Church-based Care stream

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Coming up

- **Session 1** – how churches can walk alongside people who have experienced trauma wisely and well
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- **Session 2** (church leaders) - issues affecting church leadership including welcoming, preaching and training
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- **Session 2** (church members) - small group dynamics and how to navigate welcome, Bible study, prayer & fellowship when a group member is struggling with trauma

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Your calling

In a fallen world – where hope is needed
In community – where our call is to share lives
With our gifts – given by God for the blessing of the church
We have a role in walking alongside those who have faced trauma
We cannot do everything - but we can do something - a privilege

Your calling

- Not to heal – that's God's job
- Not to behave as if we're experts – we're not, others are
- But to be part of the body
  - Keen to listen
  - Keen to pray
  - Keen encourage
  - Keen to serve
  - Keen to love – with humble, sacrificial hearts

Discussion

- Does that vision sound too big or too small or just right?
- What pressures might you face to do more – or to do less?

Your community

Who do you have in your church community?

- People with excellent God given pastoral skills, but no experience in relation to trauma?
- People with an introductory understanding of trauma (they've read a book, been on a conference!)?
- Anyone with expertise in trauma –either through biblical counselling training or their secular work and training?

Discussion

- How many people do you think you can identify in each of these three categories?
  - strong pastoral skills, no knowledge of trauma
  - strong pastoral skills, introductory knowledge of trauma
  - strong pastoral skills, some expertise in trauma
- How should this affect, or not affect, what your church aims to do?

Your conversations

- Imagine a conversation with someone new to your church who you meet after an early morning service. You discover this is their first time in church after a 5 year absence.
- The backstory is that five years ago they were present when a fire started at a night club. In the panic, four people died and dozens were injured.
- They have not since felt able to attend any large gatherings. Even at this smallest of your church services with 30 people present, they are anxious and it has been an effort to stay.

A bad conversation

- Either discuss – or better still role play – the initial conversation you might have.
- Start at the point when you say: ‘hello, I’ve not seen you before…’
- First role play (or discuss) a bad conversation
  - Where you make lots of assumptions
  - Or ask intrusive and probing questions
  - Or offer trite platitudes about faith and trust

A better conversation

- Now start again from: ‘Hello, I’ve not seen you before…’
- This time role play (or discuss) a better conversation
  - Where you are welcoming
  - You check what they do or don’t want to talk about
  - You find ways to express understanding and sympathy
  - You find an appropriate way of acknowledging how little you know about the impact of trauma

Your continuing support

Initial questions:

- What would you like me to be praying in the week ahead?
- Is there a simple way I can practically support you?
- What would help you engage with God in this season?
- Who else might it be useful for us to bring into this conversation?

Then embracing the beauty and power of small things

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Your continuing support

Being OK with "just" checking in

- What's been hard this week?
- What's been hardest?
- How can I pray?

Your continuing support

Being OK with "just" praying

- That's the biggest privilege
- That's the most powerful act
- That's the most transformational opportunity ... anyone can have

But sometimes in our hearts we want to be activists – knowing, involved, fixing things – that's a dangerous place to be

Your continuing support

Being ok with "just" helping people feel safe at church

- Talking about what's hard
- Talking about where to sit
- Talking about who to sit with
- Talking about what to do if something in the service feels overwhelming
- Talking about how to help them feel connected if they can't be there

Discussion

Imagine you now meet this person again on a Sunday three weeks later -

- How will you follow up with them?
- How will you continue the conversation about church being a safe place for them?

Your continuing support

Being ok with "just" being hospitable

- Meals (check to see if it's best to avoid alcohol)
- Coffees
- Batch cooking together
- Laughing together
- Chilling on a Sunday afternoon (check to see what TV/ films feel OK)
- Antisocials

Your continuing support

Being ok with "just" offering practical help

- Lifts
- Shopping
- Helping to take exercise or engage in relaxation
- Engaging in hobbies
- Financial gifts
- Being attentive to what is wise – being attentive to whether it is safe to be alone with some who may be deeply hurting

Your continuing support

Being ok with "just" helping people trust God a little more

- Sending a song
- Offering to memorise a Bible verse together
- Praying weekly on the phone for a few minutes
- Looking at a very short passage of Scripture together
- Who is God
- Who am I before God
- How does that make a difference today?

Being a rock solid encourager, who is certain of hope

Your continuing support

- In for the long haul
- In dependence on the Lord
- In collaboration with church leadership
- Attentive to caring for others in a grace-paced way
- Not expecting meteoric change
- Confident God is at work and there is masses of hope

Discussion

- What are you likely to find hard / draining about this kind of caring?
- How can you help yourself persevere in love, with eyes on Christ?

Your competency / capacity

- The importance of ‘knowing your limits’
- The value of increasing your reach

Reflection

- What problems exist with the following ‘limits’?
  - Never speak to someone who says they have experienced trauma
  - Only have ‘superficial’ conversations with someone who has experienced trauma
  - Don’t have any ‘counselling’ conversations with someone who has experienced trauma
  - When anyone shows signs of distress pass them on to someone experienced immediately
- What ‘limits’ might be more helpful than these

Some better guidelines

- Never withdraw abruptly when someone speaks of trauma or seems distressed – you risk increasing shame & isolation
- Where there is past trauma, only embark on in-depth conversations if you have experience & someone to oversee
- Don’t interrogate / probe with detailed questions about a traumatic experience
- Ask what support would be helpful (even if that means acknowledging you don’t know where to find such help)

Resources

Check out the resources room for

- Factsheets
- Books
- Reflections
- And more ...

Q&A

Top questions

Pinned

Newest

Oldest

Answered

There are no unanswered questions.

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