Preventing group violence

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Best reference for talk: *Overcoming evil:Genocide, Violent Conflict and Terrorism*. Oxford (November, 2010). See also. www.ervinstaub.com

Since violence, and the psychological and social bases of it evolve: We can identify conditions that indicate the probability of violence, but not what kind of violence it will be.

Understanding the roots of violence is important for prevention.

Table 1: **The origins and prevention of violence** between groups
(From Staub, 2006, <u>Political Psychology)</u>

A: <u>Starting points</u>:

<u>Difficult life conditions</u> (economic, political, social change; war) and/or

<u>Conflict between groups (</u>Differences in power, repression, and so on).

The resulting frustration of basic psychological needs

Turning to a group for identity and support

Scapegoating

Ideologies

<u>Self interest as motivation</u>

Continuous Processes:

The evolution of harmdoing (changes in perpetrators, bystanders, institutions, social norms and culture).
(Past violence as predictor of future violence—a 'chasm' that reopens).

The role of leaders
The role of followers
The role of bystanders

Addressing difficult life conditions in ways that creates community.

Roosevelt
Financial security but also belonging

Creating constructive, inclusive ideology
Israel-Palestine: Economic community, help the
whole Middle East

<u>Creating alternative, constructive communities</u>, especially for youth

France—microcredit for youth, support by community.
Sierra Leone, former child soldiers supported by community.
The attraction to radical movements, genocidal or terrorist, or in group conflict, may initially be an expression of desperation by people. However, violence can become a way of life.

<u>Conflict, especially moving toward crisis</u>:

Preventive diplomacy.
The role and obligation of leaders.
(The role of citizen bystanders).
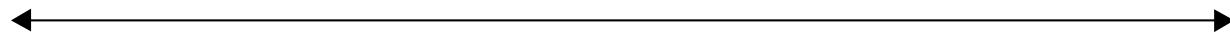
Kenya.
Yugoslavia.
Belgians in Rwanda in 1959

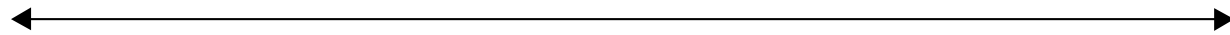# B: History, culture, and current practices

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Devaluation of Other   **Humanizing the Other**

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Destructive, Exclusive Ideology   **Constructive, Inclusive Ideology**

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Unhealed Wounds   **Healing of Past Wounds**

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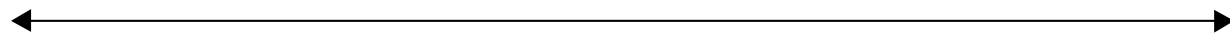
Uncritical Respect   **Moderate Respect for Authority**

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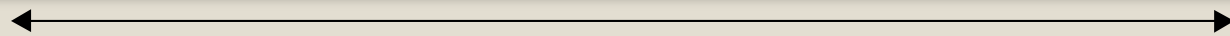
Developing positive orientation toward the "other"
Humanizing the other —through words (Israel/Palestine: some have been working for peace, Rwanda: some have saved lives).

Through gestures. Arafat and Rabin.

Though contact.

Through positive action toward the other.

Israel-Palestine. Lot of contact, but not ongoing, persistent contact between either populations or leaders. Lots of mutual derogation, negative actions.

Persistent contact can develop trust, which makes it possible to resolve material, practical issues.

Working to create psychological recovery

Engagement with experience in a supportive context--and in community
The *right kind* of commemoration
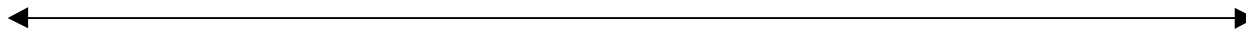
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Addressing "chosen" trauma

Creating awareness of its existence

How it affects perceptions of events, interpretation, action

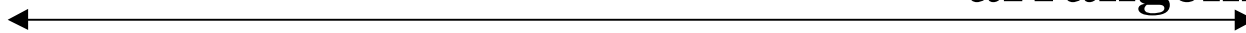How it enters into the educational system. Armenians

Monolithic Society   **Pluralism**
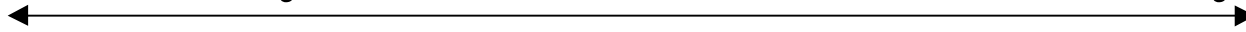   **(structures; processes)**

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Unjust societal arrangements   **Just social**
                                     arrangements

←————————————————————→

Passive bystanders   **Active bystanders**

←————————————————————→

Promoting societal justice through access and capacity building. Helping groups with acculturation. Muslims in Europe (Moroccans in Holland).

Pluralism means two different things:
 A wide range of beliefs and values can be expressed in the public domain
Every group has access to the public domain

Psychological changes are often a prerequisite to building good civic institutions, which are essential:
Justice system, schools, police and military.

Without institutions, psychological changes are likely to be ephemeral

Reconciliation (even before violence is an avenue of prevention).

