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Presentation Transcript
Trauma #20071011
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This presentation is titled, *Trauma*. It's one in a series of presentations on the effects of mental health on spiritual development.

While I was doing my schooling to be a counselor, one of the practicums I did was in a youth detention facility. It was minimum security. One day my supervisor told me I had been assigned to a new case – a boy who had shot and killed another boy. That was the first time I'd ever talked to somebody who'd been involved in that kind of violence – that I knew of, anyway.

He was sixteen. When I started talking with him, it seemed to me that he was kind of sad and withdrawn. He'd been transferred from another facility and had been incarcerated for about nine months. After I'd been seeing him for a couple of weeks, he told me that he was having nightmares and trouble concentrating. As we talked about the dreams he was having, they all seemed to carry a lot of violence and a sense of fear. So I asked him about his lack of focus, and he told me that he kept seeing things. So I didn't quite know what he meant by that. I thought, maybe – hallucinations? But I said, "What kind of things?" And he said, "Like I was going back and doing things again." I said, "Doing what things?" He told me that...and I'm going to take what he said and kind of put it together, because what he told me was very all-over-the-map – hit and miss, fragmented – but the essence of what he told me was that he and a friend were planning to walk to the store one evening, and his twelve-year-old cousin begged to go. He was about fifteen at the time, by the way. And this boy didn't want to take his twelve-year-old cousin with him, but his friend prevailed upon him to take him. So the three of them started out for the store on foot. And on the way, a car full of rival gang members drove by and shot at them. So this boy took out a homemade gun – a zip gun – to return fire. He was tracking the cars that went by and he pulled the trigger just as the barrel of the pistol lined itself with his little cousin's head, and he wound up shooting him in the head with a .22 caliber bullet. He was dead before the ambulance could even put him in the ambulance.

After I understood that that had happened, I started asking about some other things. And I learned that he was having difficulty sleeping. He was irritable quite often. He had

difficulty concentrating. He had a great deal of difficulty thinking about or talking about the event, because it was so scattered in his memory. He said that he felt weird – “like I can’t get into what everyone else is doing.”

So those things, along with the two symptoms that he mentioned – you know, the persistent flashbacks – he said he was seeing things (that’s what he was seeing) – and the dreams that he had – tell us that this boy was experiencing the effects of post-traumatic stress.

Why would we talk about the subject of trauma from a ministry dedicated to children? Well, there are three reasons. One is that trauma in children is often not recognized. And two is that parents have a hard time bringing up emotionally healthy children if *they* have been traumatized. And trauma, in adults and children, always hinders spirituality. So, it’s always good to know about things like this. So, the purpose of this presentation is to help people recognize trauma and know how to deal with it – how to get help for people.

What is trauma? I’m going to give you an example that you might not think of as trauma. But a friend of mine told me he was driving his Jeep off-road once along the side of a hill. So he was in what’s called an *off-camber* situation. And it was so steep he was afraid he was going to turn over – as in very nervous. And after about thirty minutes of that very nervewracking situation, he pushed it a bit too far, and he *did* turn over. He rolled three times down the hill. He wasn’t hurt. There were people around to help him. They pushed his Jeep upright and, although it was banged up, he was able to continue on. But after, he told me he had a very hard time driving on that type of terrain. He would become extremely anxious. His palms would sweat just at the *thought* of it. In fact, while he was telling me about this two years after it happened, he looked a little bit nervous while he was talking to me – a little anxious. He would become anxious just because of the traumatic event that had occurred in the past. And he had a very hard time getting in that situation again. He said he was much, much more careful about it. That would be an example of what happens to people when they suffer something that’s very frightening, or unexpected or dangerous.

Let’s just talk about some of the causal factors in society. These are some things that you might, or might not, think about as being traumatic. Auto accidents can be very traumatic to people. Fires. 9/11 – a huge amount of post-traumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorder from that. Shipwrecks. Plane crashes. Spousal abuse. Rape. War. Robbery. Torture. Violence. Captivity. Kidnapping. Or like the guys that were kidnapped in Iran – not kidnapped, but they broke into the embassy and captured fifty-some people (I can’t remember how many). And they kept them captive and blind-folded for what? a couple of years (I don’t remember the details). All that was very traumatic for them, because they didn’t know whether they were going to live or die. And children – because children don’t have the psychological defenses that adults have – they have a much lower tolerance.

