

# *USING FOCUSING FOR YOURSELF*

A PROCESS TO SUPPORT RESILIENCY IN THE FAMILIES AND CHILDREN OF GAZA

## **THE FOCUSING APPROACH**

We can't control what is happening around us – but we can change how we react to what is happening. By noticing what we are feeling and understanding what is going on inside us, we can find a different way of being with our feelings. Instead of being caught up in our feelings, we can get to know them as friends – even when they are uncomfortable.

The Focusing approach takes us out of our heads and into a “felt sense” of our body's apprehension of experience. Felt sense will manage or contain trauma by enabling us to take time to notice our responses without being controlled by them. The exercises allow a natural, non-intellectual form of self-reflection to develop as an on-going process while we interact with life. They enable us to listen to the unclear (but clearly felt) bodily experience of our situation at any given time. This should be developed internally so that the person can learn to be quiet, attentive and accepting of themselves. When feelings are located, sensed and given a little time to breathe, they are then able to change or evolve in a safe environment.

## **THE SAFE SPACE**

- In pairs, each person senses inside for their “Safe Space” and notices what that is like.
- After a few minutes they start drawing what it looks like. This is an opportunity to represent or symbolise that safe space.
- They then talk about the drawing. The listener reflects back. Then the roles are swapped.

## **LISTENING, AS A SKILL**

Each exercise is a skill to take home and use or practise as homework:

- Pausing. Allowing time for what is unclear to really unfold
- Listening to someone in attentive, non-judgemental silence
- Reflecting back to someone
- Holding the space and sustaining attention
- Respecting people's boundaries and defences
- Being in the presence of the other person

## **CONTAINING TRAUMA**

Having found the Safe Space, use breathing exercises and movement to contain and focus on your feelings. Take time to develop the Felt Sense. Find a Quality of Caring inside yourself. Nothing is ever understood for long. Accept the changing nature of feelings and sensations. When the time is right, find a language which will develop a sense of a bigger picture around your situation.