

Congregational Trauma, Resilience, and Healing

Eastern PA Conference Advanced Boundaries Training

October 15, 2022

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PURPOSE

This advanced sexual ethics workshop
equips participants
to recognize congregational trauma and
to implement practices
that will
increase resilience and healing
within a congregation.

WELCOME ALL

- Survivors
- Perpetrators
- Bystanders
- Upstanders
- Community members and leaders
- Wounded healers
- Healed healers

RESOURCES FOR INTERVENTION

- National Sexual Assault Hotline (24 hrs/day): 1-800-656-4673
- Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR), <https://pcar.org>, Call 1-888-772-7227
- Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.pcadv.org, 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (child abuse prevention), <https://pafsa.org/>, 1-800-448-4906
- Solihten Institute (network including Samaritan Counseling Centers), <https://solihten.org/find-a-center/>
- UMC General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, <https://gcsrw.org/>. Confidential Toll-Free Number 1-800-523-8390
- EPA ICARE Team, <https://www.epaumc.org/icare/>

UPCOMING

Body & Soul: Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence, Oct. 21-22

The Eastern PA Conference Domestic Violence Committee will explore the physical, emotional and social impacts of trauma related to violence, primarily domestic and intimate-partner violence Oct. 21-22, via Zoom, on Friday, 7-9 PM, and Saturday, 9 AM -12:30 PM. Resource experts, advocates and survivors will present information and compelling insights, and lead discussions and workshops.





Prayer

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INVITATION TO MUTUAL CARE

Mutual expectations and responsibilities

- Trigger warnings
- Self-care
- Grounding exercises
- Zoom etiquette
- Covenant regarding information sharing—respond in the CHAT.

- Breakout Room Discussion:
- What brings you here today?
- What do you hope to gain from this workshop?

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Definition of Trauma

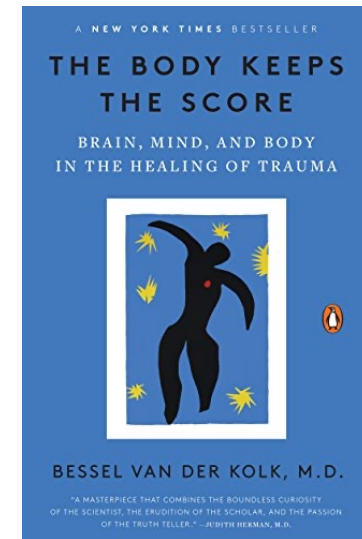
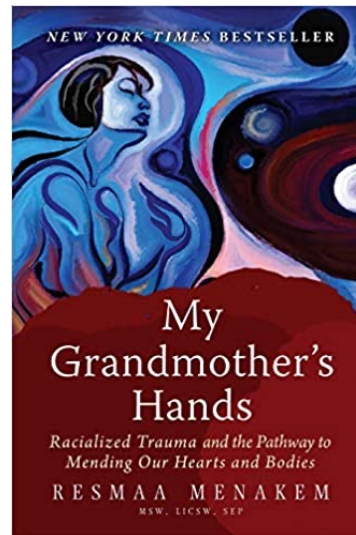
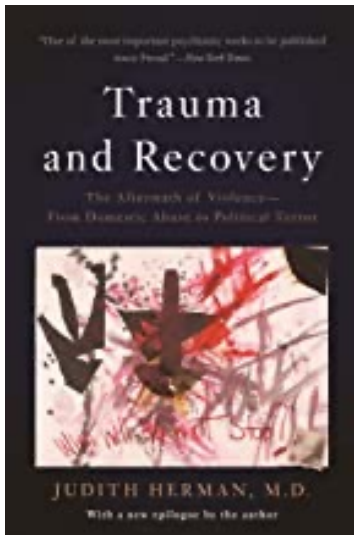
Trauma is an event or series of events,
experienced as harmful or life threatening,
with lasting adverse effects
on everyday functioning and well-being.

