

Compassion and Comfort:

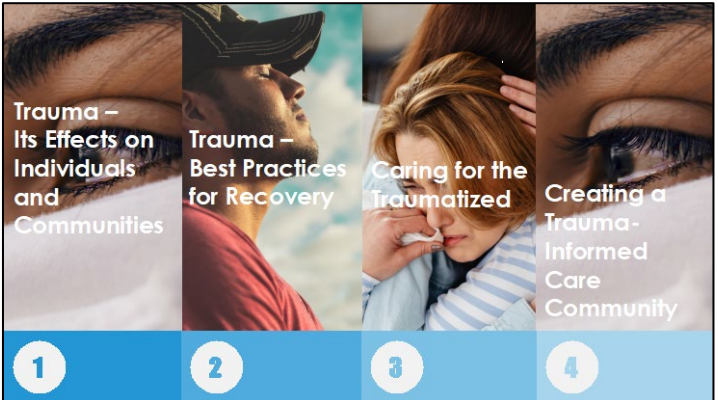
Assessing and Developing Trauma-Informed Care Communities

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Wellspring Counseling is a non-profit counseling center and outreach ministry that provides mental health services and education in a professional, Christian, and holistic way. Our goals are to restore hearts and minds from mental illness, to help develop mental health skills and to bring about transformative change in the lives of individuals, families, ministries, and communities for generations to come.



I. Trauma – Its Effects on Individuals & Communities

Activity 1: List (privately) several names of people in your ministry who you think struggle to fit in. Such as:

- They seem to have inappropriate emotional or behavioral responses to situations.
- They have needs greater than the ministry can handle.
- The staff struggles to work with them in ministries.


Trauma Healing & the US Church

- **70%** of church leaders have **experienced trauma**.
- Church leaders estimate that **40%** of their congregants are **experiencing trauma**, with the highest estimates in multi-ethnic (44%) and predominantly Black congregations (42%).
- **79%** of church leaders indicated an **interest in developing a trauma healing ministry** in their church.
- **17%** currently **have some type of trauma ministry** offered in their church.
- **75%** of church leaders identified **interest in a Bible-centered trauma healing curriculum**.

March 2022, Trauma Healing Ministry Survey, American Bible Society – 1000 responses from American pastors & church leaders.

Three Ingredients of Trauma

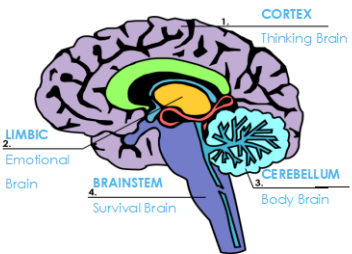
1. Trauma Effects |



- 1. Life-threatening**
"Something bad is happening to me."
"I could die."
- 2. Helpless**
"I can't stop it."
"I can't do anything."
- 3. Overwhelming**
"I don't know what to do."
"This is beyond what I have ever known, experienced or expected."
"I have no words for this."


Trauma & the Brain

1. Trauma Effects |



The Stress Response - Survival

1. Trauma Effects |



Don't think. Act!
Flight, Fight or Freeze.


Be strong.
Focus on the important.

Survive.
Let the body remember for later.

NORMAL Effects of Trauma 1. Trauma Effects |

A. Emotional (strong feelings)


- Shock (numbed emotions, questioning of perceptions, memory disturbances)
- Denial (helps reduce helplessness, fears to be manageable)
- Confusion and disorientation
- Numbness
- Panic
- Weeping
- Extreme anxiety and insecurity
- Inflexibility
- Dissociation, feelings of unreality



NORMAL Effects of Trauma 1. Trauma Effects |

B. Cognitive (thinking)

- Disbelief
- Disorientation and confusion
- Difficulty thinking and concentrating
- Unwanted thoughts (traumatic memories may intrude on everyday living or dreams, feels out of control)
- Perceptual problems (world may seem unsafe, unsteady, unpredictable, unfair)
- Traumatic memories (intense, clear, vivid images)
- Forgetfulness



