

Editors Preface

It has been my honor and pleasure to act as the Editor, for this first EMDRIA publication on diversity. The pages that follow were edited from a transcript of a workshop presented at the 2010 Annual EMDRIA Conference held in Minneapolis. While the workshop was on the last day of the conference, it was well attended and it has helped to generate a wave of interest in diversity within the EMDR community.

The workshop was titled “EMDR and Diversity: A Panel Presentation” and was held on Sunday afternoon of the four-day conference. David Eliscu, LCSW and I worked for several months before the conference to recruit and develop a dynamic team of presenters that could cover a wide range of topics related to diversity. We were pleased that the EMDRIA Conference Committee accepted the abstract that was submitted and the workshop became a reality.

Like many organizations, EMDRIA has struggled with the issue of diversity. What is the role of diversity within EMDRIA as an organization? What role does the EMDRIA Board of Directors play in terms of organizational policy? How do we encourage diversity in terms of presentations at the Annual Conference? How can the EMDRIA membership become more diverse? How are practitioners sensitized to the issue of diversity? How can we effectively work with diverse populations?

What is the role for EMDR in public practice, in agency settings? How do we support/promote EMDR so that it becomes available regardless of race, class, culture, gender, income and age? These and other questions are crucial for us to address as we move forward in our effort to make EMDR treatment available to all.

This publication seeks to address diversity within the EMDR community and I hope it will serve as a vehicle to keep the discussion alive and dynamic. The six presenters were successful in addressing a wide range of topics related to diversity. The content areas include working with the Native American population, treatment for Holocaust survivors, EMDR and the gay community, working with ex sex workers, enculturation issues within the Hispanic community and working with the severely mentally ill in community mental health settings. The information presented is unique in its ability to address and promote discussion so many issues related to diversity in one workshop, at one time. Moderator David Eliscu, LCSW was thoughtful and diplomatic in his ability to support six presenters as they brought “the best of diversity thinking” to the workshop. Thanks to David for his passionate labor of love.

It is my personal passion and mission to help EMDR move into agency and community mental health practice. In agency settings there is a broad range of clients, many feeling disenfranchised and with a history of personal or community trauma, for whom EMDR has so much to offer. As EMDRIA and our EMDR practice becomes more diverse, we can realize our potential to reach all clients in need of this innovative and landmark psychotherapy. As Gandhi said “Be the change you want to see in the world” and the members of the Diversity Panel are change in motion, when it comes to the EMDR community.

As a former member of the EMDRIA Board of Directors I am pleased to see us take this step forward to help EMDR serve and embrace a wider group of people. In addition, I want to

recognize the support the EMDRIA Executive Director Scott Blech has lent his personal help this project start and move forward to a publication.

Donald F. deGraffenried, LCSW
Editor