



Greetings,

It is with great pleasure that I am reaching out to you about the upcoming Professional Training Program (PTP) for the Baton Rouge community, hosted by the Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) and the Baton Rouge Children's Advocacy Center (BRCAC). The *Baton Rouge Trauma-Relief and Resiliency-Building Program* is the result of many years of grassroots work and the collaboration of many community partners and professional disciplines. Through this collaboration, we are able to provide scholarship opportunities for your organization.

**Program Requirements and Expectations:**

This is a two-part training program and full attendance is required for both programs. Thanks to the collaboration and contribution of many Baton Rouge community partners, the scholarships will cover all program fees. Your investment is a commitment to 100% attendance at the 4-day Initial Training Program (**June 24-25, 28-29**) as well as the 4-day Advanced Training Program (**September 10, 13-15**) \*. The training days will last from about 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

By applying, you also commit to co-leading at least one workshop and two, 8-week mind-body skills groups during the year under the supervision of CMBM Senior Faculty.

Priority will be given to those who apply with 2-4 people from a given organization or institution to ensure that you will be able to work with a co-facilitator and have ongoing support.

**Why this project is needed:**

The traumatic events of 2016 in Baton Rouge – the Great Flood, the police shooting of Alton Sterling, the ambush of police officers, and subsequent civil unrest– put significant strain on a community already facing enormous challenges due to high levels of poverty and racial tension. Leaders in Baton Rouge have launched important initiatives to bring trauma-informed approaches to those in need, including ReCAST Baton Rouge and the BRIGHT Center. Yet schools, healthcare facilities, houses of worship, nonprofits, and jails are still struggling to serve the large numbers of people in need of psychological support. Burnout and secondary trauma are widespread among educators, healthcare providers, social service providers, and other caregivers.

Service providers and community leaders across Baton Rouge say they need training and support in an accessible trauma-relief and resilience-building intervention they can bring to their clients and institutions. With the additional stress and trauma presented by COVID19, the need for a proactive approach to building resilience is greater than ever. The Center for Mind-Body Medicine's model for healing population-wide psychological trauma is ideally suited to meet this need.

The *Baton Rouge Trauma-Relief and Resiliency-Building Program* will directly serve over 107,000 people and benefit tens of thousands more in the years to come. We anticipate over 150 people in the Baton Rouge

community to be fully trained in the CMBM model and to be able to integrate the mind-body skills they have learned into their work and personal lives.

### **About the Center for Mind-Body Medicine**

The Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) is likely the world's most effective program for dealing with psychological trauma on a population-wide scale. For 28 years, we have implemented such programs with entire regions addressing conflict (in Kosovo, Gaza/Israel, and Jordan) and climate-related disasters (post-hurricane New Orleans, Houston, and Puerto Rico; post-earthquake Haiti; and in northern California, in the aftermath of wildfires). We have also implemented large-scale programs with Veterans (through partnership with the VA's Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8), which serves Veterans across Florida, South Georgia, and the Caribbean); with communities affected by school shootings (Broward County), and populations facing intergenerational trauma (Native American communities).

CMBM's evidence-based model teaches service providers how to use self-care and group support as transformational tools for stress- and trauma-relief and to build resilience. This approach provides participants with practical skills to deal with stress and trauma while giving them the opportunity to safely share their experiences of trauma.

CMBM partners with communities, by training and empowering local residents to do this evidence-based, trauma-healing work. We teach local educators, first responders, healthcare providers, humanitarian workers, clergy, and community leaders to use our model to deal with their own trauma and stress and enhance their resilience, reducing the burnout and secondary trauma that are so prevalent among caregivers in communities struggling with poverty and trauma. We then teach them to use the same model as an integral part of the work they do in the institutions, communities, and programs in which they work.

Research: CMBM has published papers in leading peer-reviewed, scientific journals that document the efficacy of our small group model in relieving stress and trauma in traumatized children, adolescents, and adults. The CMBM program has repeatedly, and significantly reduced PTSD symptoms and this improvement has been maintained at 3 and 10-month follow-ups. CMBM's programs have also shown significant reductions in anxiety and depression, as well as increases in hopefulness in traumatized communities.