NORMAL Effects of Trauma 1. Trauma Effects |

C. Hyper-arousal (sensitivity, state of alert)

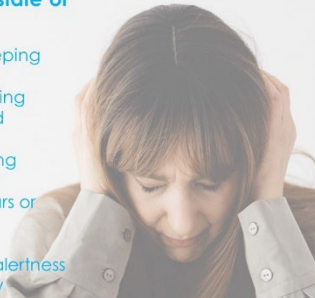
- Trouble sleeping
- Trouble concentrating
- Heightened vigilance
- Easily startling
- Being wary
- Sudden tears or anger or panic
- Increased alertness and anxiety

D. Body

- Gastrointestinal symptoms
- Headaches
- Allergy symptoms
- Menstrual problems

E. "The Inevitable Review"

- Thinking about what they could have done differently




Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 1. Trauma Effects |

Three Categories of PTSD Symptoms

1. Intrusion
"I can't stop being reminded of the bad thing and feeling out of control."

2. Hyper-arousal
"Bad things could happen at anytime, so watch out."

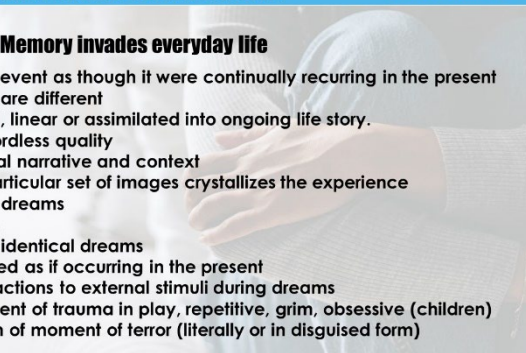
3. Avoidance
"The only way I can feel OK is to avoid reminders."



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 1. Trauma Effects |

1. Intrusion - Memory invades everyday life

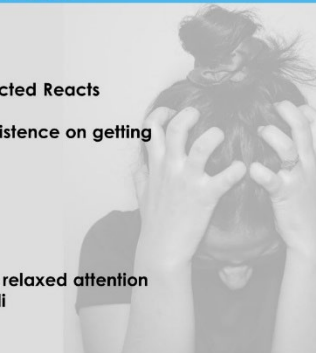
- Relive the event as though it were continually recurring in the present
- Memories are different
- Not verbal, linear or assimilated into ongoing life story.
- Frozen, wordless quality
- Lack verbal narrative and context
- Often a particular set of images crystallizes the experience
- Traumatic dreams
- Fragments
- Repeated identical dreams
- Experienced as if occurring in the present
- Violent reactions to external stimuli during dreams
- Reenactment of trauma in play, repetitive, grim, obsessive (children)
- Recreation of moment of terror (literally or in disguised form)



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 1. Trauma Effects |

2. Hyper-arousal - permanent alert


- Increased heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Startles easily, especially by unexpected Reacts iritably to small provocations
- Aggressive, controlling behavior (insistence on getting way)
- Sleeps poorly – arousal persists
- Nightmares
- Psychosomatic complaints
- Generalized anxiety
- Specific fears
- Constant state of alert for danger vs. relaxed attention
- Intense reaction to associated stimuli
- Can't tune out repetitive stimuli



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 1. Trauma Effects |

Avoidance - ("constriction" - state of surrender when completely powerless)

- Limits of activities
- Limits of emotional capacity
- May feel a part of them has died
- Dissociation through alcohol or narcotics
- Internal escape by altering state of consciousness
- "freeze" mode
- Numbing, detached calm
- Events become disconnected from their ordinary meanings
- Perceptions numb or distorted
- May observe event from outside body
- Experience it as a bad dream
- Feeling of indifference, emotional detachment, profound passivity
- Detached states of consciousness (like hypnotic trance)
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts /attempts
- Survivor's guilt



PCL-5 - PTSD Personal Assessment for a single life event:



II. Trauma – Best Practices for Recovery

Getting Past Survival Mode 2. Trauma Recovery |



End the Trauma

- Safety vs. Danger
- Control vs. Helplessness
- Manageable vs. Overwhelmed


Manage Ongoing Trauma

- Trauma education
- Self-regulation tools
- Distancing / Delaying tools

The Start of Recovery 2. Trauma Recovery |

Begin to process what happened

- Reality of the truth
- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Consequences




Resolution Requires: 2. Trauma Recovery |

- Facing
- Feeling
- Expressing
- Fixing - what you can
- And Accepting...

...what has happened.

