

## **Sian Morgan and her legacy**

By Robin Logie

As a colleague of Sian's for many years, I will do my best to try and remember her and to describe the wonderful legacy that she has left through her work.

Sian worked as a psychotherapist for more than 25 years. For most of those years she specialised in a psychological therapy called EMDR, recognised by the NHS and the World Health Organisation as one of the most effective treatments for those who have been affected by traumatic events in their lives. As well as utilising this therapy herself to help many clients, she supervised other therapists and, in the last few years, trained others in EMDR therapy. Much of this work took place in Sussex, and Sian made it her mission to increase the provision of EMDR in local charities working with traumatised people by providing pro bono and reduced cost places at her trainings.

But the impact of Sian's work went far beyond these shores. More than 20 years ago, Sian set up a charity, now known as Trauma Aid UK, which provides training and supervision in EMDR, at no cost, in countries affected by conflict or natural disaster. The main guiding philosophy of Trauma Aid is that old saying, "give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime". Rather than going in and providing therapy ourselves, at Trauma Aid we offer EMDR training to mental health professionals in each country.

How did Trauma Aid achieve so much? Well, Sian was a smooth operator. I can tell you, from my own experience, that she was an expert in persuading you to do stuff for Trauma Aid. She did it with such humour and appreciation that it was always difficult to say "no" to Sian.

Under Sian's inspired leadership, Trauma Aid has grown from strength to strength and has trained several hundred therapists both in the Balkans and the Middle East. Sian herself travelled extensively to do these trainings, including offering trainings on the Syrian border to therapists working in Syrian refugee camps. It may be impossible to calculate how many traumatised people have been helped by Sian's work. But let's try and do the maths! If 500 therapists have each helped 100 clients, then maybe that's 50,000 people who have been helped by Sian. Or more!

In Bosnia and Herzegovina they now have their own EMDR Association and a new association has recently been set up in Egypt. This is Sian's legacy. Her work will continue for as long as there are traumatised people in these countries.

Sian was well loved and very much respected within the EMDR community where she will always be regarded as a beacon of expertise, strength and compassion.

Sian's achievements and contribution to the EMDR community were to be recognised by the EMDR Europe Association and she was to receive an award at the EMDR Europe conference in Valenica next month. This award will now be presented posthumously in Sian's memory. Whilst writing an appreciation of Sian for this award, Shiraz Farrand wrote, "Sian embodies the spirit of the EMDR community. She is a humble, wise, determined, steady, diligent leader and mentor to many. With her gentle example she just gets on with the task, methodical yet open to ideas whenever a new challenge surfaces and inspiring others to join her.... We have seen in times of mass crisis how people want to reach out and help in whatever way they can. As we speak, in these troubling days, Sian is a focal point of communication for the UK EMDR community offering support, a reassuring reminder

that when the actions of the minority take humanity a few steps backward, many good people step forward.”

Since the news of Sian’s death became known, tributes have been pouring in from around the world and the Book of Condolences on the website of Trauma Aid UK will attest to this. (Just Google ‘Trauma Aid’ to take a look.) I would like to finish by reading one message that was posted by Alma, an EMDR therapist in Bosnia: “Dear Sian, thank you for your openness, kindness, support, knowledge, which you selflessly shared with us. I felt that you saw the whole Bosnian EMDR community as a family. You are our family, our guide, the originator of a wonderful idea and practice. Rest in peace, our dear Sian.”

*Presented at Sian’s funeral on 26 May 2022.*