I went out four-wheeling myself with a colleague from work, and he brought his five-year-old son with us. We had him in the front in his little car seat. And we were very

careful not to go down anything that was too steep, or up anything that was too steep, because we knew that it would frighten him. It might frighten us, but we can deal with that stuff, and we know the limits, and we have control over the vehicle, and so it's not so scary. But, for a small child, who's totally reliant on others, and doesn't have the psychological toughness or resources, things can frighten them, and terrify them, and traumatize them that we might not often think about.

Bullying. Parents arguing – you know, among themselves. Divorce. These things *can* be traumatic to children – much more so than a lot of adults would realize. And for both children *and* adults, often witnessing any of the things we've mentioned so far can also be traumatic, as much as if one is the victim. Some of the kids I have met, who are gang members, have suffered a lot of post-traumatic stress just from witnessing a lot of the violence that was done in their past life.

I had two friends once, who liked to play golf, and they were going to go to the golf course together one day. So one of them drove to the other's house, and they were loading his clubs in the trunk. They were out in front of the house, in the driveway, and a light plane flew over their house and crashed about a half-block down the street – right there. So they ran down to it and heroically pulled the pilot from the plane, which had caught on fire. He was so badly burned that they could see the bones in his feet and lower legs. He actually died before they could load him into the ambulance. The fireman gave them both a phone number and urged them to call for what they call a *critical incident stress debriefing*. I was talking to one of them about it, and he told me that he thought he was okay, but they were so insistent that they go to this debriefing, he went anyway. And he said he went because he was interested in the way they would do it – you know, the counseling aspect of it. Well, during the debriefing he had a total meltdown – as in crying, and shaking and just not being able to pull it together. See, he had witnessed a trauma and he had been traumatized by it himself.

You know, you may have come upon the scene of a terrible automobile accident.... I saw a man lying beside the road without a head once. He'd been in an accident. I still have that image in my mind. I wouldn't say that I was really traumatized by it, but it's not something that you soon forget when you see things like that – especially unexpectedly.

These events can be traumatic if they're single, sometimes, or repeated – it can be either. My friends witnessed a one-time event – that terrible accident. Or it could be like the soldiers in World War II, who were trapped, surrounded by Germans at Bastone during the War, and endured a month in cold weather with heavy, unexpected shelling – you know, where they really had no protection from it. If the shell landed in their foxhole, that was it. There was nothing you could do about it. It was totally out of control – totally arbitrary – and no way to get away from it – no way to get relief from the uncertainty.

So what are some of the symptoms in people that have suffered acute trauma? Fear certainly would be one of them. Overwhelming sense of helplessness – a lot of times. My friend that had the meltdown, as he was waiting for the ambulance to arrive with this man, he just wanted, with everything in him, to do something to ease his pain, but there

wasn't anything he could do. And that was one of the traumatic things for him about all of it. He just hated to see him suffer so much. Horror is another one. Sometimes, in children, there's what we call disorganization, where they just don't know what to do, period. They just kind of freeze up. Or agitation – with them. Sometimes, there's what's called re-experiencing – that would be the flashbacks – or reliving it. Dreams of the event possibly recurring. Sometimes in children we see repetitive play – reenacting what happened. I saw that once with a little boy, who witnessed his father shooting his mother, and he would act it out in the sand tray week after week after week. People feel a sense of intense, internal stress. Sometimes, if it's bad enough, the stress may cause people to hallucinate. People will do anything to avoid thinking about it or anything that will stimulate bringing it to consciousness. Sometimes they repress it, so they have an inability to remember what happened. You hear that a lot about children who have molested or women who have been raped. Sometimes people have a sense of foreboding danger, even though they're safe. Because they have been so traumatized, they feel like they are in danger at all times. Difficulty sleeping. Irritability or rage. Difficulty concentrating. Hypervigilance – you know, where people can't ever relax. They're always on the lookout for danger. An exaggerated startle response – you know, flinching. I had a little boy, who, if anything unexpected happened, he would throw his arm up – you know, to ward off the many blows that he'd received.

