## Vocational Counsellors stream

Andrew Collins & Laura Perbet



#### Trauma as intrusion of death and the devil

- When death come close:
  - Traumatic grief
  - Painful & premature death/illness
  - Sudden intrusion
  - Accidents
  - Natural Disasters
  - Violence

- The devil and oppression
  - Inescapable
  - Inflicted by another
  - Prolonged
  - Violence
  - 'Father of lies' deceit, manipulation and coercion
  - Accuser shame, guilt



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# Shame & Guilt



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"Guilt is an awareness of failure against a standard...Shame is a sense of failure before the eyes of someone else." David Powlison



#### Guilt & Justification

- 'The gospel answers guilt with forgiveness. Guilt leaves a moral stain on our soul which the blood of Jesus washes clean and then replaces with His own righteousness.
- Sin does not become our identity because the gospel transforms us from rebels against God to ambassadors for God. Jesus paid the penalty for sin in our place.
- Sanctification involves transforming the selfish motives which make sin seem appealing to motives that take their joy in loving God and loving others.'

**Brad Hambrick** 



#### Shame

- · To do with 'self-perception'
- To do with the wider community
- May be legitimate:
  - "Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush." Jeremiah 6:15
- Or 'illegitimate' i.e., not linked to any wrongdoing on their part
- Designed to be known and loved



Shame is the deep sense that you are unacceptable because of something you did, something done to you, or something associated with you. You feel exposed and humiliated. Or to strengthen the language, you are disgraced because you acted less than human, you were treated as if you were less than human, or you were associated with something less than human, and there were witnesses. These definitions get us started. There isn't one mandatory definition or description for shame, but any definition will include certain elements. For example, you can expect images of being an outsider, naked and unclean. And don't forget shame's public nature. Guilt can be hidden; shame feels like it is always exposed...Shame is life dominating and stubborn. Once entrenched in your heart and mind, it is a squatter that refuses to leave...shame becomes your identity. Guilt lives in the courtroom...shame lives in the community...It says, "You don't belong you are unacceptable, unclean, filth, disgraced." Ed Welch

## Doctrine of Adoption & Shame

- Using our union with Christ to meet shame
  - How we are beheld by God
  - · God's words results in action
  - Made clean
  - Accepted
  - Delighted in
  - Welcomed
  - Known and loved





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- Shame, guilt, regret and to some extent grief can feel the same.
  - To what extent do you think it's helpful to help the counselee to differentiate which they are feeling?
  - How can this be unhelpful?



# Relational Hypervigilance



#### Relational Hypervigilance

Darby Strickland's definition, understanding the characteristics and how to help.

JBC 37:3 (2023) 'Trauma and Relational Hypervigilance'

 'an intense and pervasive watchfulness that seeks to assess the potential relational harm others might perpetrate (e.g. betrayal, abandonment, rejection). It may arise from physical or sexual trauma (which are inherently relational traumas). People struggling with this are on alert, obsessively making observations and assessments (knowingly and unknowingly) about others.'



# Characteristics of Relational Hypervigilance

- 1. Pronounced anxiety about relationships
- 2. Struggle with deep emotional intimacy
- 3. Over-reliance on intuition about others
- 4. Assessing and anticipating other's needs and desires

- 5. Exhausted from social overstimulation
- 6. Fear they are being paranoid
- 7. Strong belief that others should be able to intuit their emotional and relational needs



# How to Help:

- 1. Consistency is key
- 2. Be clear with expectations
- 3. Listen out for interpretations
- 4. Invite questions and feedback
- 5. Facilitate building emotional intimacy with others
- 6. Facilitate lament to the Lord



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# Dissociation and Depersonalisation



#### Dissociation

#### • DSM-5 definition:

- "the disruption of and/or discontinuity in the normal integration of consciousness, memory, identity, emotion, perception body representation, motor control and behavior"
- "Dissociation is the psychological mechanism by which discrete states are kept separate and trauma states are formed" (Lyons-Ruth et al (2006))



