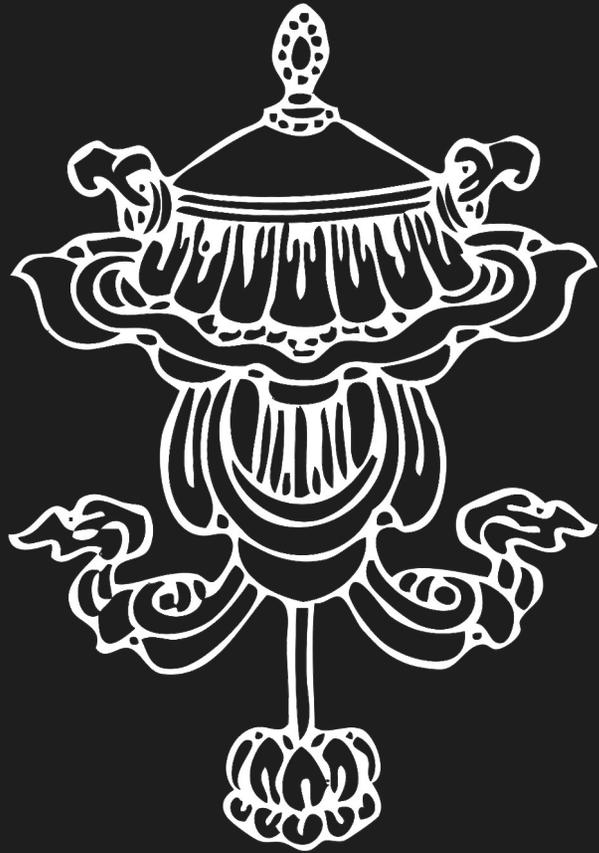


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THE DUKAR PROJECT

Healing the Trauma of the Tibetan Diaspora

In collaboration with:

The Health Ministry
of the Tibetan Government in Exile

The Tibetan Women's Association

Men Tsee Khang Clinic -
Tibetan Institute of Traditional Medicine

In this presentation

1. What is The Dukar Project? Why is it needed and what are its goals?
2. A review of the pilot training and a summary of its curriculum
3. Results of training evaluation and participant feedback
4. An overview of The Dukar Project's ongoing three-year training curriculum and beyond

What is The Dukar Project?

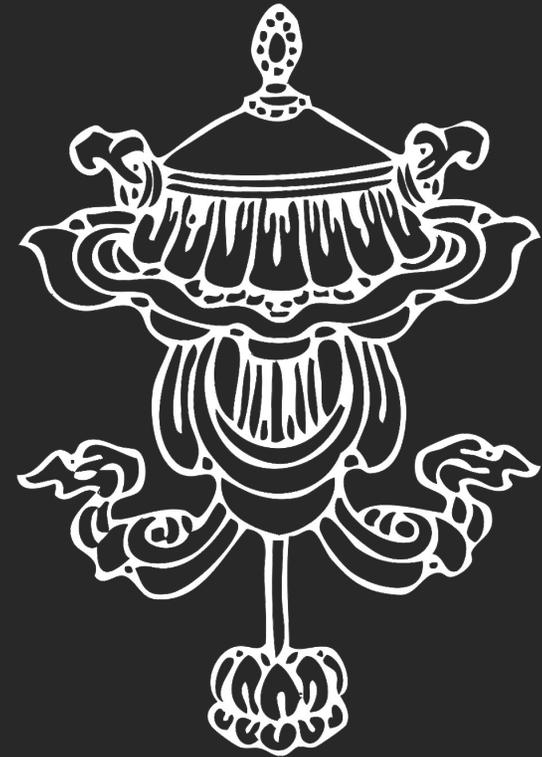
The Dukar Project is a culturally sensitive trauma recovery training program developed by ICMHHR at the invitation of the Health Ministry of the Tibetan Government in Exile.

The training is offered to Tibetan health workers, social service workers, monks and nuns to develop clinical skills to assist individuals and families within the Tibetan exiled community suffering from PTSD and developmental trauma (complex trauma), depression, anxiety and other symptoms common to the refugee experience.

What is the significance of *Dukar*?

“*Dukar*,” pronounced *doo-kar* is a Sanskrit word meaning white umbrella. It is one of the eight sacred symbols of Tibetan Buddhism. *Dukar* is the protective aspect of the deity of healing and compassion, Tara.

As an umbrella offers protection and refuge from the searing heat and drenching rains, *Dukar* offers psychological protection and refuge in the face of suffering.