It's interesting, too, that not everyone suffers traumatic stress after traumatic events. They don't suffer the symptoms. I tried to think about why. A lot of it has to do with a person's perception of what's going on. Sometimes children are so small they don't realize that what's being done to them is something that's bad or terrible. Other times people just have enough internal resources to deal with it. Not all the soldiers, who went to Viet Nam and saw terrible things, came down with post-traumatic stress disorder. So there's a lot of individuality there. And it has a lot to do with our coping abilities.

This has been called a lot of different things down through the years. In the Civil War there was this thing that they talked about called *soldier's heart*. The symptoms were essentially what we read, with a lot of pounding of the heart and everything, because of the anxiety. Freud dealt with a lot of women who have been abused and they called it *hysteria*. In World War I they called it *shell shocked*. Let's see. There was a term for it in World War II – it was *combat neurosis* or the *thousand yard stare*. I saw that once – a picture of a soldier sitting on a tank, riding between battles, and he was just zoned out. His eyes looked glassy. In Viet Nam people started coming back, after all these atrocious things they'd seen and done, and they really started to look into what it really was and what was going on, and they came up with the term *post-traumatic stress disorder* – PTSD.

There are other types of trauma that don't endanger us physically that also cause trouble for people. The things that we've talked about...a lot of those things are really extreme, you know, but then, some of them aren't. These are not so extreme. You know, the loss of a loved one – especially for children – can be extremely traumatic. Why would that be traumatic to a child? Well, because the loved ones in a child's life usually are adults who

take care of them. So, when they lose their caregiver, then they're in a vulnerable, or exposed, place where they could be hurt or might not have what they need to live. Sometimes the loss of the love of a loved one can be very traumatic. A lot of broken relationships – romantic relationships – from divorce are just.... All these kids today feel like they can't go out with somebody of the opposite sex unless they're paired off with them in some kind of committed relationship. So they go from one, supposedly, committed relationship to another one. And this does a lot of psychological damage to some people.

And just the loss of relationship generally.... Many of us, a few years ago, had to flee from the church we'd been in for many years because of a doctrinal shift that was made without our input. We had to do that to preserve our spiritual identity. And that caused a lot of us to lose relationships with people that we'd had for many, many years. It wasn't the kind of trauma where we were going to lose our life or anything, but it was still difficult for many people.

Sometimes the loss of identity is difficult, too. I have a relative, who was in a big company – if I mentioned the name of it, you'd know it instantly. I guess he was a supervisor. Well, he just got laid off. And that's what he's done for twenty-five years, though. Men tend to identify themselves by what they do. So that's somewhat traumatic for him, I would think.

We know that abuse is traumatic to people, but abuse, as a power in organizations, can sometimes be traumatic. Of course, that only happens when we *allow* ourselves to be taken advantage of. Because it's a free country and nobody *has* to stay in any job or organization. So there's not a state of helplessness, but it still is hurtful to people when that happens.

How does one help people who have been traumatized? There are three commonly accepted stages of recovery from trauma. If somebody's really, really been through a deep, deep trauma, I don't think most of us are really going to be able to help them in the way that they need it. But it's still good to know so that we can contribute to it. Before we get to the three stages, however, there is one thing to consider. And I don't consider this a stage, because it's something that goes through all of the three stages. And that is, there has to be a *healing relationship* in place. Trauma often involves a loss of control and a disconnect. You know, if a little girl is sexually abused by a neighbor, she's intimidated into not telling anybody. So that separates her from her family, from her friends. And a lot of times, people in traumatic situations lose control of the ability to save themselves – like people who have been kidnapped, for example. I know, in talking with this boy that I mentioned in the beginning, who shot his nephew accidentally, he felt *completely* alone – cast off, misunderstood. Nobody had heard *his* story, except for his family. He felt totally isolated. And he was! He was totally isolated. He'd been incarcerated for nine months, and nobody had noticed that he was suffering these extreme symptoms. He was having full-blown flashbacks, and recurring nightmares, and all the other daytime stuff that was going on with him, and nobody had noticed or tried to treat him. So he *was* very much isolated. It makes sense that in order to help people heal from

trauma, when they've been isolated, that they need to begin to reenter into relationships with other people – safe relationships. The thing that I think about in these is that the relationship has to be characterized by empowerment, because all power is taken away from people who have been traumatized.

