

Special Section



GUEST EDITORIAL

There Is No Justification...



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I *Imagine all the people / Living life in peace* – these words are from John Lennon’s 1971 timeless song *Imagine*. His message has become part of a culture that has influenced my attitude towards the world and its people. Despite the many challenges in my life, I have chosen to believe that in this world there is a place for everyone, where everyone can build a home, create, work, and securely be. Despite the disappointments and losses, I have chosen to believe in the goodness of people. We are destined as human beings to connect, create alliances to further develop as individuals, and build better and more meaningful lives for ourselves and the generations to come.

Today, however, I imagine other things. I imagine anti-aircraft sirens ominously breaking the silence before the bombs unleash their destructive power. I imagine buildings collapsing in seconds, the remains of homes created with love and hard work, and ruined cultural sites, symbol-bearers of centuries of history and culture. I imagine the deafening screams of people before whom loved ones, relatives, neighbors, and friends are dying, and their ensuing horror, stupor, and inability to grasp or stop what is happening. I imagine hearts beating in terror as people run to find life-saving hiding places. I imagine the emotional devastation of millions of people making the impossible choice to leave grown sons and husbands, and flee somewhere far, far away, relying entirely on the mercy of fate and the compassion of strangers in search of security, freedom, and life for themselves and their little ones. And I imagine the irretrievable rupturing of the souls of thousands of soldiers – little by little with every shot fired by one human at another.

These images terrify me, weaken my faith in the good, in meaning, and in humans. They shake my resilience. There is no justification for war – for any war, ever, no matter where it happens on the planet, or how well-founded the arguments each side presents. I hope

that we, as individuals and as a professional community, can find a voice strong enough to call for an immediate cessation of military operations and the restoration of common sense.

It is with this idea in mind that we dedicate a special section of our *Journal* to war trauma. We open with **Courtenay Young's** article *Why War?* Is it possible, he asks, to make sense of war? The human animal is possibly the only species on the planet that conducts sustained aggression against its own. Courtenay traces the evolutionary development of war in human history, and gives us a pragmatic container for how to think about it. **Eduardo Pera**, a contemporary Reichian body psychotherapist, shares his twenty years of experience working with war trauma in post-emergency missions in the Middle East. His thrilling article, *Contemporary Reichian Analysis and War Trauma*, explores how Contemporary Reichian Analysis makes sense of war trauma to help those who are affected.

In our quest to deepen our understanding of the effects of war, we were fortunate to meet **Hanna Kemp**, a Ukrainian body-mind therapist and childbirth educator specializing in the postpartum rehabilitation and health of Ukrainian women. In this deeply moving and insightful interview, Hanna shares her extensive experience with pregnant women, women in labor, and women with little children in war zones and refugee camps where life and death interweave. Hanna gives us first-hand knowledge of what it's like to flee war, leave home, family, and friends. She describes the effects of war on women's health and psyche, and on their unborn and newborn infants. What is it like to live as a refugee; what do refugees need; what are the dangers of giving birth away from familiar medical care; what are the consequences of war-related trauma on intrapersonal and interpersonal levels? In *Giving Birth in a War Environment*, Hanna answers these questions and more, expanding our understanding of the challenges faced by people in the midst of an active war and how to best support them.

We are grateful to **Maggie Kline** for her outstanding article, *Empowering Children and Caregivers Impacted by the Atrocities of War*, in which she shares her work on the psychological effects of war on children. In this article, Maggie presents the core of her work: The Resilience Roadmap and the Eight Essentials of secure attachment. Her model details a plan to provide children with external co-regulating resources that counteract war-conditioned threat responses. Combining principles of Somatic Experiencing® with drawing and movement, Maggie gives us a wealth of practical somatic strategies. Her goal is to evoke interoceptive intelligence, thus increasing resilience, mitigating acute stress, and preventing the long-lasting symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

We continue our exploration with a trauma-informed approach to understanding trans-generational trauma. **Sally E. Watson**, an expert in conflict resolution, presents ***Trans-generational Trauma: The Role of Warrior Talk***, drawing on fifty years of warlike discourse in Northern Ireland, and more recently in Belfast, to show how the new generation of young people are drawn into sectarian conflict. Her article presents an argument for greater emphasis on somatic approaches to postwar trauma. Sally's historical tracing of the Irish conflict clearly demonstrates how warrior talk keeps adversity active and is instrumental in transmitting animosity through the generations, on both individual and collective levels.

We close our war trauma section with an article by **Melissa Sinclair**. ***Organizing a Rapid Response to War Trauma Lessons from the Somatic Experiencing Ukraine Task Force*** (SEUTF) is an in-depth demonstration of the course of action used to organize an effective worldwide emergency response to collective trauma as it unfolds in current time. The lessons from the SEUTF operations show how, as somatic practitioners, we can rally the agency of our community of healers and move quickly into active involvement using the internet. The SEUTF success shows how, as conflict situations unfold, we can move out of the isolation of our consulting rooms to organize effective outreach and responses to the real-time needs of those in the midst of collective trauma.

There is no justification for war. Contemplating the world at peace and the world at war, I heartfully want to return to my perception of the world as a place of peace, freedom, and understanding among people. I hope that this special section opens a way towards showing that this desire is not just an idealistic dream, but could become a sustainable reality for all time.

