

## Empowering Couples Victimized by Terror Attacks in Israel

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### ABSTRACT

Israel has suffered intensive terror attacks for more than two decades. People have been brutally attacked at home while sleeping in their beds, when driving their cars, or simply when walking down the street or eating in a restaurant. Some have lost spouses or other relatives, their health, and/or property.

For those who have experienced a terrorist attack, daily life becomes seriously disrupted. Most suffer from PTSD, which needs to be addressed to help them on the road to rehabilitation. Professional literature dealing with PTSD notes that resilience, self-efficacy, hardiness, and social support among other variables, are what help these people survive and take steps to a normal – or at least manageable – life.

The workshop we shall be presenting is based on a three-day workshop we have conducted numerous times in Israel, in which we have treated hundreds of couples where one has been injured or traumatized in a terrorist strike. Our workshop interventions in Israel are sponsored by the "One Family" Israel Emergency Solidarity Fund.

Our intervention method relies on "group power." Participants are encouraged to freely tell of their experiences to the group. The empathy and support they receive from the group and the facilitator helps them rebuild their strength.

Our experiences have discovered many brave people who, in the group setting, have listened to total strangers and provided vital empathetic social support.

Individual characteristics that help in recovery are resilience, optimism, religious belief, a strong drive to survive despite the difficult situation, and a strong, healthy marriage.

**Keywords:** couples, terror attack, resilience, self-efficacy, hardiness