I once worked with a little boy who was in a pickup truck with his dad, and his dad, for some reason – I don't know whether he went to sleep or he was run off the road – but he ran his pickup off the freeway, rolled it, and was ejected from the truck. When the first person came by, the little boy was sitting by his dad's body. His father was killed. He felt completely, totally unable to do anything about that – no sense of control whatsoever.

When we think about a healing relationship, it has to be characterized by the ability to empower the person who has been traumatized. You think about kidnap victims, and victims of domestic violence. So healing has to do with a part of regaining a sense of power over one's own life and providing safety for oneself. Another way to say that is, a primary aspect of treatment is *autonomy*. Even in the therapy, most of the training that we take about this has to do with – a lot of it has to do with – allowing the person who has been traumatized to kind of call the shots in the therapy.

I was thinking about, after we left the church that stole our beliefs, it was incredibly healing to all of us to construct a new church, where things were going to be more autonomous – we thought. The thought of it was good for us, wasn't it? And that's what we wanted. We wanted an organization that wouldn't do to us what the former one had done. Right? That's what most people were driving for in that. And that's because we knew what we needed. Most trauma victims kind of know what they need.

What are the three stages? Well, the first one is extremely obvious. It's *safety*. If a person has been beaten, raped, shot at, terrified in some way, then providing a safe place, where they're *not* going to be beaten, raped, shot at or terrified is essential if you want them to get better.

I talked to a woman once who had a husband who was like a volcano. She told me about how she would come home from work and he would be standing at the door, waiting for her to knock or come in, and she could tell if he had been drinking. But he would find something to beat her up about – you know, something that she hadn't done before she left work or something like that. She knew the minute she walked in that she was about to get hit again. They had company once, and they were having breakfast – they'd spent the night. And he became enraged with her over something, and they went from the dining room table to the basement – made a big scene. These people were pretty much slack-jawed that he would act that way – very uncomfortable – when suddenly he showed up at the kitchen door again. He took the coffee pot and poured the coffee all over his wife's head, and then left for work. The people that came to visit her were very wise. They gave her no choice. They walked her upstairs. They packed up her stuff. They got her kids out of school. And they took them to a motel. They provided a safe place and *urged* her to call the police and get hooked up with a clinic – you know, a safe house – which she did.

They insisted that she leave that very day, because they saw the violence in this guy. They saw the signs of abuse.

So that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? A woman who's been raped doesn't need to live alone. She needs to be with people so she can be safe. I've encountered a number of children who have been abused sexually, and it's always good psychologically when they know the perpetrator is behind bars. That's always a really good thing for them to know that. And, to their everlasting credit, I think most of the judges in this state know that, because they certainly do put them in jail. So, safety is essential to reduce the anxiety and promote the healing.

The second phase, then, of healing from trauma can be called *remembrance and mourning*. I'm taking that from a book called, *Trauma and Recovery*, by a lady named Judith Herman. It's kind of a landmark book on this topic. She's one of the best writers you'll ever read, too. When people are traumatized, the part of the brain that stores memory – there's a little thing that sits over the brain stem called the amigdula – and it scans for threat. It sends the data up into a thing right over the top of it called the hippocampus. The hippocampus' job is to store things in memory – all of this stuff coming in from the senses. When this happens, the hippocampus becomes overactive, they think, and it starts shooting this data out into the brain all over the place. Now, the way it *normally* stores things is beginning, middle and end. It stores memory in story form. You know, if I asked you what happened to you, when you were five, on the first day of school, you'd probably tell me a little story about your recollections. If that's a little too early for you, then you can go to something else that happened to you later – like when you made the Little League team, or the dance squad, and you could tell me a story about that. That's how your brain stores memory. But, in this situation, it just shoots things out, and the most traumatic parts of that come back as *flashbacks* to us. They're just stored randomly, rather than in an organized fashion. So, the treatment for this is the telling and retelling of the story, because it pulls the pieces together and surrounds them with context. And so they become embedded in a story that has a beginning, a middle and an end.

