

## **AWARDING OF THE PRESTIGIOUS DAVID SERVAN-SCHREIBER AWARD IN DUBLIN 2024 FOR THE PRESIDENTS OF EMDR ASSOCIATIONS OF BOSNIA&HERZEGOVINA AND SERBIA: A POSSIBLE SMALL CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL EMPATHIC CIVILIZATION**

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Dear Editor,

Empathy based on love as life philosophy and a way of being in the world is the most essential and basic core element in human communications which leads to healthy, creative, flourishing, and well-functioning families, communities, nations, societies, and civilizations. Culture of empathy is an essential part of the new 2.0 Enlightenment which is a mental, social, spiritual and political movement that inspires aspiration towards global human spirit, collective mind and humanistic self, public and global mental health, cosmopolitanism and empathic civilization (Jakovljević 2023).

In the actual World where natural and man-made catastrophes as wars, civil and mixed traumas leave lasting scars on the innocents, experts from two countries that were not so long ago engulfed in 1992-1995 war conflict, truly joined forces and managed to create a deep connection. Their cooperation is not only professional, but imbued with emotional connections and the warmth of human relationships. In the safe space they shaped together, they shared their knowledge and experiences without hesitation, supporting each other and supported Trauma Aid United Kingdom (TAUK).

Cooperation between mental health experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), United Kingdom and Serbia, began in difficult times after a tragic event at a school in Serbia, where a 13-year-old boy committed mass murder of his peers (The Guardian 2023). President of the EMDR Association of Serbia, Vesna Bogdanović, Ph.D. recognized the emergency of the need to support and educate her colleagues in approaching to collective traumas resolving. She addressed to Trauma Aid UK, whose President Shiraz Farrand reacted immediately and contacted the President of the EMDR Association of B&H, Professor Mevludin Hasanović, who promptly organized his team of experts with experience in working with the group trauma protocol (G-TEP), adapted for the population of B&H. Under the leadership of Vildana Aziraj-Smajić and the supervision of Shiraz Farrand, with the support of EMDR experts Sedir Habibović, Šemsa Šabanović, Selvira Draganović and Daryl

Joyce from Scotland, the training was successfully realized on June 17, 2023 (Aziraj-Smajić 2023). Their dedication to work and humane values, especially towards children, clearly shows not only expertise but also immense love for their profession. Through this cooperation, they not only overcome the issues of war conflict 1992-1995 and trauma they have gone through the wars' and afterwar conditions, but look to the future together, creating a better environment for the most vulnerable individuals and their societies. This story is an inspiration that reminds us of the strength of togetherness and international solidarity in facing today's most difficult challenges (Hasanović 2024).

This collaboration and joint engagement continued through participation in a training for expertise in EMDR treatment of children and adolescents in Sarajevo, led by the prominent Joane Morriss Smith as a leading expert in EMDR therapy for children and adolescents. All participants were deeply grateful for her transfer of valuable knowledge and experience (Hasanović 2024). On that occasion, Professor Vildana Aziraj-Smajić Ph.D. presented her book "Stories that help children overcome their fears and develop resistance to stress" to the presented colleagues in training. „This unique book“, as described by Professor Hasanović, one of the reviewers, „integrates EMDR techniques with the second and third wave of CBT techniques and approaches children in a subtle and unobtrusive way, offering them support and tools for overcoming anxiety and encouraging their psychological resistance to stress“. Vildana donated her book to both Associations of EMDR therapists, with the dedicated goal of strengthening cooperation and connections between associations from different regions. In addition, it was agreed that the book will be translated into English in order to enable its use for TAUK and to expand support for children in need around the World, thus creating a new chapter in cooperation, as well as encouraging the creation of literature that enriches resources and expertise of the EMDR community.

This highly successful collaboration of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia EMDR Associations were recognized from the Europe EMDR Association leadership who awarded this

historic moments by the ceremonial awarding with the prestigious David Servan-Schreiber awards in Dublin on the June 7th, 2024 during the Opening ceremony of 25th jubilee EMDR Europe conference in Dublin titled "Pathways to Peace with EMDR". These awards represent high recognition for their outstanding contribution to the field of mental health and therapy, standing out for their particular commitment and expertise in their communities. The David Servan-Schreiber Award is an honorary award given by EMDR Europe during the European Annual Conference in honour of outstanding achievements in the field of EMDR Therapy. It was instituted in 2012 in memory of the late David Servan Schreiber, psychiatrist, researcher, EMDR trainer, and an internationally acclaimed author.