The Scope of Need

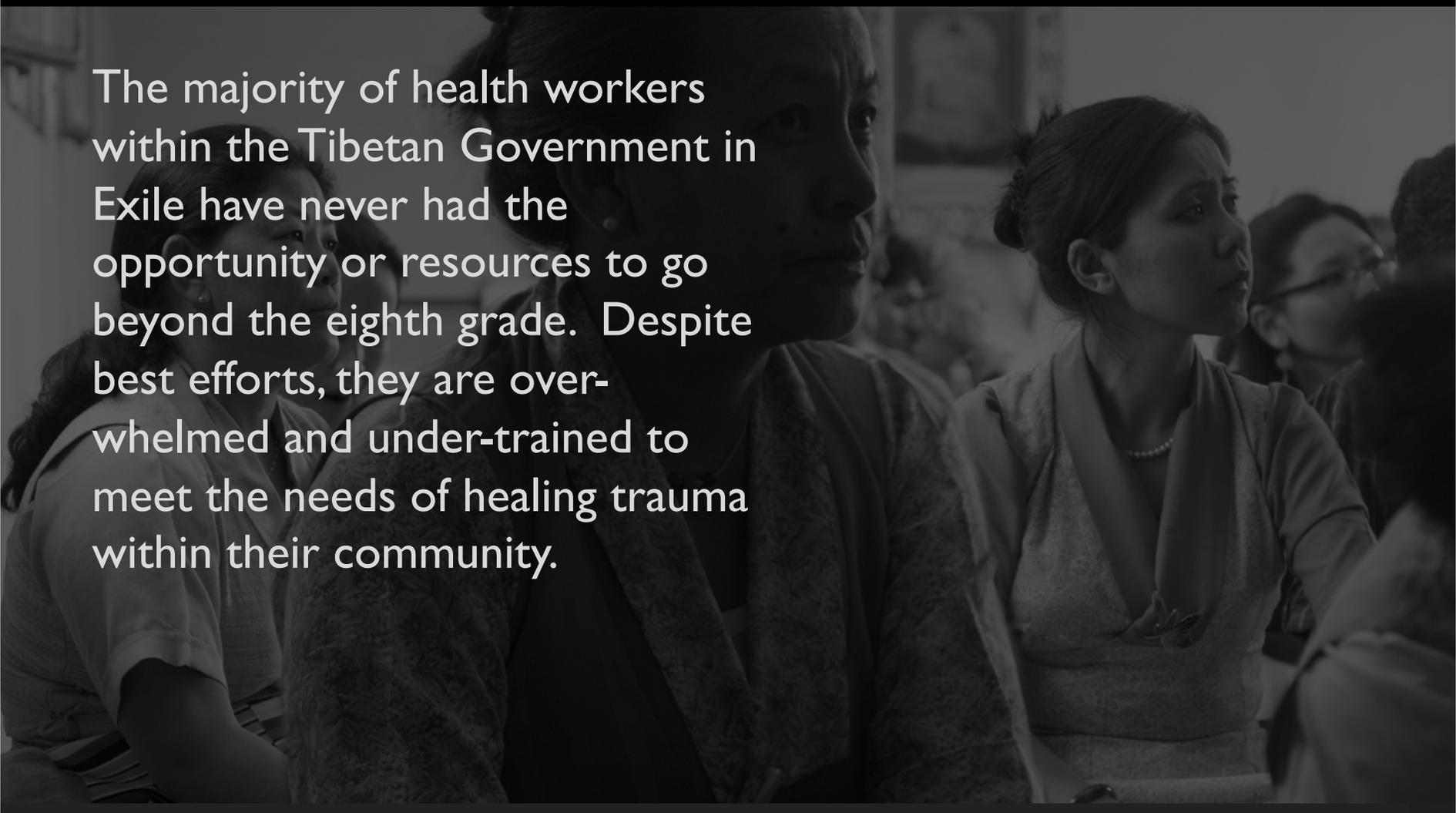
Since the invasion of 1949, hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have fled their homeland to escape religious persecution, political repression and cultural annihilation. Currently over 150,000 Tibetans live in settlements and communities scattered across the Indian subcontinent. Despite great hardships they have shown exemplary self-sufficiency, industry, non-violence and resilience.

The Scope of Need

However, according to the *Hopkins symptom checklist*, exiled Tibetans exhibit signs of “significant emotional distress.”

The tragic loss and ruptured attachments to family and homeland, the impact of ongoing and prolonged human rights violations within Tibet, and the stressful demands of the adjustment to living in exile create conditions that have contributed to the spectrum of multi-generational trauma, depression, anxiety, and alienation.

The Scope of Need



The majority of health workers within the Tibetan Government in Exile have never had the opportunity or resources to go beyond the eighth grade. Despite best efforts, they are overwhelmed and under-trained to meet the needs of healing trauma within their community.

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The Dukar Project provides an integrative solution weaving together strategies and skills for healing from the following areas:

1. Complex Trauma and Neurobiology
2. The Clinical Adaptation of Mindful Awareness
3. Strategies for Self Regulation
4. Tibetan Traditional Medicine
5. Compassionate Listening
6. Case Consultation
7. Group Therapy Training

I. Complex Trauma and Neurobiology

All PTSD symptoms reflect problems associated with poor neural integration, impairing the capacity for self regulation.

- Emotional regulation - managing arousal
- Capacity to self soothe - calming the mind
- Secure attachment - capacity to trust
- Immune system - physical health
- Impulse control - behavior
- Capacity for attention - ability to learn
- Perception - paranoid vs. reality based

Complex Trauma and Neurobiology

Neuroscience research points to functional and structural brain changes in long-term Tibetan Buddhist practitioners. Mindfulness practice promotes whole brain functioning and strengthens connections across the mid-prefrontal cortex leading to *neural integration*.

