

July 9, 2019

Congressman Jamie Raskin, Chairman
House Committee on Oversight and Reform
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Hearing on Detention of Separated Immigrant Children

Dear Chairman Raskin:

Trauma Recovery EMDR Humanitarian Assistance Programs (Trauma Recovery) is a non-partisan not-for-profit, located in Hamden, Connecticut, whose mission is to increase capacity for effective treatment of psychological trauma in under-served communities and populations anywhere in the world. Both at home and abroad, Trauma Recovery), focuses its efforts on building the capacity and expanding access to EMDR Therapy through proper training by our amazing community of dedicated groups of volunteers.

EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. EMDR is an evidence-based therapy developed by the late Francine Shapiro, PhD and has been endorsed by US Department of Veterans Affairs & Department of Defense, World Health Organization (WHO), International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies and many other organizations. EMDR therapy is especially effective in treating the effects of trauma and a broad range of mental health concerns, in both outpatient and inpatient settings.

It is based on our 25 years of providing psychological treatment to thousands of victims of trauma, that we know that the separation of children from parents, the extremely crowded rooms, the lack of clean drinking water and bathing facilities, and the lack of adequate food is causing trauma for these immigrants that is likely to be long lasting.

The current conditions in the detention camps are having a devastating impact. The separation of young children interrupts their ability to attach and feel connected to other children and adults. This leads to depression, and eventually could cause a lack of empathy and sociopathy.

Living in a state of fear causes neurological changes that lead to anxiety, panic disorders and PTSD and in fact there is recent research showing, via neurological imaging, exactly how the young brain is damaged by the above-mentioned conditions.

It is our hope that this situation will end, and that children and parents will be released to family members and sponsors in the US who can provide acceptable living arrangements for them.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter.

Sincerely,

Carol Martin

Executive Director