Not long after we left the church that changed our beliefs, I pastored a church that had some members who went through the experience and some who did not. Those who had not observed that the ones who had been through it couldn't seem to stop talking about it – to the point that it was just tedious for them to listen to us talk about it. That was us processing our way through what happened – putting the pieces together and putting it to rest. And we had to tell that story until it moved away from and just became a part of our lives, rather than the one big thing that was constantly before our faces.

So, after a trauma, we need to talk about it and pull everything together. And when we're tired of talking about it, and bored with it, then the trauma is resolved and we're ready to move on with our lives.

You know, the *Andrea Doria* luxury liner went down off the coast of New York in 1955, and only one or two people died. The rest were all rescued because they were so close to

the city – lots of boats there to take them back. They housed them in warehouses, and schools, and YMCAs until relatives could come pick them up. And unlike many other traumatic situations, there was a whole raft of psychologists, and trained counselors, and social workers in that city, who descended on this group of people to give them support. And they noticed how much they *had* to talk about what happened to them. That's what trauma victims have to do.

Now I've noticed, in our church, that some people still become really angry over church grievances some twenty-five years ago. Have you noticed that? While it is normal and necessary to revisit past traumas, reliving it like it was still going on right now is *not* normal – called *unresolved trauma*. And it's what happens to us when we get stuck and we haven't done the work that we need to do to get past it. When that happens to us, we're robbed of a good part of our life. We're still held captive by those people. We just need to learn how to get past that. And the way we do that is in the presence of somebody who's safe, and who knows *how* to help, and talking about it, processing through it until it is resolved. If we talk about it to everybody, all we're going to do is alienate everybody from ourselves. So we need to do it in the context of a *healing* relationship with someone who understands what has to happen. In most cases, that's somebody who's trained to help people in this way.

The third phase, then, is *reconnection*. Once a person has resolved the past and mourned the self who was lost in the trauma, then it's time to kind of reinvent oneself and to reconnect with others.

The woman, whose home has been her concentration camp – like that lady that I told you about earlier – once she's free of it, then she has to build a new life for herself – free of all that control and danger. And that's exactly what this woman had to do. She had to go out and learn how to make a living. She had to learn how to discipline her kids without her husband. She had to develop a career and learn how to plan financially. So she really did have to reinvent herself and reconnect in a healthy way with society.

A child who has been abused needs to know that the strong cannot ignore moral values and do just as they please, because in the world they come from, that's how it is. They're pretty much at the mercy of their abuser, and they have to learn that that *isn't* how it really is in the world, and they have to live a different kind of life according to that.

I was working with groups of grieving children, and a sixteen-year-old who had lost his father said, "It helps me to have fun with other boys who suffered the same loss as me. I learned that life could go on." He wasn't kidnapped or abused, but his father died. So he was having to learn how to reconnect with life. And he learned it from other boys that had suffered the same way he had. So he was starting to feel a sense of commonality with other people that had gone through the same thing.

So those are pretty much the three phases that we have to go through. I've noticed that we're pretty much intolerant of people that always want to talk about their traumas, and sometimes it's because they're stuck and that's all they ever talk about, but it might give

us some insight into knowing what's going on and what we can do to help people that are stuck. They need to get some professional help to deal with that.

So, what happens after that? Well, after recovery from trauma – and actually, you know, there really isn't a full recovery ever, because we always remember what's happened to us – you can't go back and unring the bell. You can go on from it, but what happened is still there. And victims need to revisit the trauma – especially as they pass through different stages of development.

When we're kids we only have a limited amount of brain wiring – until we're about twenty-two to twenty-five years old. So, if something bad happens to us when we're five, when we're in the middle stages of elementary school, we're going to be able to think about what happened with more brain power. And so a lot of times we have to go back and rework what happened. When we hit teenage, that may happen again. And when we hit late adolescence, yet again. And as we get older, we may have to keep revisiting those things. And that would be true whether it's the loss of a loved one, or some kind of abuse. With each new stage, we have to reprocess from the new vantage point that we have.