Three E's

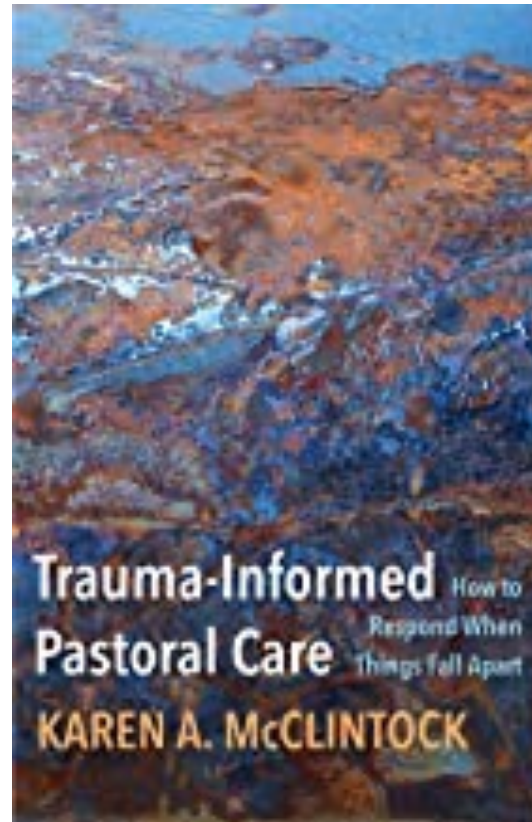
“Individual trauma results from an **EVENT**,
series of events or set of circumstances that is
EXPERIENCED by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening
and that has lasting adverse **EFFECTS**
on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being.”

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Books on Trauma



Primary Resource for Today



Resources

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Search SAMHSA

Find Treatment Practitioner Training Public Messages Grants Data Programs Newsroom

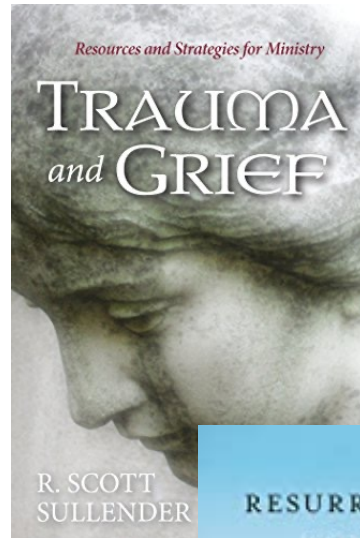
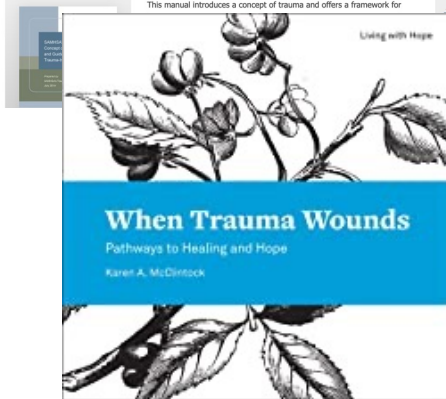
Publications and Digital Products

Log

Start a New Search

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach

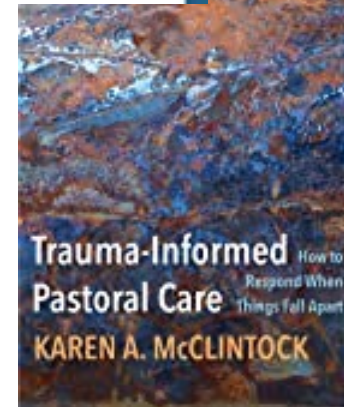
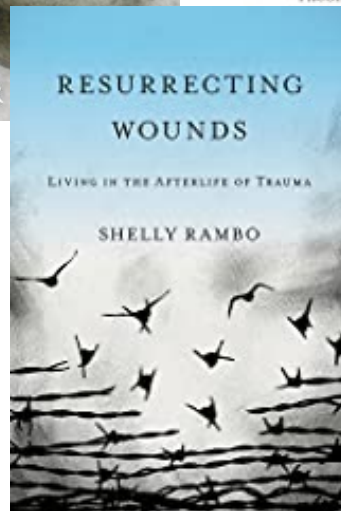
This manual introduces a concept of trauma and offers a framework for