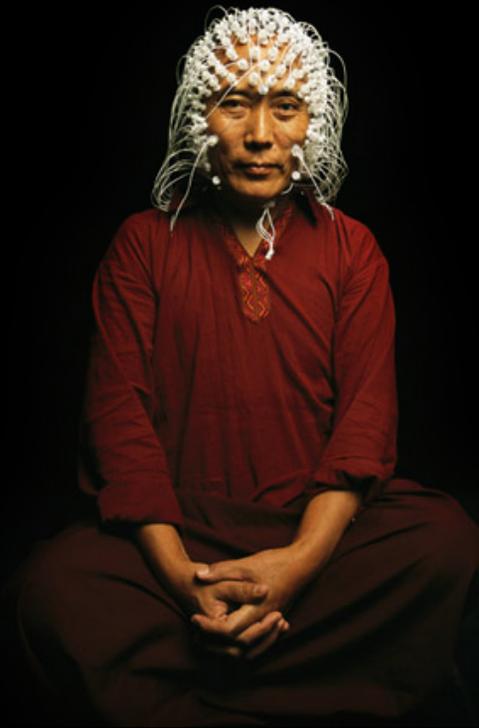


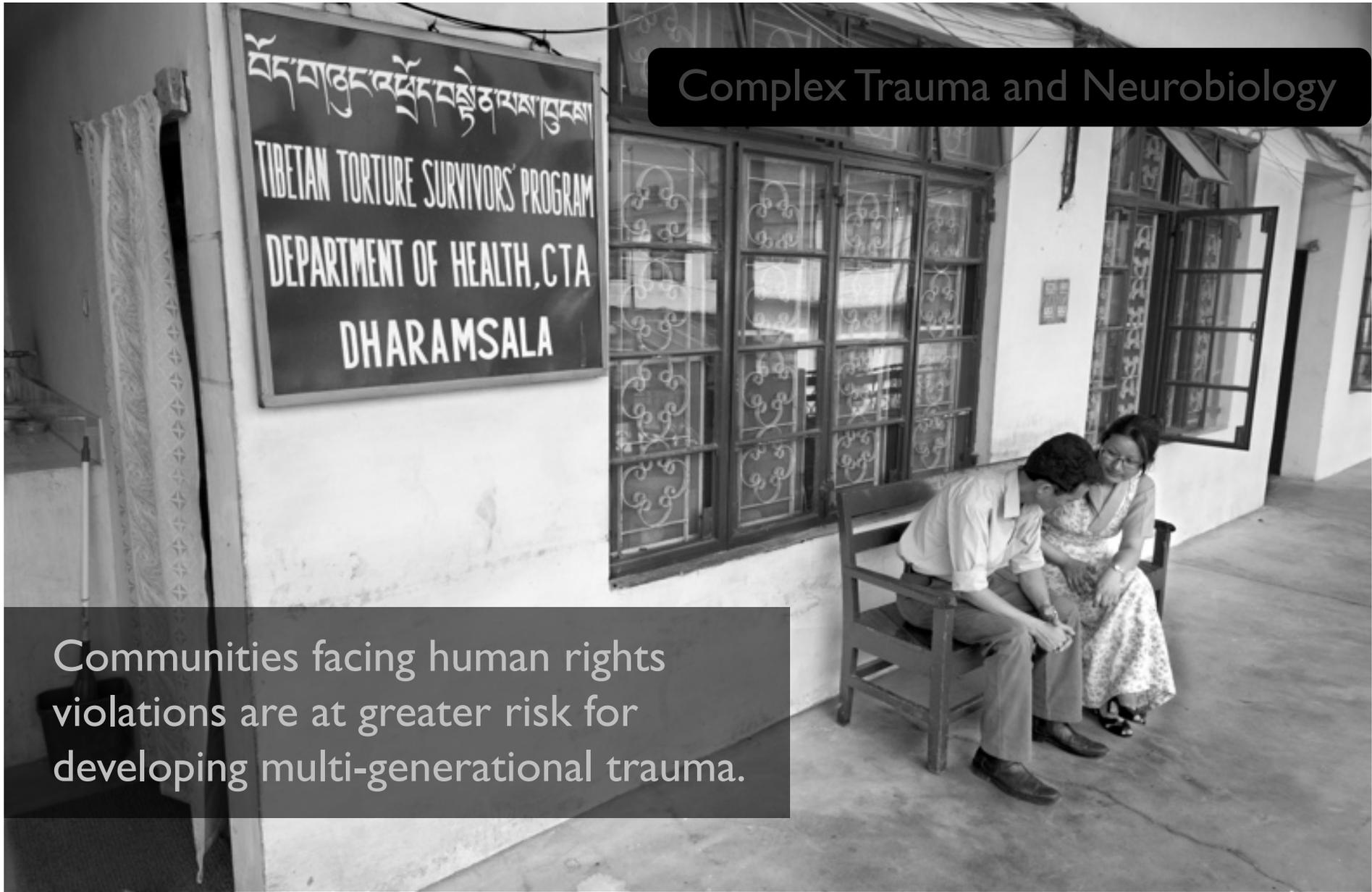
photo by Cary Wolinsky

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Complex Trauma and Neurobiology

Neural integration is necessary for people to live healthy lives.

Prolonged psychological trauma erodes and puts at risk the development of neural integration, dysregulating optimal mind-body-brain functioning across generations.



Complex Trauma and Neurobiology

Communities facing human rights violations are at greater risk for developing multi-generational trauma.

Neurology Informs Attachment Attachment Informs Neurology

Unresolved trauma in the parent generation
effects the attachment style of the next generation
with alarming predictability...as early as 18 months.

Mary Maine, PhD and Eric Hesse, PhD

Neural integration is a pathway to mindful awareness and secure attachment.

Mindful awareness is a pathway to neural integration and secure attachment.

2. Clinical Adaptation of Mindful Awareness



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Mindfulness is...

paying attention in a particular way:

- on purpose
- in the present moment
- and non judgmentally

Jon Kabat-Zin, PhD

Characteristics of Mindful Awareness

- Non judgmental awareness and acceptance of the moment-to-moment experience
- Intentional attention to sensation, images, feelings and thoughts that arise in the mind (SIFT)
- Non reactivity - not clinging to judgments
- Inquisitive relationship to the present moment
- The ability to become aware that the mind has wandered and return to the present moment

The Importance of the Mindful Therapist

A German study showed significantly higher levels of positive therapeutic outcome in the group who underwent psychotherapy with counselors who practice daily mindfulness meditation over the control group across all mental health categories including anxiety, depression and psychosis in a 16 week period.

Mindful awareness helps *the therapist* to develop:

Presence - the ability to be “present,” accurately attuned to feelings, non verbal communication such as tiny, facial micro-expressions

*Compassionate
Listening* - non judgmental attention

Dual Attention - the ability to track the moment-to-moment experience, both content and affect