### **Baton Rouge's History with Mind-Body Medicine:**

The foundation for a city-wide Mind-Body Medicine program in Baton Rouge has been built through 15 years of outreach, organizing, and engagement.

CMBM started working in Southern Louisiana in 2005, helping communities heal after Hurricane Katrina. In subsequent years CMBM trained 20 clinicians, educators, and community leaders from New Orleans and Baton Rouge in our evidence-based model of self-care and group support. This local CMBM cohort has in turn provided compassionate and effective services to over 5,000 children and adults in the region. This effort has been developed and overseen by CMBM under the direction of Ms. Toni Bankston, LCSW, BACS, Executive Director of The Children's Advocacy Center of Baton Rouge, and Senior Faculty at CMBM. Two additional training alumni from Southeast Louisiana have also become local CMBM Faculty and have helped Ms. Bankston as she has overseen the expansion of the program.

Local Faculty and alumni have provided hundreds of intensive 10-week Mind-Body Skills Groups and dozens of Self-Care Workshops to children and adults across Baton Rouge, partnering with institutions throughout the city including public and private schools, the Baton Rouge Police Department, homeless shelters, the VA, and Tulane, and Louisiana State University Medical Schools. When the BP Horizon Oil Spill Disaster occurred, CMBM Faculty and alumni worked closely with Catholic Charities and local citizens' groups to provide trauma healing and resilience building for the hard-hit populations of Plaquemines and Orleans Parishes. Faculty and alumni also responded to Hurricane Gustave.

Recently, in the aftermath of the traumatic events of 2016, leading private donors and public agencies in Baton Rouge partnered with Ms. Bankston to bring CMBM's model to over 1,000 service providers across sectors. The model has been embraced by social service providers focused on disaster relief and ongoing community challenges violence, as well as by the law enforcement, clergy, human service professionals, medical and mental health professionals, and educators.

#### 2017: Trauma-Relief & Resiliency Conference, Bridge Center for Hope

In November 2017, the Bridge Center for Hope (planning group) offered a 2-day training to help service providers identify and support people who are suffering from stress related to the storms and subsequent flooding. Over 500 people attended, including social service providers, health and mental health clinicians, teachers, and first responders. CMBM provided plenary sessions on Mind-Body Medicine and Community-Wide Trauma Relief, and Self Care and Group Support as Fundamental Tools for Trauma Relief and Resilience Building. CMBM also provided breakout groups throughout the day dedicated to mind-body medicine. CMBM's sessions were the most popular and very highly rated. Evaluation feedback demonstrates widespread interest in a comprehensive training program.

#### 2018 & 2019: ReCast Baton Rouge Workshops

With support from the Mayor's ReCAST (Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma) Coalition, in both 2018 and 2019, BRCAC and CMBM provided a series of Mind-Body Medicine Workshops for hundreds of community providers. Customized workshops were provided to the Baton Rouge Police Department, first responders, educators & school-based therapists; Human Service Providers; and Clergy. These workshops provided an introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) or early childhood trauma and their impact on problems through the lifespan. Participants learned how to recognize trauma symptoms in children and adults they encountered in their day-to-day work. Workshops also introduced a toolkit and strategies to respond to and offset the effects of trauma, both in clients and in themselves. Evaluation results were strongly positive across all sectors, with dozens of requests for further training.

Today, CMBM Faculty and alumni are conducting Mind-Body Skills Groups with diverse populations around the city, including with schools and children and teens impacted by trauma from violent crime. Throughout the 14 years CMBM programming has been available in Baton Rouge, institutions have regularly requested additional programming, and many want to train their staff members.

We are excited to finally bring this much needed training to the Baton Rouge community. As we get closer to the training dates, we want to know your interest in the program and how many scholarships you would want for your organization. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you have.

Best,

Dr. James Gordon, MD, Founder and Director, CMBM

And

Toni Bankston, LCSW-BACS, C.E.O. BRCAC and Senior Faculty, CMBM  
CMBM & BRCAC

\*More information on the Advanced Training Program will be provided during the initial professional training program (PTP)