Taken from © The Circle of Truth



Professional Therapy Options for Resolution: 2. Trauma Recovery |

			
TF-CBT	EMDR	Experiential trauma-specific therapies	Exposure Therapy
Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing	ie. art, equine, music, drama, journaling, story-telling	

Trauma-skilled Lay Options for Resolution: 2. Trauma Recovery |

- Trauma-informed pastoral care
- Trauma-informed narrative therapy
- Trauma-informed group therapy
- **Trauma-informed communities of care**

See Appendix 1: Resources


Wellspring Trauma-Resolution Options: 2. Trauma Recovery |

					
Story Healing	Shared Tragedy Therapy DER	Individual Therapy Weekly / Intensive	RESTORE Resilience Institute	Bounces!	Equine-Assisted Therapy

www.wellspringmiami.org

III. Caring for the Traumatized


Recognizing the Traumatized 3. Caring for the Traumatized |



Learn and Recognize PTSD Symptoms

1. **Over-reactive emotions**
2. **Dissociation**
Disconnected from mind, body, situations
3. **Hyper-Vigilance**
Overly alert, easily startled
4. **Instant survival mode**
Fight, Flight, Freeze
4. **Irrational avoidance**
5. Etc.

Recognizing the Traumatized 3. Caring for the Traumatized |



Avoid Mistabels


1. Anger management problems vs. fight mode of survival
2. ADD vs. hypervigilance
3. "Bad" kid/adult vs. behavioral management of symptoms
4. Etc.

Recognizing the Traumatized					
3. Caring for the Traumatized					
How Fear Changes Your Thinking & Behaviors					
Fear State	Calm	Alert	Alarm	Fear	Terror
Brain Regulating Region	Neocortex / Cortex	Cortex / Limbic	Limbic / Midbrain	Midbrain / Brainstem	Brainstem / Autonomic
Thinking Style	Abstract	Concrete	Emotional	Reactive	Automatic
Behaviors to Avoid	Rest	Avoid	Give in	Disconnect	Pass out
Behaviors to Protect	Rest	Cautious	Resist	Rebel	Attack

Responding to PTSD Symptoms

3. Caring for the Traumatized |

- Intrusion of Memories**
 - Reliving vs. Remembering
 - Hard to concentrate
 - Respond – grounding in present
- Hyper-vigilance**
 - Breathing, Relaxation, 10-min a day
- Avoidance**
 - Reminders, triggers
 - Use of substances, distractions
 - Respond –
 - Bring a friend to reminders,
 - Journaling/drawing eases remembering



Immediate Tactics for the Triggered

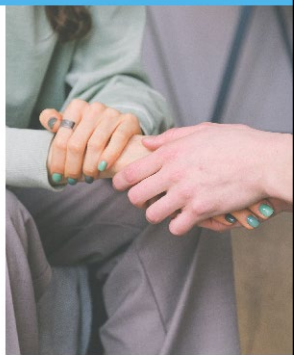
3. Caring for the Traumatized |



- Help them return to their "thinking brain"**
 - Don't try to reason with someone not in their thinking brain.
- Create safety**
 - Physical & emotionally safe surroundings
- Be safe to them**
 - Lower your own emotional escalation & voice
 - Slow the pace
 - Give distance
 - Be non-judgmental
- Offer choices**
 - Simple ones, give back sense of control

Immediate Tactics for the Triggered

3. Caring for the Traumatized |



- Meet physical needs**
 - Water, comfort
- Grounding**
 - Help them notice here & now
- Deep breathing**
- Listen first and listen well**
- Delay**
 - Decisions, consequences, logic

Long-Term Solutions


3. Caring for the Traumatized |



- Teach about the effects of trauma**
 - Normalize
- Discuss observations without judgment**
 - Later, when calm
- Teach self-regulation & mindfulness skills**
- Establish routines of self-regulation**
 - Mindfulness, meditation, calming & breathing techniques
- Teach emotional vocabulary**

Long-Term Solutions

3. Caring for the Traumatized |



- Give permission to feel without judgment**
- Observe with kindness & empathy**
- Offer solutions for trauma resolution, professional referral**
- Create safe spaces to process**
- Learn to listen well...**

Activity 3, Discussion:

Share (without name) about a person on your earlier list who you now think might have experienced trauma. Given this "caring for the traumatized" content, what do you think they need/needed from your ministry leaders?