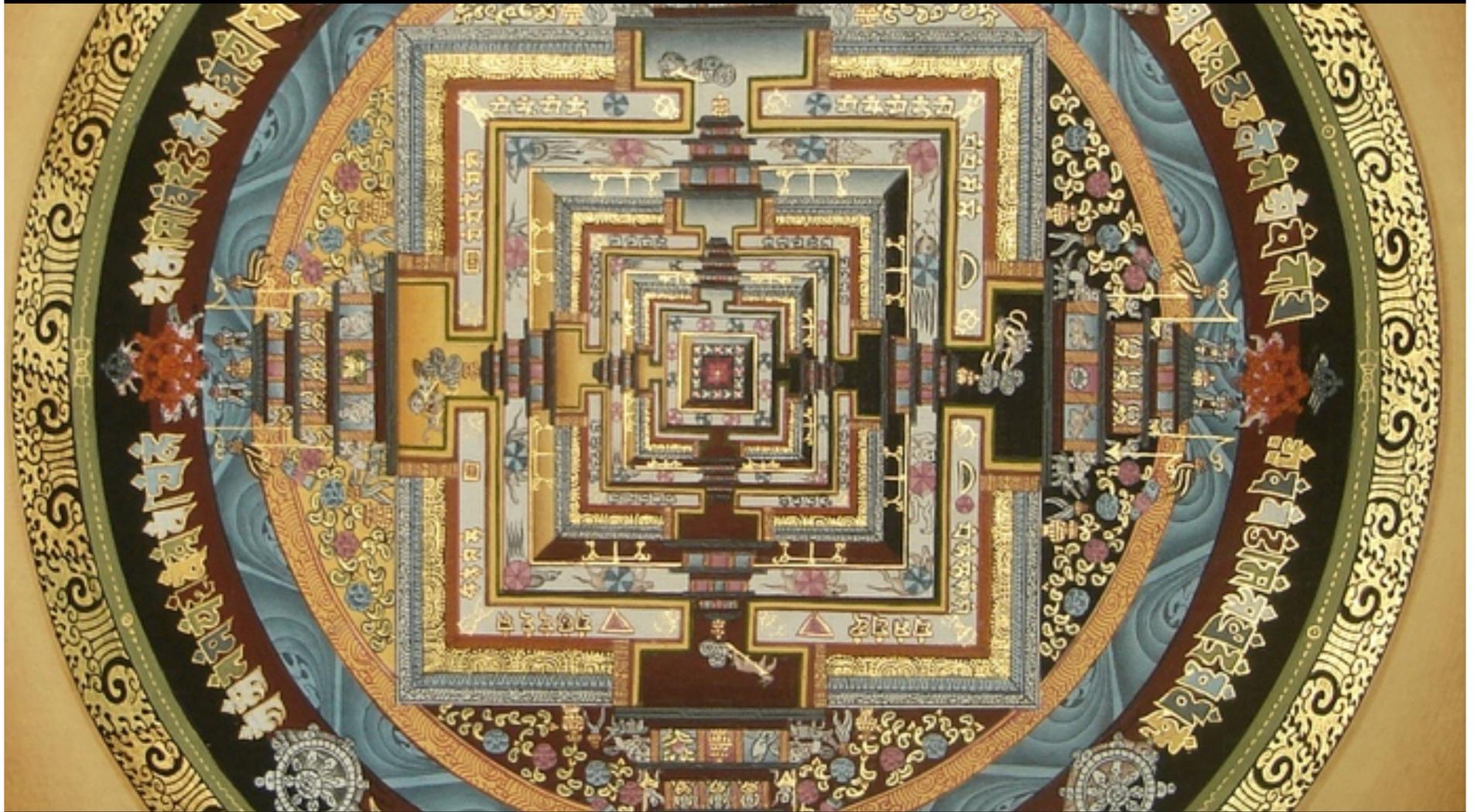
*Sensory
Stabilization* - the experience of self regulation - calm, energized optimal arousal

When the therapist is mindful it enables
the patient to develop...

- mindful awareness
- language that describes experience
- the cultivation of self compassion
- secure attachment
- self regulation

Necessary pathways in the healing of complex trauma

3. Strategies for Self Regulation



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Walking Meditation Strategies for Self Regulation



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Grounding and Sensory Stabilization Strategies for Self Regulation



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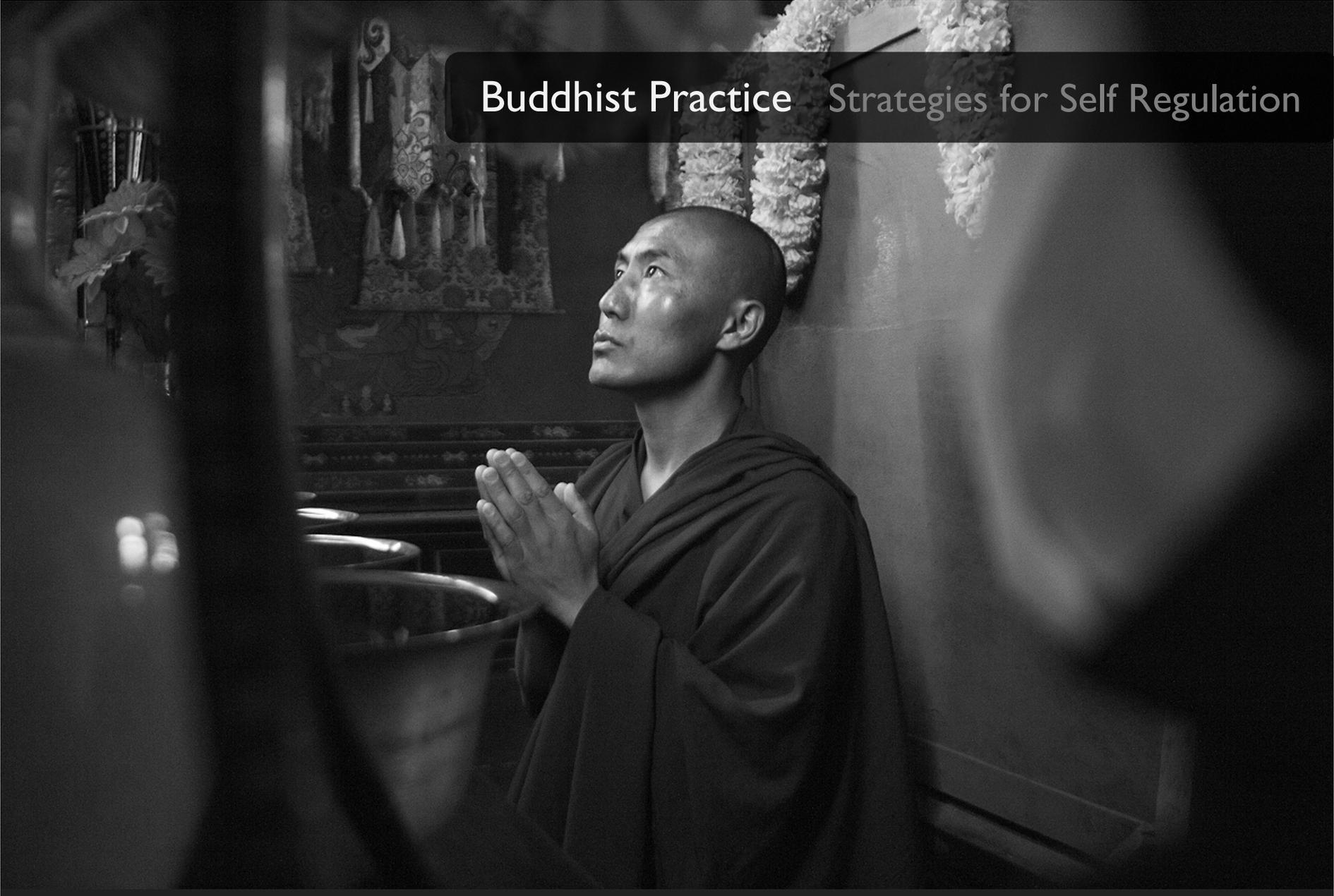
Laughter Yoga Strategies for Self Regulation

