

Trauma Aware Accompaniment: Four Dynamics

*We MUST NOT do what mental health pros and programs can do much better.
Trauma aware accompaniment is not a replacement for mental health services.
We CAN do what mental health does not do as well: i.e., spiritual sensitivities, shared faith,
Spiritual practices, rituals, moments of grace.
Trauma aware accompaniment is way more than welcoming. And it is for adults.*

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Parish</u>
Attend To Stories	<i>Ask and listen</i> "What happened?"	<i>Refer to stories of pain, loss, grief, guilt, isolation in homilies.</i>
dss	"How did you feel?" "What's the hardest part for you?" maybe "How are you getting through it?"	(in the readings and in lived experiences) Include mention of hard times in bulletin "columns".
Honor Impact	<i>Respect the debilitation</i> Hold it carefully, reverently. Do not judge. Do not minimize Do not try to fix.	Demonstrate awareness of struggles and setbacks. Avoid easy remedies Be careful promoting forgiveness.
Point toward Renewal and Restoration	<i>This is THE work and THEIR work</i> Encourage specific social, spiritual, physical, clinical steps and practices. Not all at once. Not once and for all.	Seminars (not support groups) Meditation and spiritual practices List of local mental counselors, resources, Catholic Charities services.
Offer Solidarity	<i>Presence</i> Keep Company Offer, don't assume or impose. May not be wanted or capable	<i>Sanctuary</i> Alone and Together Find spiritual strength/comfort here NOT join us. NOT come more often.

Some free resources

Whole Hearted download at Catholic Charities USA

www.ccusa.online/wholehearted-journal

www.ccusa.online/wholehearted-guide

All versions including Spanish and Young Adult Whole Hearted are here:

<https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/our-vision-and-ministry/leadership-development-catholic-identity/psm-and-behavioral-health/>

Hope. Try her SC number 315 276 3157 (do not share). Parishes (\$15-\$20K, then \$12K) or dioceses (cost depends on size).

Trauma Aware Parishes

Psychological trauma is damage to the mind as a result of a distressing event that exceeds one's ability to cope, or integrate the emotions involved with that experience.

Trauma may result from a single distressing experience or recurring events of being overwhelmed.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, trauma consists of

- Flashbacks. Bad dreams. Frightening thoughts.
- Avoidance of places, events, objects that remind you.
- Tense. On edge. Easy startled. Angry outbursts.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Effects your brain. Hard to concentrate on tasks or remember details of the T event(s).
- Negative about yourself and the world. Distorted feelings of guilt, shame, blame.
- Loss of usual interests. Increased isolation from others.

It is not permanent if addressed.

A Trauma Aware Parish does three things:

- Demonstrates awareness of, and sensitivity to, trauma's impact on its members and their loved ones.
- Helps parishioners recognize their experience of, and response to, trauma.
- Provides restorative spiritual and professional resources in a variety of ways.

How might your parish do these three things?

Name it. ie add to mission statement: *And we are aware that at times life can be painful and overwhelming. We seek to support one other during such times.*

Homily themes occasionally refer to death, loss, betrayal, pain, grief, isolation.

Bulletin/website occasional articles, resources, local professional services and call numbers.

New prayer experiences ie Veteran's Day , Mass for Deceased Children, Lent.

Wellness seminars for all , **NOT support group** for specific trauma. Virtual and in person options. One time or short term. Not drawn out.

Offer Experiences of Meditation, Contemplation, Adoration, Lamentation, Reconciliation, Spiritual Journaling.

There are trauma related assets in our Catholic expression. Trust them.

acceptance of *Mystery*

Holy Spirit in and among us

trust in a *Higher Power*

Cross

experience of *Grace*

Paschal Mystery

practices of *Prayer*

life of *Faith*

Creator of Seasons

Lamentation

Sacramentality and Ritual

Social Teachings

Our Christian community was born out of trauma. We have always held each other in trauma.

We are not new to it. Can we again be true to it?

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