IV. Creating a Trauma-Informed Care Community

Trauma-Informed Church Communities – CDC, SAMHSA

Based on "Six Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Approach" by SAMHSA

- Safety** –
 - physical, emotional and relational
- Trustworthiness and Transparency** –
 - valued authenticity, confidentiality
- Mutual Support** –
 - shared vulnerability, modeled self-care
- Collaboration and Mutuality** –
 - culture of improving, listening to those who have been hurt
- Empowerment, Voice, and Choice** –
 - sharing and teaching by recipients, appreciating the gifts of trauma experiences, avenues for self-advocacy
- Cultural, Historical and Self-Identity** –
 - understanding cultural issues of trauma, celebrating uniqueness

5 Key Components of TIC Organizations - Relias

- Organizational Self-Assessment**
- Paradigm Shift**
 - From "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?"
- Safety**
 - Emotional & physical safety, policies of safety, confidential feedback
- Employee wellness & self-care**
 - Employee wellness programs
 - Trauma-informed supervision of front-line/clinical employees
- Everyone is included**

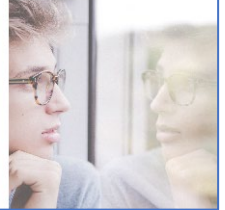


Why Create a Trauma-Informed Christian Community

- 1. The Church should look like Trauma-Informed Care:**
 - Safety, trustworthy & transparent, mutually collaborative & supportive, empowering of voice & choice, celebrating uniqueness!
- 2. People are hurting.**
 - The Bible tells us that in this world, we will suffer. We must know how to respond to pain.
- 3. Love responds.**
 - Love is active – noticing, caring, listening, empathizing, helping.
- 4. Suffering has Kingdom value.**
 - Wisdom, character, and the knowledge of God comes through suffering.
- 5. Love heals.**
 - The gospel is seen by how we respond to suffering.
 - "Healing = feeling great pain in the presence of great love." ~J. Brier

Toxic Theology when Caring for the Traumatized

- 1. "Just pray harder"**
 - Philosophy in conversations, sermons, norms of a faith community.
- 2. Judge**
 - Assume causes without listening well
- 3. Oversimplify**
 - Ignorance of issues
 - Solutions without understanding
- 4. Spiritualize**
 - physical, psychological issues
- 5. Hands off**
 - ignore or refer out and let go



VI. Next Steps for You

How to Create a Trauma-Informed Christian Community

- 1. Form a Trauma-Informed Care Committee/Team**
 - Assess TIC principles in your organization
 - Make plans – change the culture, change the structure
- 2. Gather Resources**
 - Identify internal resources – professionals, lay experts,
 - Identify external resources – referral sources, educators
 - Equip with resources – written/video by topic, need
- 3. Educate in Trauma**
 - Leaders, staff, members.
 - Teach it, talk about it, normalize it.
- 4. Create Systems of Care**
 - Funnels for those seeking help
 - Formalize teams for "high maintenance" needs

Activity #4, Final Discussion:

1. Do you think your leadership is interested in learning how to become a TIC organization?
2. What barriers may keep your organization from developing a TIC approach?
3. Describe one next step that you could take to help your organization become more trauma-sensitive?

V. Resources

Organizational TIC Assessment Tools:

1. Very good organization assessment. Section III - Assessment and Planning Services, does not apply well for churches, but can encourage creative thinking about how to gather information from church participants in a trauma-sensitive way. https://traumatransformed.org/documents/tia_orchard.pdf
2. Trauma-Informed Care in Youth Serving Settings: Organizational Self-Assessment <https://traumaticstressinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Trauma-Informed-Care-Org-Self-Assessment-Final.pdf>

Trauma-specific information:

1. Free App for trauma information, and excellent individual coaching tool (created for veterans): **PTSD Coach**
2. Info about trauma on the web: **David Baldwin:** www.trauma-pages.com
3. Info about trauma and loss in children, with lots of resources: **Trauma and Loss in Children Institute:** www.starr.org
4. Info **about EMDR** as a trauma technique and directory of **EMDR certified therapists:** www.emdria.org
5. Book about trauma and the brain: **The Body Keeps the Score**, by Vessel van der Kolk
6. Trauma resources **for churches:** Trauma Healing Institute, <https://traumahealinginstitute.org/>