Professor Mevludin Hasanović, the founder and the first president of the EMDR Association of B&H, has been recognized for his tireless work on strengthening the EMDR community in B&H. Reasons for his nomination is his work in implementing EMDR therapy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, his work on the post war traumas and the articles that he co-authored in the field of EMDR that shows that he engaged in organizational activities as president of EMDR B&H, but also in the field of clinical practice and research and motivate people around him. His engagement and dedication in bringing together members and supporting people in need have been recognized as key factors in advancing mental health therapy and care, which has deeply touched many lives in B&H community (Anonymous 2024).

Vesna Bogdanović Ph.D., the president of the EMDR Association of Serbia, was also awarded for her continuous contribution to the development of the EMDR community in Serbia. Her efforts in the education and support of therapists, both in Serbia and beyond, contribute to improving the quality of services and support for people facing trauma.

The awarding of the David Servan-Schreiber Award highlights their exceptional dedication, expertise and humanitarian contribution, highlighting their role as leaders in the field of mental health and therapy, not only in their countries but beyond (Anonymous 2024).

From 2009, seven EMDR trainings were successfully organized and realized in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The sixth EMDR training started face to face, part 1, and because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions parts 2&3 realized online. The training for EMDR consultants was held online under the complex circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic too.

EMDR trainings for mental health professionals in B&H, with the help of TAUk has resulted over 160 fully trained professionals in EMDR and estimates that more than 1,500 Bosnians have benefited from the process and are no longer suffering from psychological symptoms. Until today, we have 14 EMDR Europe accredited practitioners, 4 EMDR Europe accredited consultants and 2 EMDR Europe accredited consultants in EMDR for children and adolescents. Also, there is one EMDR trainer in training.

The National Association of EMDR Therapists in B&H, founded 2013 became the member of EMDR Europe from 2015. It is the member of the Union of Psychotherapy Associations in B&H. Our EMDR Association held three conferences with international participation in BH, also a National EMDR Committee for Accreditation, recognized by EMDR Europe, for the accreditation of its members has been established.

Since 2015, TAUk has two EMDR Child & Adolescents trainings provided by Joanne Morris-Smith (2015/2016 and 2023/2024). This training had international participants, besides the BH participants there were participants from Egypt, Serbia and Tunisia. This training was organized and realized to provide Ivana Trlin and Tea Vučina from Mostar, B&H to become Europe accredited trainers of EMDR C&A.

During 2023/2024 the seventh cohort of EMDR training was organized and realized under supervision of senior trainer Manda Holmshaw (UK) to provide Mevludin Hasanović, to become Europe accredited EMDR trainer.

To keep Continual Professional Development there were different additional trainings in specific EMDR skills and group supervision supported by TAUk, and after COVID-19 pandemic measures changed life conditions over the Globe, the CPD in B&H continued with webinars in different fields of EMDR trainings. All of these contribute to the increased national capacity for offering better quality of psychotherapeutic treatment for traumatized individuals and groups in post-war and post-COVID BH under the auspices of Trauma Aid UK in cooperation with the UK EMDR Association. This will keep perspective national development of psychotherapy capacities in post-war and post-COVID B&H (Hasanović et al. 2018, 2021).

Through partnership and solidarity, experts dealing with EMDR therapy (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the UK continue to work together to improve the quality of care and therapy for people in need. This is not only a story of a timely and adequate response to the urgent need for support after a traumatic event, but also an inspiring example of how expertise and solidarity can overcome borders and historical divisions. The cooperation between EMDR experts from B&H and Serbia showed that through joint efforts and exchange of knowledge, we can provide support to those who are most affected. This step toward connection and mutual support not only strengthens therapists' capacity to work with trauma, but also serves as a reminder of the power of humanity and professional solidarity in the most difficult times (Jakovljević 2023).

We are thankful to all people who helped the Bosnia-Herzegovina people during and after the severe war 1992-1995 and who recognized needs to continue with substantial help up to nowadays. Particular gratitude to our EMDR trainers: Manda Holmshaw, Richard Mitchell, Sandi Richman, Michael Paterson, Joanne Morris Smith. Also we are thankful to sincere friends of Bosnia and Herzegovina EMDR community: Sanja Oakley,

Shiraz Farand, Sonya Farrel, Robin Logie, Cornelia de la Fosse, Soraya Chrystal, Jim Knipe, Sally and Richard Worthington, John Henry, Keith Piper, Bridget O'Rawe, Matthew Wilcockson, Colin Brazier, Debra May, Jane Ware, Fridrum Williams, Ginny Dobson, Jamie Hacker Hughes, Luiza Rangel, Jennie Metaxa, Nel Walker and Maxine Sherrel.