#### CONTINUUM OF DISSOCIATION

		ACUTE	POST		DISSOCIA-	
	DISSOCIA-	STRESS	TRAUMATIC		TIVE	DISSOCIA-
NORMAL	TIVE	DISORDER	STRESS	DISSOCIA-	DISORDER	TIVE
	EPISODE	(up to 4	DISORDER	TIVE	NOT	IDENTITY
		wks.)	(4  weeks  +)	DISORDER	OTHERWISE	DISORDER
					SPECIFIED	



- hypnosis
- ego states
- automatisms
- childhood imaginary play

- fear/terror
- repression
- highway hypnosis
- sleepwalking
- !mystical/
- religious
   experiences
   (e.g.,
   meditation,
   ecstatic
   experiences)

- flashbacks
- numbness, detachment, absence of emotional response
- reduced awareness of surroundings (dazed)
- derealization
- depersonalization
- amnesia for aspects of the trauma

- Dissociative amnesia
- Dissociative fugue
- Depersonali
  -zation
  disorder

- DDNOS
  - with features of
  - DID
- Polyfragmented
   DDNOS
- Dissociative trance disorder
- Possession trance disorder

- DID
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   DID

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### Discussion

 What biblical categories and themes might help us to make sense of dissociation and depersonalisation, or understand it from a biblical framework?



# Grounding techniques & establishing safety

- Helping the person to become well acquainted with the experience of safety.
  - Who do they feel safe with? Why, what do they do, say? What sensations do you experience or not experience when with them?
  - Where do you feel safe? What is it about that place?
  - A memory of safety
  - Open discussions about the counselling relationship and how to promote/increase safety & trust
- Understanding God as refuge when ready (Psalm 27)
  - Experiencing God in the present how is he relating to you now?



# Grounding techniques & establishing safety

 What grounding techniques have you found most helpful?

 What concerns do you have about being with those who experience dissociation?



# Forgiveness, Anger & Justice



## Forgiveness

From Brad Hambrick – 5 things Forgiveness is not...

- 1. ...not pretending I'm not hurt
- 2. ...not letting someone off the hook
- 3. ...not making an excuse for someone
- 4. ...not forgetting
- 5. ...not necessarily trust or reconciliation



# Anger

- God is rightly angry
  - He hates oppression
  - God is angry at sin and its consequences
  - God rebukes the accuser –Zech 3
- In trauma there is often the need to affirm and even encourage a rightly placed anger

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." Isaiah 5:20



# Anger

- And to discern when it might be hijacked into
  - Vengeance
  - Bitterness

# Anger – righteous and unrighteous

 Discussion – where sin has been done to the victim, what have you found helpful in your counsel of anger?

 How have you discerned with your counselee righteous anger and unrighteous anger when both are in the mix?



#### Who is God?

- Questions trauma raises:
  - Where was God when this happened?
  - Why did he let this happen?
  - Why did this have to happen to teach me something?
  - Will he just let them get away with it?
  - How can I possibly ever feel safe if they are in heaven too?
  - Is going to the police seeking vengeance?



#### Justice

- Judgement & the Cross
- God is the most sinned against
- God as Judge and Saviour
- Our desire for justice is only a shadow of God's
- How do we introduce mercy
  - "We are all more than the worst thing we've done"
- Helping navigate justice now and wait for the not yet.



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#### Traumatic memories

- Often a source of anxiety for the counsellor and counselee
- Balance of not rushing vs not avoiding
- Essential for counsellors to know themselves well
  - What are you fearful of?
  - How do you safeguard yourself from being overwhelmed?
  - What you do afterwards
- Don't ask leading questions or make suggestions



#### Traumatic memories

- From the outset give control and choice to the counselee
  - "how much do you want me to know now so we can begin working together?"
- Difference between saying what happened and re-telling the trauma
- Re-telling is often slower, with more detail focus on the five senses
- Metaphor of video they have the controls rewind, fast forward, slow motion, volume up or down.



#### Traumatic Memories

- Listen for the meanings that are made or the interpretations that arise
- Listen for when help came, or escape became possible or how they resisted evil.
  - Don't push this on them but keep it in your mind
- Take time don't need to be completed in one session
- Multiple memories don't necessarily need to do them all
  - Enable the counselee to choose and order



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# Q&A

Top questions

There are no unanswered questions.

Pinned

Newest

Oldest

Answered