Theology in a Ruptured World

Serene Jones

Foreword by Kelly Brown Douglas,
author of *Stand Your Ground!*



**TRAGEDIES AND CHRISTIAN
CONGREGATIONS**

THE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF TRAUMA

Edited by
Megan Warren, Christopher Swartzgatz, Carla A.
Gross-Miller and Hilary Ison



TRAUMA BASICS

Trauma

- is a **survival response** when mortally threatened
- **overwhelms** normal coping mechanisms
- is the **wound** resulting from the event
- is experienced **uniquely** by each person
- resides deep in the **body**
- is physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually **disruptive**

RESILIENCE

- ❖ The capacity to bounce back

- ❖ Determined by
 - prior trauma history,
 - environmental and cultural factors,
 - personality,
 - social supports and care

We can strengthen resilience in others through our care and support.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALING



FAITH PRACTICES

Prayer

Ritual

Story

Accompaniment

Community-building

TRAUMA

**abandonment
disruption
interruption
isolation
separation**

FAITH PRACTICES

**Prayer
Ritual
Story
Accompaniment
Community-building**

HEALING

**recognition
re-integration
re-narration
solidarity
re-connection**

TRAUMAS

individual
complex
collective
vicarious
secondary
physical
psychological or emotional
generational or epigenetic

COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

Groups as well as individuals can experience trauma.

- ❖ Natural disasters
- ❖ COVID and social distancing
- ❖ Systemic racism
- ❖ Prolonged conflict
- ❖ Betrayal and abuse of power

CARE FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERS

- risk of vicarious or secondary trauma (sometimes accompanied by compassion fatigue)
- recognition of our own trauma histories
- importance of debriefing with colleagues, pastors, counselors, and other professionals about the emotional, spiritual, and physical toll

FAITH LEADERS DURING TRAUMA

1. Difficulty thinking, focusing
2. Take one task at a time
3. Lean on your gifts
4. Savor the sweet spots
5. Do less
6. Triage is necessary at times
7. Adapt and pivot
8. Past traumas will emerge
9. Rituals and structures of self-care
10. You're not the savior

Adapted from Rev. Emily D. Scott



Grounding Exercise

4-7-8 Breathing

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TRAUMA-INFORMED RESPONSE

Instead of asking, “What’s wrong with you?”
a trauma-informed minister asks,
“What has happened to you?”

**Trauma-informed care is a shift in approach
from blame and shame to empathy and support.**

PRINCIPLES & VALUES of TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE



SAMHSA - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

IMPLICATIONS OF THESE VALUES

- Every person is a beloved child of God.
- Trauma-informed care is victim-centered.
- Care begins with listening and bearing witness.
- We must humbly put aside our own biases and projections.
- Don't "fix it". INSTEAD, empower with voice and choice.
- Neither love "... as yourself" nor treat others "... as you would have them do to you"—INSTEAD, ask how they want to be treated.

STARTING PLACES

1. Listen to victims' accounts; avoid retriggering
2. Ask open-ended questions; don't try to "fix" anyone
3. Invite victims to tell their stories at their own pace; don't rush them
4. Believe the victim; memory loss and confusion are common
5. Maximize safety through appropriate confidentiality and boundaries
6. Inquire about spiritual needs without proselytizing

Karen McClintock, *Trauma-Informed Pastoral Care*, p. 78.

THE Rs OF TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

- **Realize**
- **Recognize**
- **Respond**
- **Resist**
- **Reconnect**

REALIZE

Realize the **widespread extent** of trauma in society.

- ❖ The ACEs study (1998)
- ❖ Childhood sexual abuse rates
- ❖ Systemic racism
- ❖ Urban ACEs study in Philadelphia (2012)
- ❖ COVID and social distancing

SCENARIOS

See handout in the chat.

- Breakout Room Discussion
- Case study, *Realize*

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RECOGNIZE

The signs and symptoms of trauma in individuals . . .