We are particularly grateful to our teacher, coach, friend and great woman of world achievements, our Sian Morgan who lost the battle of her life against COVID-19.

May peace and God's mercy be upon her and her work.

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## RELIGIOUS COPING OR SPIRITUAL COPING: WHICH ONE IS CORRECT?

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Religion and psychiatry have had complicated, sometimes neutral or friendly and cooperative, sometimes competitive and antagonistic relations over their long histories. Relations between psychiatry and religion are influenced by complex belief systems, each diverse and changing. Psychiatry has often ignored spiritual and religious dimension in health and illness while religions influenced the treatment of mental disorders directly by defining mental disorders as evil spirit possessions and prescribing exorcism as treatment (Jakovljević, 2017a). Over the years, research has shown a direct link between the presence of meaning in life, health and recovery. It becomes impossible to ignore this connection as well as the issues of spirituality and religiosity that are immersed in the meaning of life (Mulahalilovic, 2021).

Religion is a Divine law that calls those who have reason to adopt the truths communicated by the prophets (Tumer 1994).

Religion has always existed for thousands of years, from the first man and the first prophet Adam (Alayhi As-Salam), the ancestor of humanity, to the present day, and will continue to be at the center of life in many societies until the apocalypse. Adam (Alayhi As-Salam) and his wife Havva (Eve) prayed to Allah as follows: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost" (Surah Al-Araf, 2023). This is evidence that religious coping is as old as human history.

Religious coping is a means of seeking Allah's help, trusting and taking refuge in Allah, finding solace in religious provisions/teachings, and praying/worshiping more than usual during stressful events of life such as illness, calamity, death, or circumstances where a person is helpless. Religious coping is frequently used by many patients with chronic diseases, especially psychiatric patients, in developed and developing

**Table 1.** Comparison of Religion and Spirituality (Çaksen et al. 2023)

Religion	Spirituality
The founder of the religion is Allah. Religion is the law set by Allah. Religion is a declaration, a manifesto, describing both the One who made this beautiful universe and the universe itself.	Spirituality is a degree of spiritual attainment that emerges in a person when he fulfills the de facto gratitude by acting under Allah's orders and prohibitions with his material organs, intangible feelings, and Letaif (subtle faculties).
Religion includes the basic tenets of Islam, which never changed in the course of human history.	Spirituality is variable. It can weaken or strengthen a person over time.
Religion is broader than spirituality and it encompasses spirituality.	Spirituality is a dimension of religion.
Allah teaches the principles of religion to the prophets, and the prophets convey them to people. True religion cannot be of human origin.	Spirituality is the high states, blessings, tastes, and happiness that a person feels in his conscience and soul. It is strengthened by the application of religious principles.
Religion is effective in functioning the entire universe, including man (from outside to inside).	Spirituality is within man. It is affected by the order, arrangement, and functioning of the universe (from inside to outside).
Religion is the very life of life, its light, and its basis. There is no life without religion.	There is life without spirituality.
Religion is the light of happiness, sublimity of feeling, and salvation of conscience. The revival of religion is the revival of the nation. No nation can continue in existence without religion.	Spirituality is nourished and strengthened by religion. There is no spirituality without religion.

countries. However, the terms “religious/spiritual coping”, “spiritual coping”, or less frequently “religious/spiritual struggle” and “spiritual struggle” are often used instead of or synonymously with religious coping in the literature (Kéri, 2023, Satchell et al. 2023). Here, to end the terminology confusion in the literature we presented the differences between religion and spirituality and discussed the terms religious coping/struggle and spiritual coping/ struggle.

Religion is a Divine law that leads rational people to things that are personally beneficial through their own choices. Religion is what connects people to the reality. Religion is the basic manifesto of life. Religion is man's understanding of supersensible Divine truths by observing the beings in the universe (Tumer, 1994, Nursi, 2012a). Religion is a law that ensures mutual trust and peace by preventing disagreements and conflicts among people. In religion, there is a covenant and reconciliation not only between people but also between people and Allah. In this way, compatibility is achieved between the will of The Creator and the will of the creature (Tumer, 1994). Almost all religions promote love, empathy, compassion and altruism as the essence of humanism and human condition. From the public and global mental health perspective religions can help people and communities to thrive and to turn our world from ill mental health, violence, self-centeredness, and narcissism toward kindness, empathy, compassion and love (Jakovljevic, 2017b).