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Therapeutic Writing Strategies for Self Regulation



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Buddhist Practice Strategies for Self Regulation

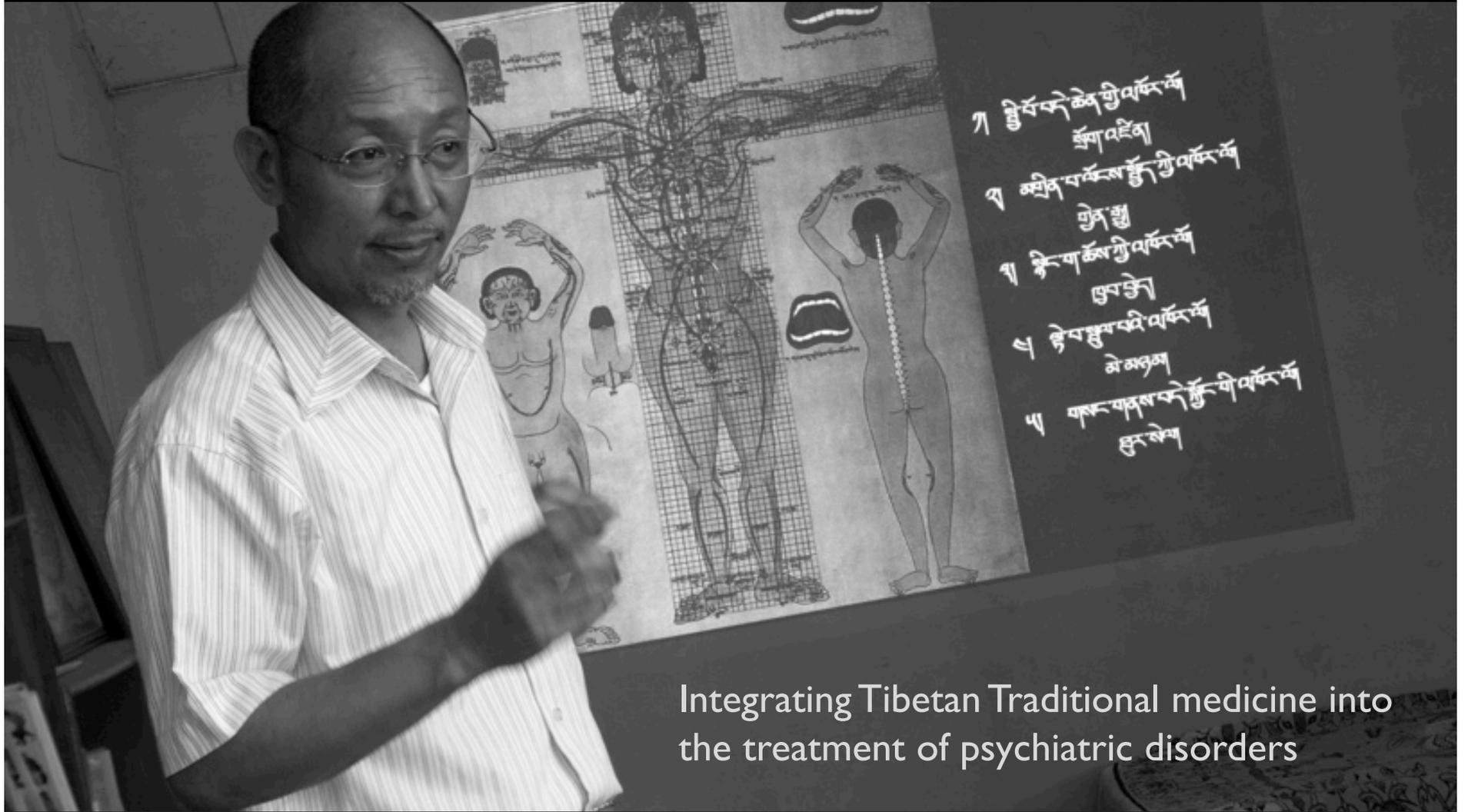
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Strengthening Secure Attachment Strategies for Self Regulation



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4. Traditional Tibetan Medicine



Integrating Tibetan Traditional medicine into the treatment of psychiatric disorders

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Tibetan traditional medicine is a highly sophisticated, integrative approach to mind-body-brain healing, offering insights into the causes and treatment of disease that correlate with western regulation theory and the emerging understanding of the *polyvagal nervous system*.

Psychiatric disorders are understood to be an expression of "*rlung*" disorders - an imbalance of the wind element in the body, a subtle flow of energy linked to the in-breathe and the out-breathe, affecting the organ system and regulatory mechanisms.

5. Compassionate Listening



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Cultivating Trauma Sensitive Intervention

Essential to the counseling relationship is the capacity for attuned, accurate, compassionate and non-judgmental attention.

