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I feel it in my body

June 16, 2008

Netivim Center hosts a workshop: Coping with Trauma

Netivim Center in Sderot worked with Gina Ross, internationally renowned therapist, President of the International Trauma- Healing Institute (USA) and co-founder of the Israeli Trauma Center in Jerusalem, to bring a workshop to Sderot's residents. The workshop was held at "Mishkan Ela", next to Sderot's Cinematheque and was led by Ross and 20 assistants – psychologists and therapists who specialize in Somatic Experiencing therapy and who came to Sderot from all corners of Israel.

Somatic Experiencing Therapy, also known as SE, was developed by Dr. Peter Levine and is based on releasing traumas from our soul and body by examining the physical sensations we feel. Ross: "The ability to cope with trauma is already embedded in us. All animals experience terrifying moments when they fear for their well-being or their life, but they are able to quickly return to their normal existence. Their trauma release mechanisms function well, letting go of the emotional energies that accumulate during their terror. You can see how they shake, breath and twitch.

But we humans have trouble doing this, either because we are embarrassed to admit we are frightened or because as our brains developed they imprinted our traumas in our body."

Sderot's SE workshop lasted six hours, during which the "Zeva Adom" rocket alert sounded twice. Ziva Ben-Shitrit, a Sderot resident, participated in the workshop. "My husband's barbershop took a direct hit, twice. Another Kasam rocket fell when we were attending synagogue. Everyone in the family was hurt and since then, for years, I haven't dared take care of myself. I came today to honor Gina. I heard about her therapy a year ago, by accident, when someone gave me her book, *Beyond the Trauma Vortex*. Her idea is simple and I began to practice the exercises in her book. Today I take care of my trauma. Today I go to the protected room calmly and help my children do spiritual trauma release



Gina Ross: "letting go of the emotional energies"

exercises [during rocket attacks]. The situation is complex but I have tools to cope with it.” Ross and her team brought hope to the residents of Sderot who participated in the workshop. They have also appealed to the city residents to contact them, with the hope of holding another SE workshop, free of charge.

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<http://www.ginaross.com>- information about Gina Ross For more