Complex truth, justice, ***moving toward*** a shared history. (Newbury on Rwanda).

Each group acknowledging its responsibility---mutual acknowledgment in mutual violence. This requires healing by perpetrators (or both groups in a conflict).

Acceptance of the past?
Some degree of forgiveness of each other over time?

Institutions that can facilitate
reconciliation and peace

To work on history and collective memory
(stop denial, engage with the past in a
realistic and truthful manner).

On what children are taught in the school
about the other

To develop joint projects
serving shared goals.

Joint commissions

Our work in Rwanda (and Burundi and the Congo).

Staub and Pearlman and associates

Workshops and trainings—with varied
    groups.
Content
Understanding the origins and impact
of group violence
Understanding basic human needs
Soon after the start, also understanding
    avenues to prevention, healing and
    reconciliation.

<u>Study with three groups</u>:
Treatment (Integrated) group;
Traditional group
Control group

Evaluation before, immediately after, and two months after involvement,
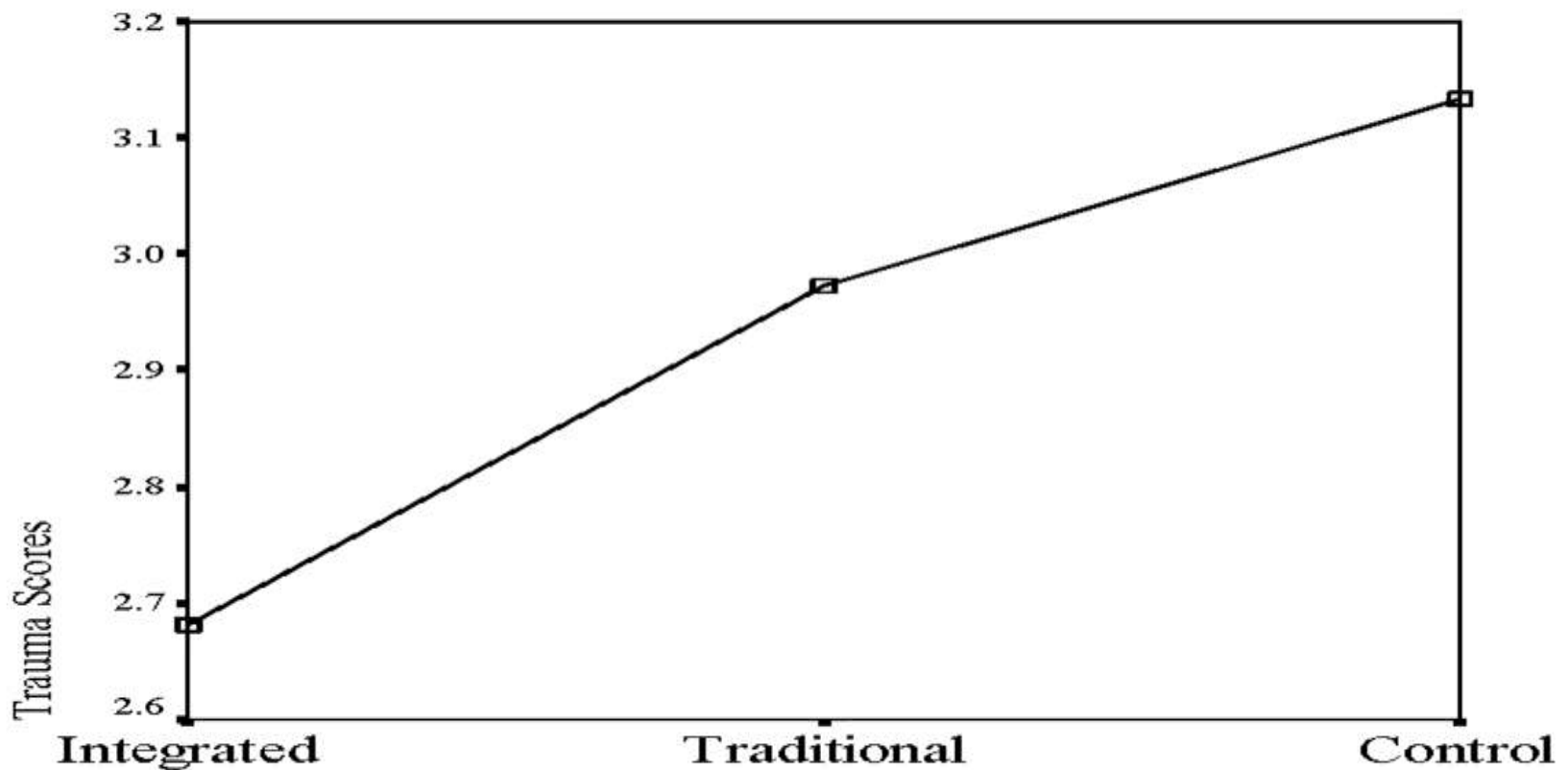
Treatment effects:
On delayed post-test,
Lower trauma symptoms,
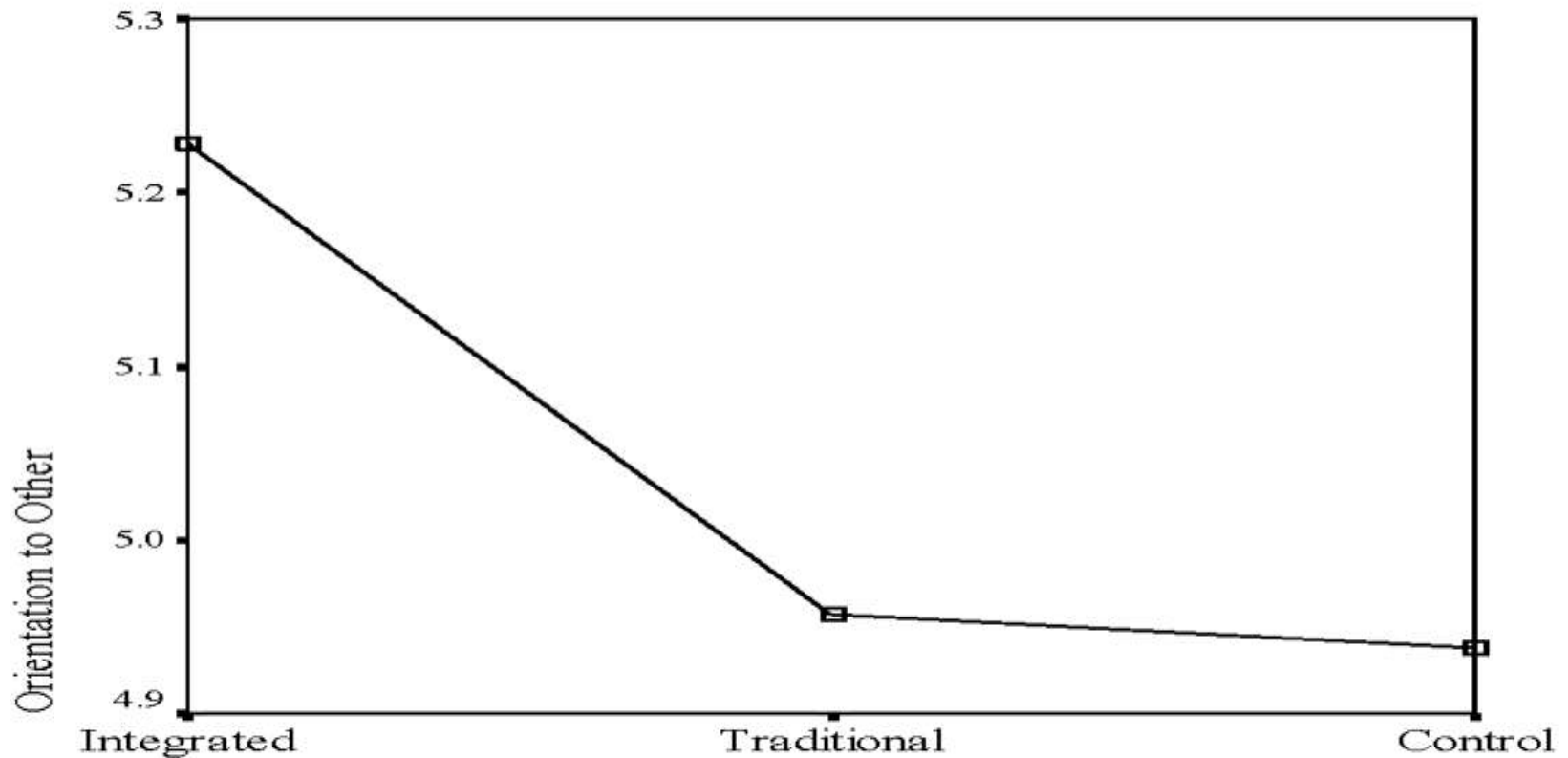More positive orientation to the other group
Conditional forgiveness.

Figure 2. <u>Tutsi participants' Trauma Scores 2-Months Post-Intervention</u>.

Covariates: Trauma Scores and Traumatic
Experiences, both at Time 1

Figure 3. Tutsi participants' Other Orientation (or Readiness to Reconcile) Scores 2-Months Post-Intervention.

Covariates: Other Orientation Scores and Traumatic Experiences, both at Time 1

Educational radio projects in Rwanda, Burundi and the Congo.

Radio dramas and other programs. Staub-Pearlman approach, LaBenevolencija.

Rezarta Bilali, Johanna Vollhardt, Adin Thayer and others. Evaluation, Betsy Paluck

A variety of effects, including:

Change in the willingness to speak what one believes.

Changes in behavior.

The uses of "understanding."

Pretraining for conflict resolution, conflict management and transformation processes—for dialogue and negotiation

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