Spirituality in its general meaning is the quality or state of being spiritual or being attached to questions and values

concerned with religion. Spirituality is defined as the presence of a relationship with Allah that affects the individual's self-worth, sense of meaning, and connectedness with others. Spirituality is the high states, blessings, tastes, and happiness that a person feels in his own conscience and soul when he fulfills the de facto gratitude by acting in accordance with Allah's orders and prohibitions with his material organs, intangible feelings, and subtle faculties (Caksen et al. 2023, Nursi, 2012b). Comparison of religion and spirituality is seen in Table 1. On the other hand, coping (or cope) and struggle are not synonymous. The difference between cope and struggle is that cope is to deal effectively with something difficult while struggle is to strive, to labor in difficulty, to fight (for or against), to contend.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that religion and spirituality are completely different concepts. Religion is the law set by Allah; however, spirituality is the high states, blessings, tastes, and happiness that a person feels in his/her conscience and soul. Additionally, coping and struggle are also not synonymous. Therefore, we strongly believe that the terms “spiritual coping/struggle” or “religious struggle” are not an accurate and cannot be used instead of or synonymously with “religious coping.”

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## DATING APPS, FORMS OF ABUSE AND PERSONALITY TYPE

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### Dear Editor,

In an era where technology is reshaping the fabric of human communication, it is imperative to recognize its impact on reinforcing gendered adversaries (Baker & Carreño 2016). Our recent study delving into the realms of mental and physical sexual Abuse experienced by women who engage with dating apps points to a concerning trend (Zimmer-Gembeck et al. 2012). A positive correlation between abuse and factors like participants' age, exposure duration to these platforms, and personality traits has been observed. The study primarily relied on focus group discussions with 20 women who have used dating apps at least once to find a partner.

Depending on the rewards and negative experiences, some individuals persist with dating apps, while others choose to uninstall them. If app uninstallation is permanent for a few participants, it is temporary based on the urge to connect with

others and positive reinforcements associated with dating app usage. The mean age of participants was 23, including working professionals, fresh graduates looking for a job and students with a graduation degree.

Despite their cultural diversity, hailing from different Indian states, a shared experience connects them: the negative experiences of Abuse manifesting in various forms, such as emotional manipulation, public humiliation, and physical assault. Instances of physical Abuse often coincide with vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

Among the distressing narratives shared by participants, disloyal dating emerges as a prevalent tactic employed by perpetrators, often with the intent of coercing individuals into engaging in sexual acts. Such manipulative endeavours are not isolated incidents; at least 10 participants recounted experiencing such abuses on multiple occasions. Moreover, a subset of participants

endured even more severe forms of Abuse, with five reporting incidents of sexual assault and three recounting physical violence ranging from slaps to expressions of hostility and violent behaviours by their partners found through dating apps.

Despite all five personality traits being associated with Abuse, Agreeableness and Extroversion seem to be common traits among those who were exploited emotionally and sexually. Among participants who have gone through any form of physical assault, Agreeableness seems to be a common personality trait. Participants who dared to sever ties with their abusers found themselves ensnared in a web of stalking, fear, and restricted mobility, perpetuating a vicious cycle of victimization. This cascade of Abuse manifested adverse psychological effects, including feelings of guilt, self-blame, social isolation, and an abiding fear of intimacy, echoing the profound trauma inflicted upon them.

At times of distress, peers were perceived as de facto counsellors. However, only three participants sought professional help, with one turning to her parents in financial distress. Others sought their coping mechanisms in physical activities like enrolling in fitness programs or finding companionship with pets.

At least eight participants have adopted a more discerning approach towards dating apps, exercising caution and mindfulness in virtual interactions. They still use dating apps but are more careful than ever. Rigorous background checks of their dates and a network of trusted friends stand ready to intervene at a hostile moment of their dates. Arranging a call to escape to cut off their date was a standard method employed by these mindful dating app users. However, the other 12 participants never re-installed the app due to the fear of being manipulated again. These participants had opted for popular dating apps through peer pressure and a sense of loneliness in a new city. They lacked social connections, mainly when their profession or studies migrated them to a newer city.

While the allure of user anonymity drives initial conversations on dating apps, it introduces challenges along with the virtually materialized relationship (Strickland et al. 2023, Park & Park 2021). First-time dating app users lacked knowledge about probable consequences and varied forms of Abuse of dating apps (Phan et al. 2021, Thomas et al. 2023). They are only aware of individual cases and experiences shared among their peers, and their immediate groups influence their coping mechanisms. Those who have moderate experience of using dating apps are also vulnerable to Abuse. However, the severity

of the Abuse may vary with the usage pattern and the personality type.

**Ethical Considerations:** Does this study include human subjects? YES

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