

# Healing Trauma in the Digital Age: From Polarization to Partnership through Human Encounter

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## ABSTRACT

In a world shaped by ongoing conflict and deepening polarization, interreligious relations are often marked by fear, mistrust, and collective trauma. Today, these traumas are frequently amplified and reactivated by the digital landscape, where algorithms and echo chambers can exacerbate division, reinforcing anger instead of fostering healing. Nowhere is this more visible than in regions such as Israel-Palestine, yet the challenge is profoundly global. While interfaith initiatives have long emphasized tolerance and coexistence, these approaches often fall short when confronted with the deeper, unaddressed forces of identity and lived trauma.

This talk proposes a shift from tolerance to transformation—reframing interreligious engagement not as an abstract ideal, but as a lived, relational process rooted in identity, faith, and human encounter. In an era where digital mediation often strips away our shared humanity, I argue that we must prioritize the irreplaceable power of the face-to-face encounter, while also developing new models for authentic, human-centric connection within digital spaces. Drawing on extensive interreligious work across global contexts, and on the founding and leadership of an interfaith center dedicated to Jewish-Muslim engagement, the presentation offers an integrated approach that combines experience, thought, and identity formation.