Resources for creating TIC in an organization:

1. **Trauma Healing Institute**, church resources from Biblical perspective. <https://traumahealinginstitute.org/about>
2. **Trauma Informed Care Project**, by the Orchard Place. Resources and videos. <http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/>
3. **Fostering Resilience and Recovery: A Change Package for Advancing Trauma-Informed Primary Care**, National Council for Mental Wellbeing. Gives in-depth overview of TIC in primary care settings. <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/resources/fostering-resilience-and-recovery/>

Christian resources and articles regarding TIC

1. Article: Trauma Healing and the US Church statistics and overview, prepared by Jeffery Fulks, PhD, Director of Ministry Intelligence, January, 2023, Trauma Healing Institute, American Bible Society

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6426f18785ef0f530ff90208/t/6446e226ced50f12e93dd358/1691014687336/THI+-US+Church+Report>

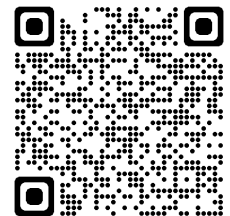
2. Christianity Today article <https://www.christianitytoday.com/better-samaritan/2023/mnay/9-ways-to-start-your-journey-as-trauma-informed-church.html>
3. List of how churches can help with the traumatized: <https://www.traumainformedchurches.org/what-can-we-do-as-churches-to-help-traumatized-people>
4. Nice overview of TIC. Includes a de-escalation interview form. https://www.crisisprevention.com/CPI/media/Media/download/PDF_TICRG.pdf?_gl=1*_1rpyff7*_gcl_aw*_R0NMLjE2OTE3NjgyNDcuQ2owS0NRand1TmVtQmhDQkFSSXNBRHA3NFFUR1VoWV91WDNNMnd0UXYxS19KMVFZYkZqV3Z5eW5KcU9nNU9YWWJjSmZwQklnNkwtVENQa2FBZ3AxRUFMd193Y0I.*_gcl_au*_MTYwMjI0NzAzMC4xNjNzY4MjQ3
5. Ideas for increasing trauma-informed care in churches. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/better-samaritan/2023/june/50-trauma-informed-ideas-your-church-can-put-into-practice.html>
6. Book: Trauma-Informed Children's Ministry, A practical guide for reaching hurting kids. By Robert G. Crosby and Lori A. Crosby.
7. North Carolina Churches, toolkit for becoming a trauma-informed faith community <https://ncchurches.org/sacred-series-toolkit-becoming-a-trauma-informed-faith-community/>
8. Christian Trauma Healing Network. Has membership and training for churches and professionals in trauma healing. <https://christiantraumahealingnetwork.org/about/>
9. Trauma Ministry. Offers training in trauma and caring for the traumatize <http://www.traumaministry.net/about/our-mission/>

Wellspring Trauma Resources:

1. Information **about trauma**, podcasts. <https://www.wellspringmiami.org/blog/2022/6/4/trauma-amp-ptsd-wd4d3>
2. Information about Bounce, **intensive trauma recovery programs for youth**: <https://www.wellspringmiami.org/bounce-camp> and **Restore, trauma-recovery program for adults**: <https://www.wellspringmiami.org/restore-retreat>
3. **Trauma Education for your organization**, tailored for you, by webinar. 4-part series includes: 1) What is Trauma? 2) How to Recover from Trauma, 3) Caring for the Traumatized, 4) Caring for the Caregiver. Email Rebecca@WellspringMiami.org for details.
4. **Wellspring's Ministry to Ministers** to sustain and equip leaders and constituents: <https://www.wellspringmiami.org/m2m>

Are you interested in becoming a Wellspring Affiliate?

Wellspring is becoming a trusted source for finding professional, licensed, trauma-trained, therapists who are also reliably Christians. As our audience has begun to attract a national reach, we are often asked if we know of a like-minded therapist with a license in another state. We would like to refer potential clients to therapists who we are confident endorsing. If you are interested in hearing more about this opportunity, follow the link: <https://wellspringmiami.app.neoncrm.com/forms/wellspring-affiliate-interest-> Or Scan the QR code:



Event Survey

Thank you for attending this event. We welcome your feedback and invite your interest in any topics we have mentioned.

