

THE ENERGY OF DIVERSITY

William Sloan Coffin, Jr. wrote that "diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without." We know this to be true if we want to see treatment in general, and EMDR specifically, unimpeded by racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender or political barriers. If our organization can increase the diversity of its membership, it will, thereby, increase the diversity in the application of EMDR treatment and of those who receive it.

In view of this, I'd like to recount an experience that I had at our 2010 conference, which reminded me of poet W. H. Auden's comment that "civilization should be measured by the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained."

I was privileged to be part of a panel of six speakers on the last day of the conference. The subject of the panel was diversity; with speakers presenting on working with the Hispanic community, Holocaust survivors and their families, traumatized sex therapists, inner city populations, the Native American community, and the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. Each speaker recounted the unique struggles and pains of these specific communities, as well as the unique concomitant challenges regarding the treatment and the therapist's experience.

Not surprising was the fact that the knowledge and information was fascinating and at times astounding. However, what was astonishing for me was what I experienced in the last quarter of the presentation. In spite of the fact that this was the last presentation, on the last day of the conference, with our inherent fatigue, the energy in that room began to steadily increase, to the point of being a wonderful buzz. This was palpable in the panel and in the audience. The magnitude of this experience was wonderfully startling!

If such an infusion of breathtaking energy could be created in such an environment, I can only imagine the outcome if the entirety of EMDRIA had the same composition.

Uri Bergmann, Ph.D.
2011 EMDRIA President