insecurity in South Africa leads to increased anxiety and therefore regressed positions within a polarized society. This makes reconciliation almost impossible....”

“The challenge is drawing STAR and the model into the paradigms of existing organizations and professional disciplines. There seem to be few opportunities for the interdisciplinary work where these models can be used at community levels. . . . In healing communities after conflict and war we need all the aspects of the STAR to work together. And in my world it seems this happens very rarely.” — Sarah Crawford-Browne, South Africa

Other STAR Resources

Resilience: the Art of Bouncing Back is the title of a forthcoming textbook for adult and adolescent English-language learners. Based on Village STAR, author R. Michael Medley, PhD, says: “My interest in combining the two subjects came when, as director of an Intensive English Program, I noticed that students from places who had experienced severe trauma such as Rwanda, El Salvador and Iraqi Kurdistan experienced severe learning challenges. STAR I and II gave me the basic concepts I needed to reflect more broadly on how STAR instructional activities might be integrated into language curriculum as well as the professional development of language teachers. *Resilience* is the product of those reflections and scheduled to be released by 2013.

Family STAR: Breaking the Cycle of Violence is a forthcoming manual designed for those who help families cope and recover from the trauma of gender-based violence. An adaptation of the Village STAR manual, it provides education and skills written specifically for the Pakistani context by a recent STAR participant from Pakistan.

“I Want to Buy An Enemy” is a thought-provoking 60-minute show by Ted and Company that allows us to laugh at ourselves, while engaging us to think about the place of the U.S. in the world, to confront the fear that is such a large part of U.S. culture, and to consider how we can work for peace and justice in the United States and in the world. Visit www.tedandcompany.com to book a show.

The Little Book of Trauma Healing by Carolyn Yoder is available in English, Spanish, Russian, Burmese and Haitian Creole. This book is part of the Little Book series from the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding and contains the core STAR content. English copies are available from Good Books, or any major online retailer of books. Check www.emu.edu/star to ascertain the availability of STAR materials in other languages.

“In all of the follow up and the plethora of things offered to help clergy cope with the devastation and aftermath of 9/11, my STAR experience was the most valuable. The support and learning I received in that five-day period are a daily help to me to this day. Thanks so much.”

Lutheran Pastor, NYC

“What distinguishes STAR from the many other trauma programs that inundated the city after the hurricanes is the focus on violence as a root of trauma. The cycles of violence model helps to identify the different levels of response to violence.”

Lou Furman, New Orleans

“Of the many things that have come to Haiti following the earthquake, STAR is the best of all of them.”

Church of the Brethren leader in Haiti

About the Authors



Carolyn Yoder was the STAR director during the first five years, 2002-2006. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a licensed professional counselor. With her family, she has lived and worked in Asia, the Caucasus, East and Southern Africa, and the Middle East. She holds an MA in linguistics from the University of Pittsburgh and an MA in counseling psychology from the U.S. International University of San Diego.



Elaine Zook Barge was the STAR director during the second five years (2006-present). During the 80s and 90s she worked in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala with Mennonite Central Committee. In her work with communities in conflict zones, she observed firsthand war, poverty, and resilience. Elaine holds a Master of Arts in Conflict Transformation (2003) and a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition/Community Development (1984) from Eastern Mennonite University.



EASTERN
MENNONITE
UNIVERSITY

Eastern Mennonite University

EMU is a leader among faith-based universities offering undergraduate, graduate and seminary programs that emphasize peacebuilding, cross-cultural understanding, sustainability and service to others. EMU offers a Christian education like no other.

emu.edu

The Center for Justic and Peacebuilding

CJP was one of the first programs at a North American university to offer an MA in the conflict and peacebuilding field. Responding to demand for intensive study, CJP launched the first peacebuilding institute, offering both professional development and short-term courses for academic credit. Our Summer Peacebuilding Institute has become a model for other peacebuilding institutes around the world.

emu.edu/cjp



STAR

Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience

star@emu.edu

www.emu.edu/star

540-432-4651



EASTERN
MENNONITE
UNIVERSITY

\$4.99 (U.S.)



Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed
forests and other controlled sources
www.fsc.org Cert no. XX-COC-XXXX
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council