The boy who said, "I learned that life can go on," after the death of his father, will likely look back on his father as he reaches each stage of development, and think about his father in each of those stages.

I know with my own father's death, as I get to various ages that my father was, I think back about what he was going through at that time in his life and compare it to mine. I think people who have lost their parents in traumatic things find some healing in that as well.

So, remember some mourning from a new perspective has to keep going on as we gain more perspective in life. A child who's sexually assaulted as an elementary-aged kid needs to rethink everything when she comes into puberty, because there's that new element to her life. And then when she's married, she has to rethink it. And then when she has children, she has to rethink it again. And so on.

So, for severe trauma, we can go on, but we know we never really get done doing the work of recovery. What's the positive in that? Well, the positive is that we *can* go on and we *can* recover some, but the negative is that some hurts are just too close to the bone, and we never completely get over them. And so we have to keep doing the work in order to function.

We say, "That's not fair," because we didn't ask for it. Yes, that's true. It's *isn't* fair. Part of overcoming the trauma is to understand that unfair things happen. And people who have been traumatized might hear that and say, "Well, that's easy for *you* to say." That's true. I'm not trying to make light of any of this. This is very hard.

Let's ask a question about the spiritual side of this. Why is trauma a part of life? Well, you know, there's a terrible and important lesson here. Life is frail. We are frail. Life is

dangerous. We are temporary. And life is futile without God. The nature of this life causes us to look for something better, because we're designed for something better. We're not designed to be traumatized.

Let's go to Hebrews 10 and look at some scriptures, beginning here. Paul said to the Hebrews:

Heb. 10:32-35 – *Remember those early days after you had received the light when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering? See, there were many Christians in that time who were traumatized just because they were Christians. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insults and persecution. At other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison. Prison is a traumatic event – especially back then. The prisons we have today are like living in luxury compared to the prisons they had in Paul's time. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence. It will be richly rewarded.*

The important lesson is that what happens to us in this life is to make us stronger. Nietzsche said, "What doesn't kill us makes us stronger." This life, and all the hard things, are to make us dissatisfied, so that we look to something much, much better – when there *isn't* going to be any trauma.

Let's go to Psalm 27:1. This is a second thing that I think about when I think about this.

Psa. 27:1 – *The LORD is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh – that sounds ominous, doesn't it? – when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear. Though a war break out against me, even then will I be confident. One thing I ask of the LORD – this is what I seek – that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and seek Him in His temple. For in the day of trouble, He will keep me safe in His dwelling. He will hide me in the shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.*

While we're not to take foolish risks, God *is* with us, and He does promise to take care of us. Now He doesn't promise to keep us safe all the time, or from every problem in life, but He does promise to lead us through much trauma into an eternal relationship with Him. You know, when David said that he wanted to dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of his life, and to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and see Him in His temple, he was talking about that time when the new Jerusalem comes down and we all have a place with God – where there won't be anymore crying or tears or trauma.

And then in Luke 4, and verse 16, it says:

Lk. 4:16 – *So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was*

handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

It's interesting to me that when we began LifeResource Ministries three years ago, the very first presentation we offered was called *Healing Broken Hearts*. It was about this scripture. It was about healing from grief. And we talked, then, about Jesus' promise to heal broken hearts. I didn't envision it then, but an entire series – over the last three years – has grown out of that first presentation – a series on the importance of mental health, because of its effect on our spiritual health. And besides all of the things we've discussed today, recovering from trauma can be seen as a restoration, or strengthening of faith in God. A lot of times, people who have been traumatized are too frightened to trust God anymore. And so their healing becomes a matter of the restoration of faith.

Since our ministry is dedicated to the children in the church, we feel a need to help adults recognize trauma in children, so that they can help them through it. And we want to help adults recognize it in themselves and others, so they can recover and help others recover and take their rightful place as viable instruments in a spiritually healthy church fit to produce Godly offspring to the glory of God.