Project COMMON BOND:
Promoting Dignity and Long-Term Healing in Youth Impacted by Terrorism
Presenters

Monica Meehan McNamara, MA, Lic, MFT
  Director of Curriculum

Deirdre Dolan, BA
  Program Manager
Formed in the aftermath of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, Tuesday’s Children supports youth, families and communities impacted by terrorism and traumatic loss worldwide.

Our long-term approach allows children, families and communities impacted by traumatic loss to heal, recover and thrive for a lifetime.
Since 2001, more than 10,000 individuals have benefited from our evidence-based programs, including: families of 9/11 victims, responders and military service members; international youth; global victims of terrorism; and local communities recovering from tragedies.
Project COMMON BOND is a unique international program that unites young people from around the world who share a “common bond”— the loss of an immediate family member in an act of terrorism, violent extremism or war.

Since 2000, over 61,000 global terrorist incidents have caused more than 140,000 deaths

(Source: Global Terrorism Index)
Program Objectives

• Healing through Community
  *building resilience in youth affected by trauma*

• Transformation through Education
  *teaching mediation, conflict resolution, & peace-building skills*

• Leadership Development
  *empowering youth to create positive change in their lives and home communities*
Annual Summer Program

The highlight of *Project COMMON BOND* is a weeklong program held each July, which brings together:

- **60 young adults**, ages 15-21, from the US and around the world
- **10-12 organizational leaders** representing our international partner organizations
- **25+ staff members**, including *mental health clinicians*, *conflict resolution experts*, and *creative arts therapists*
Program Activities

• Morning group work sessions
• Peace building activities
• Creative arts electives
• Keynote speakers and workshops
Project COMMON BOND has created a global community of 500 teenagers from 25 countries to build relationships across cultural, historical, ideological, and political differences.

Participant countries:
Algeria, Argentina, Colombia, Croatia, England, France, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Macedonia, Morocco, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Spain, Sri Lanka and the United States.
2016 Participant Impact

• 96% better able to *practice dignity* for themselves and others
• 96% recognized the value of *learning from different cultures*
• 92% motivated to *advocate for peace* in their communities
• 90% better able to *identify and respond to prejudices*
• 90% better understanding of the things that *shape their identity*
• 90% better able to maintain a *positive outlook* in the face of difficulty
• 90% better able to *respond thoughtfully* rather than react impulsively
Tuesday’s Children is a response and recovery organization that supports youth, families, and communities impacted by terrorism and traumatic loss.
Participants meet in daily morning sessions to learn the *Dignity Model*, understand their *shared humanity*, and build understanding, *empathy*, and respect for each other.

Chaperones meet in daily sessions to explore *cross-cultural understanding* and *lessons in long-term healing*. 
“Our capacity to destroy one another is matched by our capacity to heal one another. Restoring relationships and community is central to restoring well being. Language gives us power to change ourselves and others by communicating our experiences, helping us to define what we know, and finding a common sense of meaning. Numerous studies of disaster response from around the globe have shown that social support is the most powerful protection against becoming overwhelmed by stress and trauma.”

-Bessel van der Kolk
Dignity

Something inherent to everyone, by virtue of their humanity. Everyone is born with dignity; it is the human right to be cared for and acknowledged for who you are as a person. Nobody can take your dignity away, but people can hurt it (it is who you are as a person).

Dignity: “what we extend to others and would like for ourselves” or the golden rule, “treat others the way you would like to be treated.” -Donna Hicks
The Elements of Dignity

1. Accepting Identity
2. Recognition
3. Acknowledgement
4. Inclusion
5. Safety
6. Fairness
7. Independence
8. Understanding
9. Benefit of the Doubt
10. Accountability
Types of Trauma

- **Intergenerational**
  i.e., Northern Ireland, Israel, Palestine

- **Environment of violence**
  i.e., Middle East, Nigeria, Pakistan

- **Terrorist Acts/Loss**
  i.e., New York, Paris, London, Spain, Boston, South Carolina, Colorado, Orlando
Healing to Resiliency

Meeting in daily morning groups with 10-12 participants:

• Similar age range
• Diverse cultural backgrounds – gender, religion, ethnicity
• Balancing discussion, experiential exercises, skill building and play
Establishing a safe multi-cultural community

- Group agreements around respect, non-judgment, listening, curiosity

- Facilitating conversation that allows all participants to have a voice, and express their beliefs and values, without fear

- Establishing group rituals to begin and end each session and ease transitions
Personal narratives

• Each participant has had a loss

• Liberating identity from “what has happened” and locating it instead on “how you dealt with it”

• Sharing the stories of loss provides comfort for others, normalizes their experience of “otherness”, provides road maps for life going forward, allows others to shift in to role of support

• Telling stories creates community
Conflict

As participants have named the issues that are most meaningful to them, there is an opportunity to examine the role of conflict:

• Role playing conflict styles as they relate to real life issues

• Understanding that the response to conflict determines outcome

• Examining the role of trauma, mind body interaction and empathy in conflict
Leadership

• Self awareness
• Group acceptance
• Having your dignity honored allows you to be more present.
• Being affirmed by others liberates you from dwelling on the past.
# Trauma & Project COMMON BOND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFECTS OF TRAUMA</th>
<th>DIGNITY GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear/Loss of Safety</td>
<td>Establish safe environment; group agreements, inclusion, non-judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>Mindfulness/Body Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyper arousal</td>
<td>Identifying triggers; group regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Group process: speaking and witnessing individual narratives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who are the Chaperones/Organizational Leaders?

- **Representatives** from *international non-governmental organizations*

- **Organizations** that provide *support services* to individuals impacted by *violent extremism and war*

- **Professionals** from *multi-disciplinary fields* including: mental health, psychology, education, peace activism, government, advocacy, child welfare

- **Embody the values** of Project COMMON BOND including *acceptance, tolerance and connection*
Outcomes of the group include:

- Building relationships with each other and fostering potential *ongoing connections* after program
- Learning *new methodologies* of doing work
- Identifying *trauma characteristics* and *coping strategies* for participants and chaperones, who have experienced their own losses and trauma
- Understanding and *normalizing their experience* of working with traumatized populations
- Creating *self-care strategies* for themselves and others
Chaperone Group in Action
“It was a great moment. You have changed the lives of not only the children who attended, but for the entire PCB family. You have made a mark that will never be erased. Thank you for your teachings and experiences. God bless you all.”

-Chaperone from Kenya
Contact Us

Monica Meehan McNamara  
Director of Curriculum  
monica@tuesdayschildren.org

Deirdre Dolan  
Program Manager  
deirdre@tuesdayschildren.org

For more information about Tuesday’s Children, visit

www.tuesdayschildren.org