

as well, magnifying the children's. No wonder why the children turn to regressive coping mechanisms.

III. THE ROLE OF THERAPISTS IN THE COMPLEX REALITY'

During war, therapists, Jewish and Arab, find themselves in a state of stress and anxiety, as being part of the community. They are faced with physical dangers while trying to get to the clinic, may even have to look for a shelter if there is an alarm, and may not be able to return home in time. The Arab therapist, who most often works in a Jewish clinical setting, is exposed not only to the same physical threats as his or her Jewish colleague, but to being torn between his professional and personal loyalties. They are asked to be able to live in an emotional "split": in the morning, they treat Arabs and Jews alike, while in the evening, they shed off their professional neutralism and their loyalty is shifted back to their own Arabic family and / or society. Therefore, when considering treatment options for the Arab-Israeli child at times of war, we must bring all the above mentioned into account and see their impact on the specific child and parents, as well as on the therapist.

The lack of awareness of the Arab community to the psychological impact of the war on their children, may explain the very low rate of referrals to clinics. Parents do not make the connection between their child's behavior and the surrounding events, especially in times of war. An additional explanation could be that Arab parents are reluctant to open up and show their weaknesses to Israeli-based health settings. Finally, generally speaking, the Israeli government has not yet corrected the discriminative lack of psychological and mental health services provided to Israeli Arabs. Time has come to conduct studies that will show how the above described phenomena impact Israeli Arab young children over time.



This meeting was special indeed: not only, it was, the first Regional meeting in Infant Mental Health in that region of the world, but also it put us right in the main issue: debating about the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on therapists as well as on infants and families, Israeli Jews as well as Israeli Arabs. This took place in a very special place, Akko, one of the only towns in the country where co-living is really on a daily basis, with all its problematic aside with a special mix of cultures.

Above all, this was a high-level meeting in terms of clinical and research presentations, showing how active and inventive the professionals in the field of Infant Mental Health are in Israel, and allowing us to meet extremely dedicated and trained professionals, members of the Israeli Infant Mental Health Affiliate. This meeting, beautifully organized by Miri Keren and Sam Tyano has also allowed the board to meet in Jerusalem, and has facilitated a smooth transition process between the 'old' and the 'new' board of WAIMH.

Antoine Guedeney, WAIMH president



Akko (site for WAIMH Regional Conference in September, 2009) is situated by the Mediterranean sea.