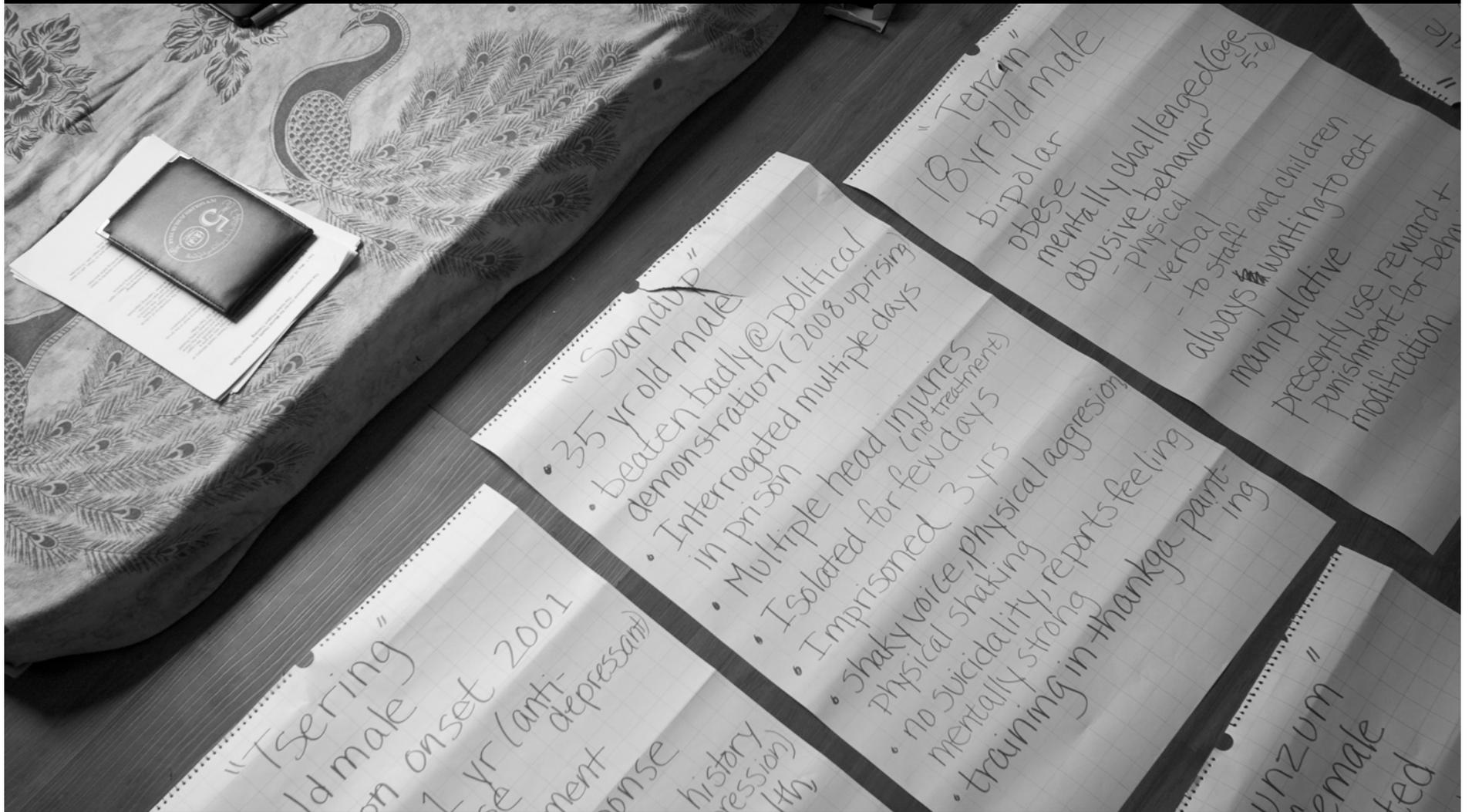
The counselor must develop and practice “deep listening” at many levels to be able to “hold” the heart and mind of another.



Compassionate Listening

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6. Case Consultation



Sharing Clinical Challenges

Trainees are supported by the collaborative process of identifying diagnostic and intervention strategies to strengthen their work.

Case consultation is a vital way to provide *care for the caregiver*. Many health workers share similar traumatic experiences to their patients and thus are vulnerable to *vicarious traumatization, compassion fatigue* or feelings of being overwhelmed.

7. Group Therapy Training



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“The Chinese never knew that they gave us the one thing we needed in prison to survive, they gave us each other..”

Jampel Monlam,
Former Tibetan Political Prisoner

“The Nazis, of course, didn't realize they gave us exactly what we needed in order to survive, they gave us one another, bunk after bunk. We could be a group...and in that way find resilience and strength.”

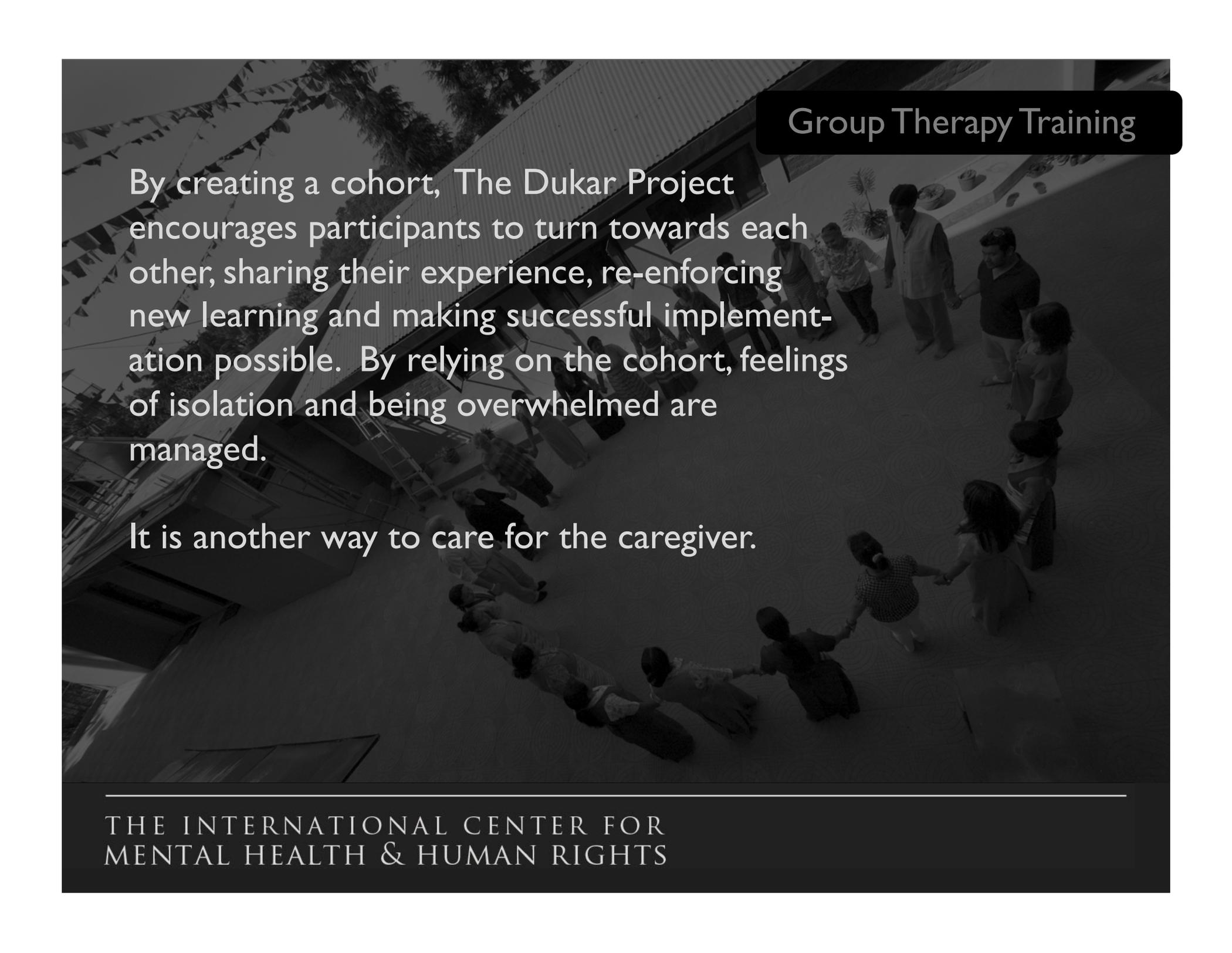
Anna Ornstein, PhD
A child survivor of Auschwitz

