

Trauma – Prairie Group 2021

Session #1: Trauma-Informed Pastoral Care and Theology of Trauma

This first session is intended to establish guiding principles for this year's Prairie Group:

- 1) In speaking of trauma, we must remember that we can never truly “speak” of trauma. Instead, trauma is specifically a thing that always eludes our ability to express it in words. Because trauma is always embodied, it can't be understood through intellectual abstractions or through academic, spoken or written language only. It must be felt and performed.
- 2) We all are affected by trauma in some way. This may take several different forms, including intergenerational, historical/racial, personal or vicarious. For this reason, the topic may trigger physical and emotional reactions that may be unexpected, frightening, and even profound. It will be especially important to be gentle with ourselves and with others, and to make ample space for silence and for opportunities to observe our own physiological and emotional responses. Self-care and care for others' well-being must take precedence over the rigors and expectations of tradition.
- 3) A trauma-informed ministry is one that emphasizes the particular over the abstract, renounces the goal of perfection, and decenters the Word to make space for the body, the gesture, and the silence that exceeds description.

Keeping all these things in mind, we hope that this first session will examine AND EMBODY a theology of trauma and trauma-informed pastoral care both through words and through ritual and silence. We hope that this first session will be as much a framing moment of pastoral care as it is about pastoral care.

Some questions to consider: How can we protect our own emotional/spiritual integrity and well-being as we witness the trauma of others? How can we maintain an awareness of our own trauma even as we help to heal others? What is there in our Unitarian Universalist faith that we can use as a resource in the healing of ourselves and others? How is the science of trauma supporting or complicating our understanding of the importance of non-anxious presence in pastoral care?

Paper: Janne Eller-Isaacs

Chaplain: Jennifer Nordstrom

Required Reading:

Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace*

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others* (Parts Two and Four)

Fred Rogers, ["Disasters: When Children Face Tragedy"](#) syndicated article (1986).

Additional Resources (Optional):

Rita Nakashina Brock and Rebecca Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes*

Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*

Session #2: The Unspoken Voice: Trauma Embodied

Trauma has long been dealt with by western medicine as something to be talked through or medicated. Many eastern traditions, on the other hand, have recognized that trauma lives in the body and is healed through the body. Medical studies now affirm this. How does this dialectic of trauma of the mind (Freud, et al) vs trauma of the body reflect a larger conflict between mind/spirit focused philosophy (Descartes, Augustine, etc.) and body-focused alternatives? How has this dynamic played out within our own UU heritage and in our congregations today? What are the implications for our anti-oppression work and decentering whiteness?

Paper: Alan Taylor

Respondent: Kim Mason

Required Reading:

Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*

Peter Levine, *In an Unspoken Voice* (ch. 1, 3, 12, 14)

Additional Resources (Optional):

Films: *Manchester by the Sea* (2016); *Marnie* (Hitchcock, 1964); *Fearless* (Weir, 1993); *Room* (Abrahamson, 2018); *Ordinary People* (Redford, 1980)

Non-fiction books: Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*; Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*

Session #3 Moral Injury: Trauma of the Conscience

Most often, we associate moral injury with participation in war, but, more recently, the term “moral injury” has been used to describe the experience of medical professionals who can save lives but are restricted by insurance and malpractice worries, those serving in law enforcement, and even citizens of the United States who are implicated in what is happening at our southern border, in our prisons, and among our most vulnerable populations. How can we apply the concept of moral injury to our ministries, whether in a chaplain or parish setting? How are we as religious professionals prone to moral injury?