- difficulty focusing, attending, retaining, and recalling
- irregular attendance or lack of engagement
- challenges with emotional regulation
- fear of taking risks
- anger, helplessness, or dissociation when stressed
- withdrawal and isolation
- involvement in unhealthy relationships

. . . and in congregations:

- Perpetual staff changes
- Lack of appropriate boundaries
- Reluctance to change
- Anger, helplessness, or disconnection under stress
- Withdrawal and isolation from the larger community or judicatory
- Secrecy and lack of transparency in communications
- Overly rigid approach to traditions, roles, and relationships

- Breakout Room Discussion
- Case study, *Recognize*

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RESPOND

Respond by integrating knowledge into practice, remembering:

- ❖ Values and principles of trauma-informed response
- ❖ Distinctive practices of faith leaders

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

Safety

Trustworthiness and transparency

Peer support

Collaboration and mutuality

Empowerment, voice and choice

Context and narrative—cultural, historical, and gender issues

RESIST

Resist further harm by minimizing risk of re-traumatization and secondary traumatization.

- Breakout Room Discussion
- Case study, *Respond and Resist*

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RECONNECT

Reconnect victims to loved ones, caring communities, and faith.

—Karen A. McClintock, *Trauma-Informed Pastoral Care*, p. 22

TRAUMA

**abandonment
disruption
interruption
isolation
separation**

FAITH PRACTICES

**Prayer
Ritual
Story
Accompaniment
Community-building**

HEALING

**recognition
re-integration
re-narration
solidarity
re-connection**

- Breakout Room Discussion
- Case study, *Reconnect*

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CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Discussion

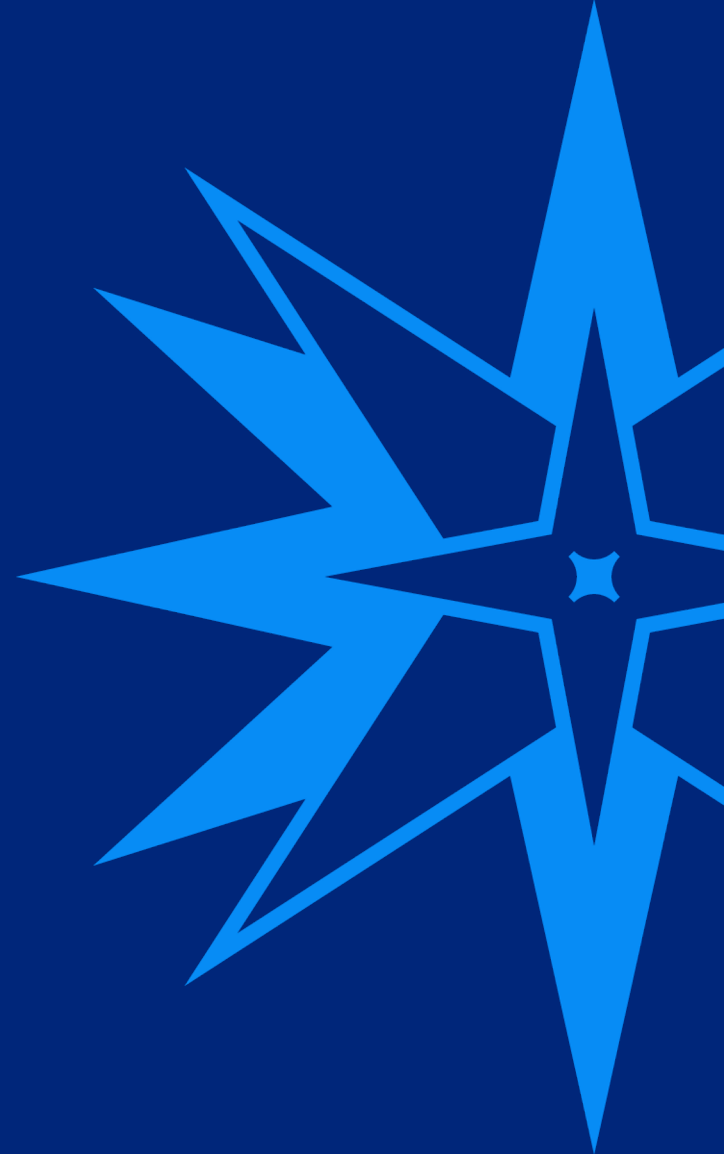
Congregational Trauma, Resilience, and Healing

QUESTIONS?

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