Group psychotherapy is an essential *standard of care* in the treatment of complex trauma, depression, anxiety, alienation and substance abuse.

The group provides a safe “holding” environment where people who have endured attachment rupture and severe trauma can begin to trust, emerge from isolation, gain access to feelings, a sense of belonging and of “having a voice.”

Interactive processing plays a major role in the deepening of emotional regulation.

All group facilitators on the Dukar faculty have undergone extensive training and have obtained the CGP certification by the American Group Psychotherapy Association.



Group Therapy Training

By creating a cohort, The Dukar Project encourages participants to turn towards each other, sharing their experience, re-enforcing new learning and making successful implementation possible. By relying on the cohort, feelings of isolation and being overwhelmed are managed.

It is another way to care for the caregiver.

The Dukar Project : Level -I Training, May 16-19, 2011



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Participant Feedback

“The Dugar Project widened my knowledge about healing trauma by developing concepts already existing within Buddhism. The topic that most inspired me was the importance of utilizing mindful awareness and sensory stabilization to cultivate self regulation. I found a new path, new inspirations, new hopes and was able to form goals about mental health in my society.”

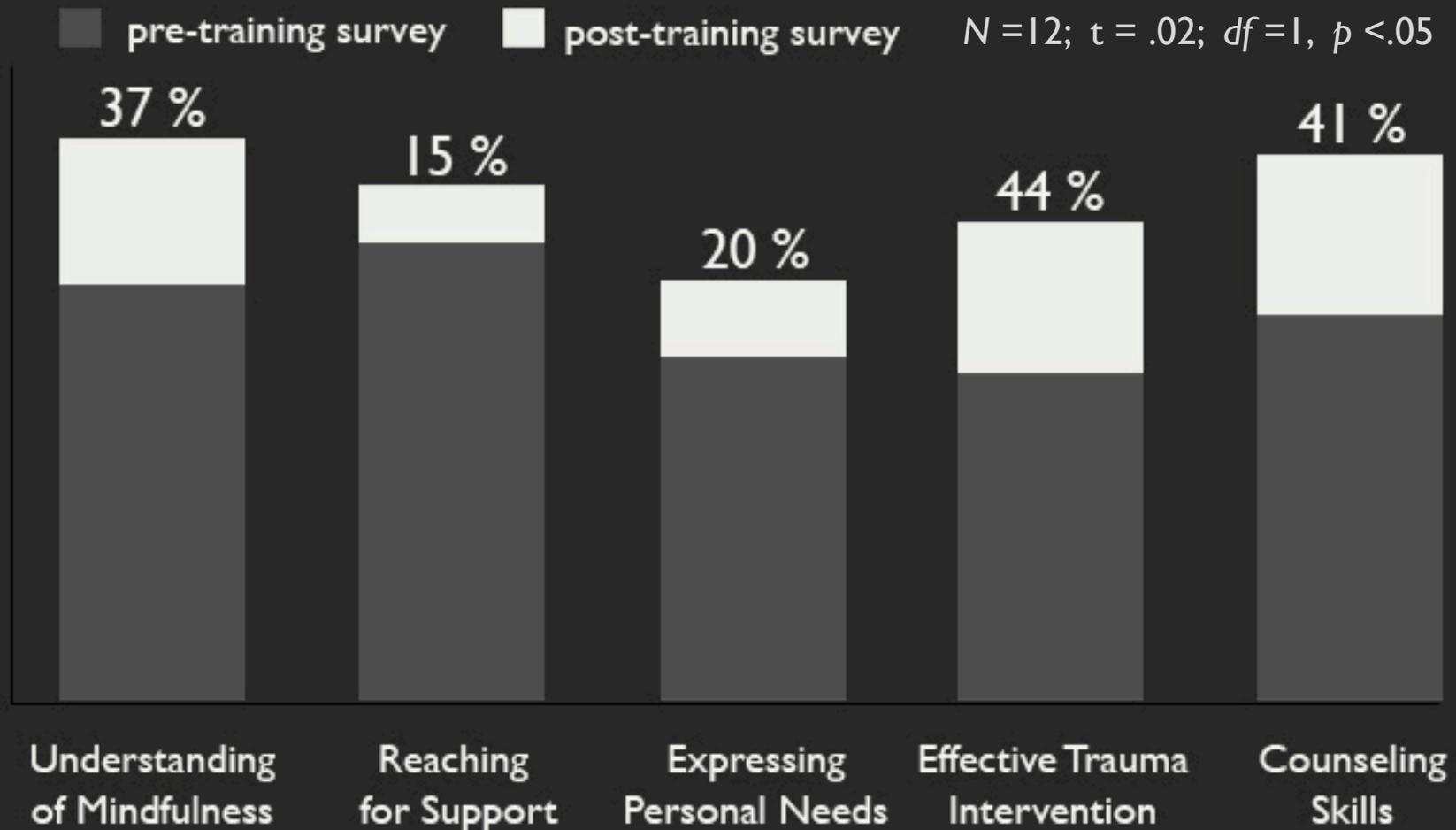
- Tenzin Yangdon, 23
Psychology Intern

Participant Feedback

"I cherished the Dukar training. The most interesting part, for me, was the integration of Buddhist philosophy with modern psychology in addressing the alleviation of suffering. The training had the right blend of theory and practice. The training has changed my perspective towards everything in life. I have become more mindful, positive and happier within myself. Thank you for reconnecting us to our roots and for giving us the feeling that we are not alone."

