

Grenfell



EMERGENCY ACUPUNCTURE at Grenfell Tower

We want to share our vision with you and our intentions for setting up Emergency Acupuncture.

Gisela Norman and Sheira Chan, acupuncturists, downed tools and came together outside Latimer Road underground station in West London on Saturday 17th June a few days after the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy. After watching the horrific news we both immediately thought that we could do something with our needles. From our experience we believed in the power of Acupuncture and the immediate impact our resources could have on being able to treat shock and trauma in situations like these. And this had been confirmed over and over again in the immediate days that followed the impact of the fire and treatments were even more

powerful than we imagined. Gisela had worked treating and teaching ear acupuncture to medics in Gaza and Myanmar so brought all this amazing front line experience.

After spending an initial couple of weeks working extremely long days we made contact with a number of individuals through our 'Street Clinic' and also by speaking to community leaders, residents and some of the survivors. We established trust and rapport with the community, which enabled us to treat survivors in the hotels. We were keen to ensure that the community received the right support they needed on a long-term basis and in a manner that continues with the vision we have for Emergency Acupuncture. Also we believe this was an excellent time to promote Acupuncture and we wanted it done in a way that upholds our principles and shows us in a good light.



In our various clinics we treated and had great treatment responses with survivors, local residents, including children and people evacuated from the immediate vicinity of Grenfell Tower. We also worked with such a range of volunteers, including the Red Cross, NHS staff, counsellors and the emergency services and many others impacted by these shocking events.

The public got to know we were there and sent many folk to us. Under no circumstances did we ask about their experiences or stories. That would be for a later date with professional counsellors when the impact of the shock kicked in.



Initially, we organised the Emergency Acupuncture call out, to get a team to treat in our Street Clinics near to the site of disaster and then made contact with the community and local acupuncturists to initiate venues whereby treatments could continue longer term as we knew this was vital in treating trauma. We have now handed over a longer-term trauma clinic, which will be held in the Mosque from October.

In the USA Battlefield Acupuncture is widely taught and used by the military and after the 9/11 attack the New York City team of acupuncturists provided the same care. They made contact with us and contacted a medical company for donations of supplies.

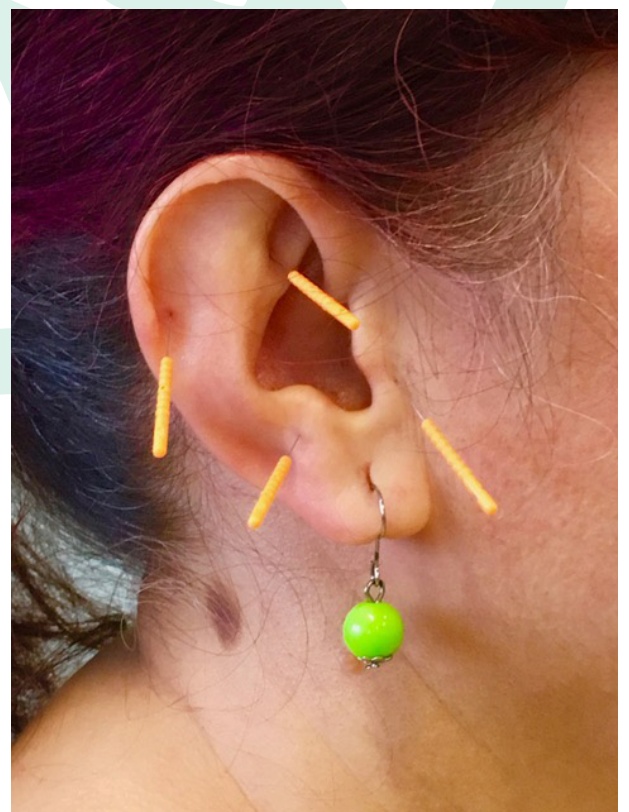
WORKING CLINICS FOR GRENFELL TOWER:

1. MOSQUE

We established a permanent space at the Al Manaar Mosque and provided continuous support Mon – Thurs 4 -7pm and during weekends at The Muslim Cultural Centre, Acklam Road. During the weekends we were there most of the day. They opened the Mosque for us to treat everyone and anyone regardless of religious beliefs, quite amazing! We then established an on going clinic twice a week for ear acupuncture and reiki healing.

2. STREET CLINIC

Our first clinic started at the Westway Sports Centre under the flyover, this was our 'Street Clinic', whereby we begged borrowed and stole chairs to create a quiet space within utter chaos and confusion. It was a rough and ready style of treating so were prepared to speak to people on the street and encourage them to have treatment. This was ad hoc with practitioners there



from 1pm 'til late or for the occasional evening session. We shared our spaces with other types of therapists who would pitch up and help whenever they could. We were supportive of each other and when our partners ran on empty we helped them. We were clear on safety issues working on the road, the Street Clinic needed to have a minimum two practitioners for support and safety. If anyone felt uneasy they followed their instincts so as not be in danger.



3. COMMUNITY CENTRES

At the Dalgarno Centre we set up a treatment space intended to be short term on Fridays 10am – 12pm. We treated and supported residents, which ran for over four months with practitioners, healers and homeopaths. A great success came through liaison with a community leader, which enabled us to set up regular Saturday clinics for survivors and residents in Silchester Community Centre at Frinstead House, opposite Grenfell Tower.

4. FESTIVALS

'Little Scrubs' was where we joined the regular Sunday healing festival, which was a relaxed environment. It had been set up to support the local community. We had a presence at these on going events as our practitioners were a hit. At 'Kids on Green' we provided Acupuncture support specifically for children at these events.

Support

We were aware that this is an unfamiliar environment and that most acupuncturist were out of their comfort zone but an incredible experience learning mainly 'on the job' nonetheless. We lobbied the British Acupuncture Council to provide emotional support for their members. Phoenix Medical an acupuncture supply company matched over £2,000 in donations of equipment: needles, ear seeds and magnets etc.

Treatment

We offered ear acupuncture – ear magnets or seeds. We occasionally treated only arm and leg points for aches and pains but that is only if it was quiet. Our focus and priorities were on treating shock, stress, panic agitation and trauma. As well as treating insomnia, clearing and supporting the lung function we also helped people detox the high amount of poisons ingested.



Communications

Each acupuncturist had a range of 'tools' for receiving communications, we set up a WhatsApp group, Facebook page, dedicated Google mail account and as some only received information via their email address and some just through their phone. We collated everyone's email addresses and made a record of their insurance number or the membership number of their regulatory body. The logistics was a huge piece of work!

We have treated absolutely hundreds of people, ourselves included. The impact of one ear acupuncture point alone was remarkable, we created a safe place where patients could be quiet, not

talk but just receive the healing. Over 80 acupuncturists joined Emergency Acupuncture, although some gave huge amounts of time, all voluntarily. The fact that we are able to treat shock and trauma with Acupuncture, and the impact on people's lives is incredible, which no other medicine can do in this way, is absolutely fantastic.

Our intention for the future is for this model to be an inspiration to others and to be used for any disaster, with immediate affect. We would like Acupuncture to be part of trauma and disaster medicine, as it is now being used worldwide.