Paper: Bret Lortie / Bill Neely

Respondent: David Schwartz

Required Readings:

Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair*

Johann Choi, *Re-thinking/embodying Pastoral Theology: Ritual in the Care of Moral Injury in Veterans*
<https://etd.library.emory.edu/concern/etds/xp68kg30k?locale=zh> (ch. 2 and 5)

Film: *Eye in the Sky* (2015)

Additional Resources (Optional):

Rita Nakashina Brock and Rebecca Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes*

Wendy Dean, ["The Real Epidemic: Not 'Burnout' but Moral Injury of Doctors"](#) Common Health, Jan. 24, 2020

David Grossman and Loren Christensen, *On Combat*

Robert Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*

Konstantinos Papazoglou et al, ["Moral Injury in Police Work"](#) Leb, Sept. 10, 2019

Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America*

Aesthetics Session – Trauma-Informed Yoga

Leader: Diana Davies

Session #4: The Healing that Never Ends: Intergenerational, Racial/Ethnic and Societal Trauma

How can clergy help process intergenerational trauma? What is our role and the church's role in this? What is the connection between intergenerational/racial trauma and the social justice and pastoral work of the congregation? How do we nurture resilience in traumatized populations, including ourselves?

What is there in our Unitarian Universalist faith that we can use as a resource in the healing of ourselves and others? How can we utilize art in developing empathy and an understanding of intergenerational and racial trauma?

Paper: Sydney Morris

Respondent: Kathleen Rolenz

Required Readings:

Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother's Hands*

One of the following novels:

Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Tommy Orange, *There, There*

Additional Resources (Optional):

Wendell Berry, *The Hidden Wound*

Joy DeGruy, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*

Tirzah Firestone, *Wounds Into Wisdom: Healing Intergenerational Jewish Trauma*

Sheila Wise Rowe, *Healing Racial Trauma*

Film: *Shoah* (Lanzmann)

Graphic Novel: Art Spiegelman, *Maus*

Podcast: *On Being with Krista Tippett* -- [Rachel Yehuda: How Trauma and Resilience Cross Generations](#)

Television Series: *Watchmen* (HBO)

Session #5: Cultivating Healing Grace in Our Ministries: Trauma-Informed Liturgy

Classic Freudian psychoanalysis puts the word/language at the center of healing (the “talking cure”); this kind of thinking is in keeping with our Congregational (Puritan) heritage, which puts the word at the center of worship (the importance of the sermon) as opposed to ritual. How might an awareness of trauma influence the way we incorporate ritual and other embodied experiences into worship? What is there in our Unitarian Universalist faith that we can use as a resource in the healing of ourselves and others? This paper shall include an embodiment of a liturgy of trauma.

Paper: Wayne Arnason

Respondent:

Required Readings:

Thandeka, [Love Beyond Belief \(?\)](#)

Shelly Rambo, How Christian Theology and Practice are Being Informed by Trauma Studies
<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/critical-essay/how-christian-theology-and-practice-are-being-shaped-trauma-studies>

Leslie Takahashi 2019 Berry St Essay: [Truth Trauma and Transformation](#)

Additional Resources (Optional):

S. L. Bloom, [Guidelines for surfing the edge of chaos while riding dangerously close to the black hole of trauma](#). Psychotherapy and Politics International. e1409 (2017)

Philip Browning Helsel, "[Witnessing the Body's Response to Trauma: Resistance, Ritual, and Nervous System Activation](#)," Pastoral Psychology. October 2014

Joan Huyser-Honig, "[Trauma-Informed Congregations](#)"

ICTG, [Seven Key Traits of a Trauma-Informed Congregation](#)

Joelle Kidd, "[A Gentle Invitation to Worship](#)"

Karen Krogh, [Love Is the Spirit](#)

Videos:

[Worship in Times of Crisis and Trauma](#)

[Trauma, Culture Care and Public Worship](#)

Other Texts Considered:

Melanie Brooks, *Writing Hard Stories: Celebrated Memoirists Who Shaped Art from Trauma*

Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*

Henry Giroux. *The Violence of Organized Forgetting*

Jules Harrell, *Manichean Psychology*

Carol Howard Merritt, *Healing Spiritual Wounds*

Alice Miller, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*

Fiction and Memoirs: Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*; Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*;

Bernice McFadden, *Praise Song for the Butterflies*; Toni Morrison, *God Bless the Child*

Films: *Monster* (Jenkins, 2003); *The Machinist* (Anderson, 2004); *How to Let Go of the World* (Fox); *The Fisher King* (Gilliam, 1991)