- Nyima Lhamo, 35
Tibetan Women's Association

Increase of Dukar Participants' Confidence and Understanding Before and After Level-I Training



Next Steps...

Tibetan Reception Center Training

ICMHHR is currently developing training modules for the Tibetan Reception Centers in Dharamsala, Delhi and Nepal where the medical and psychological needs of newly arriving refugees are accessed.

The Reception Center has requested additional training in the diagnosis and assessment of PTSD. The training will take place in November, 2011 and will complete “on the ground training” for Level-I of The Dukar Project.

Dukar Project : Proposed Curriculum for Year 2

- Compassionate intervention and case consultation
- Working with trauma and shame: HIV, chemical and drug dependency, domestic violence and sexual abuse
- The importance of both mindful awareness and emotion (affect) in healing
- Basic group psychotherapy for the treatment of adults
- “In School” program for children and adolescents. (Erase Stress Pro Social / SSR)

Dukar Project : Proposed Curriculum for Year 3

- Compassionate intervention and case consultation
- Understanding non-verbal and pre-verbal affective communication in trauma treatment
- The role of Tibetan Buddhist practice in healing: (Lojong, Tonglen, Tara, Medicine Buddha)
- Level 2- Group psychotherapy training for the treatment of adults
- “In School” program for children and adolescents. (Erase Stress Pro Social / SSR)

Evaluation and Monitoring

Our research director, Rony Berger, Phd, advisor to the *The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education* at the Stanford University Medical School, will monitor, evaluate and re-evaluate the efficacy and reproducibility of various aspects of the training, specifically the “in school” programs designed to promote stress reduction and self regulation for children and adolescents, helping to heal the legacy of multi-generational trauma.

Beyond The Dukar Project

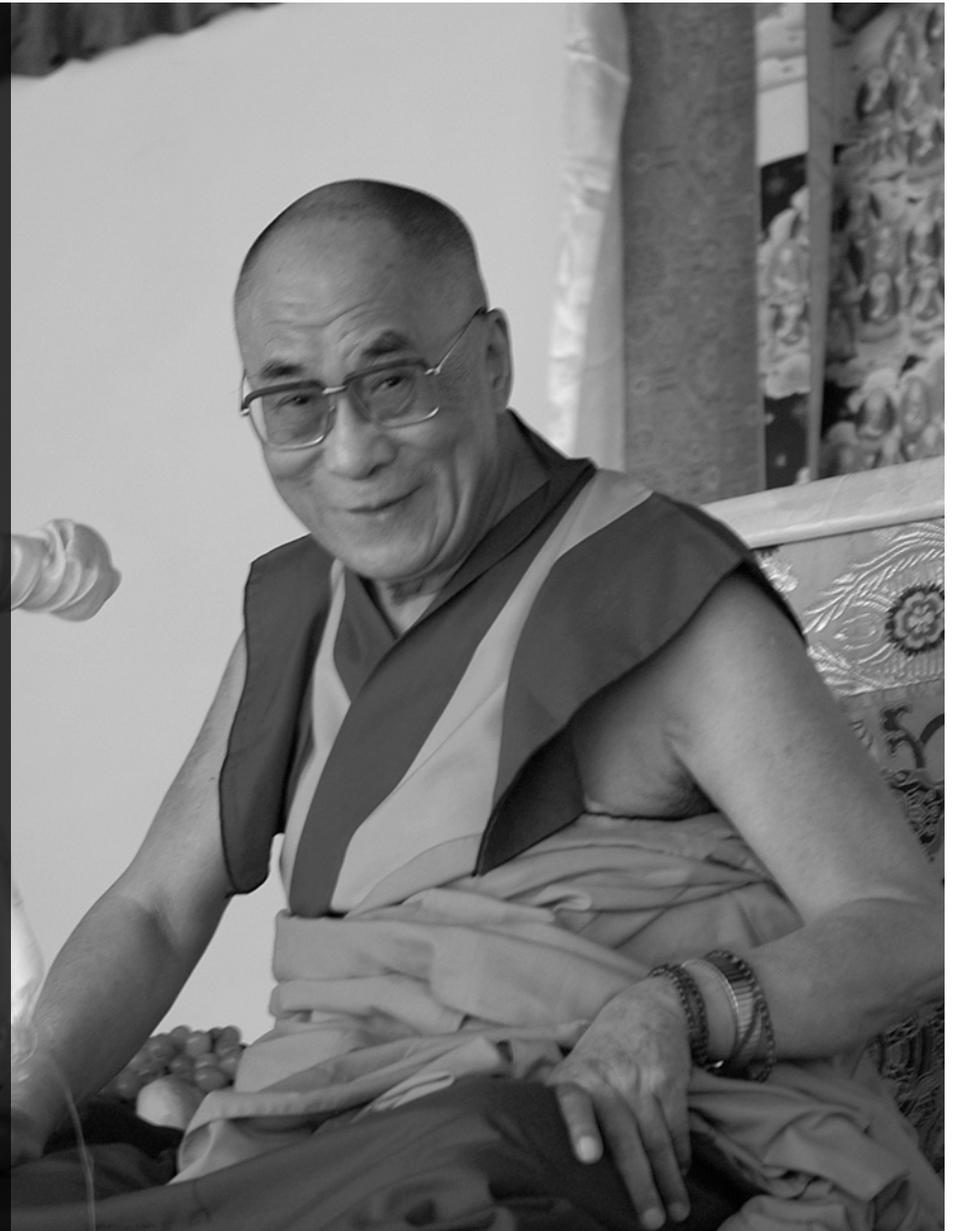
ICMHHR is actively seeking funding from foundations, grant makers and individual donors to continue Year 2 and 3 of The Dukar Project.

The Dukar Project will provide important research regarding efficacy, thus enabling ICMHHR and our partners to move forward with tested clinical strategies adaptable to other cultures and communities facing prolonged and ongoing human rights violations.

The practice of compassion is a shared responsibility. It is a fierce and tender engagement with the human condition and the tireless commitment towards the alleviation of suffering.

“It is because our own human existence is so dependent on the help of others, that our need for love lies at the very foundation of our existence. Therefore, we need a genuine sense of responsibility and a sincere concern for the welfare of others.”

- His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama



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