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Understanding God's heart for the **traumatized**

BY WENDY KITTLITZ

Since the concept of trauma and the specific word “trauma” is not to be found in the Bible, many people may conclude that God does not address – or even care – about those who experience trauma. This could not be further from the truth. In fact there are countless stories of trauma contained in the pages of Scripture. The story of God's people is permeated with examples of traumatic experiences, both on the community level (murder, flood, famine, slavery, homelessness, exile, war, etc.) as well as the individual level (abuse, rape, adultery, losses of many kinds, persecution, betrayal, etc.).

In his book *Holy Resilience*, David Carr observes, “The Jewish and Christian scriptures arose out of and speak to catastrophic human trauma.”

So while the concept may not be defined or specifically addressed in the Bible, throughout are stories of how God has walked with his people through their experiences of trauma. And from story to story, person to person, heartache to heartache, we see a single thread running through it all. At its heart, we see the story of redemption.

THE FALL

As always, it begins in the Garden of Eden with the Fall. Creation was not designed to harbour trauma or even experience it. It was only when sin entered the world that trauma came with it. When we observe or experience trauma, an appropriate response is grief, sadness and regret that any of this had to occur because this is not how we were designed to live. God grieves over the brokenness in the world he made. The shortest verse in the Bible reads: “Jesus wept” (John 11:35).

God's will for people is to “execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart” (Zechariah 7:8-10).

However, even though sin, and with it trauma, has entered the world, God has not abandoned us to it. Instead he “comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). He

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comforts those who mourn (Matthew 5:4). He “heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds” (Psalm 147:3). And finally he “will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

GOD’S PLAN

God’s ultimate plan was to become flesh himself and join us in the experience. Jesus entered into the human state and faced tremendous trauma of his own. The prophet Isaiah spoke of the coming Messiah: “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). Jesus was betrayed by his closest friends, falsely accused, mocked, beaten, condemned to the death of a criminal, crucified, and even felt abandoned by his Heavenly Father (Matthew 27:46).

We serve a unique God who understands on a profound level the trauma that we experience in this life. When we invite him into our painful memories and experiences, he will join us there. He will weep with us. And he will help us find ways to rewrite our stories with more redemptive outcomes, just as Joseph recognized: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good” (Genesis 50:20).

SHARING GOD’S HEART

As we respond to people who have experienced trauma, we must remember a few important things.

First, trauma is a result of sin. A traumatized person has been sinned against and we must grieve that and never minimize it. Acknowledge it, take it seriously, validate their painful feelings about it. God does all of that and we should too.

Second, offer comfort and understanding. Every victim of trauma needs to encounter compassion, from themselves and from others. Healing takes time but it is a worthwhile pursuit. God wants to restore what has been taken from us. “You have allowed me to suffer much hardship, but you will restore me from the depths of the earth. You will restore me to even greater honour and comfort me once again” (Psalm 71:20-21).

Finally, encourage them to seek God, who understands the pain and offers to come alongside them to write a new story of healing.

Wendy Kittlitz is the vice-president of counselling and care ministries for Focus on the Family Canada.

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Defining and understanding trauma

BY MARK A. MAYFIELD



As a counsellor, I had worked with Brooke* for several months to unpack the tangled mess of her failed marriage.

When Brooke reflected on her relationship during our sessions together, she often became frustrated with herself for not recognizing the signs of an unhealthy marriage sooner. “He never hit me or abused me,” she said. “It wasn’t like the people I hear about on the news.” Yet as we talked about her experience, Brooke disclosed that he was harsh and condescending with his words and manipulative and abusive to her emotionally.

A few months into her counselling, Brooke revealed that she had a difficult time falling asleep at night. When she did sleep, she frequently woke up in a cold sweat but could never remember what she had dreamed about. After researching her symptoms, I realized Brooke was experiencing the body’s natural stress response to trauma – symptoms similar to those of someone dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder. When I explained this to Brooke, she balked at the idea initially. “I haven’t been assaulted or

abused physically,” she said. “I grew up in a wonderful home. How could I have trauma?”

As I explained how our bodies have an innate ability to protect themselves from adverse stimuli and that a trauma response is this protective instinct in action, she began to understand how her experience with her ex-husband was traumatic in nature. She had experienced small *t* trauma.

Not all traumatic experiences are equal, but the way the body reacts to trauma is similar in every situation. Let’s break down the differences between trauma with a capital *T* and trauma with a small *t*.

BIG T TRAUMA

Major-event trauma includes highly distressing experiences such as sexual assault, rape, combat, a serious car accident, etc. This type of trauma is directly linked to a perceived life-and-death situation. When an individual experiences an event like this, his or her entire being shifts into survival mode. A heightened sense of awareness is developed where no person, place, situation or event ever feels completely safe.



SMALL *t* TRAUMA

Minor-event trauma includes experiences such as bullying, non-life-threatening injuries, emotional manipulation and abuse, etc. The trauma in these experiences can be subtle. For instance, Brooke's husband had humiliated and made fun of her in front of friends and family. He made her feel incompetent and stupid if the house was not cleaned and dinner was not on the table when he got home from work. He yelled and screamed at her if things were not perfect and then drew her close afterward in an attempt to reconnect. This type of psychological and emotional abuse combined with manipulation manifested itself as trauma in Brooke. Her life was not in immediate danger like those who experience a major-event trauma, but her survival instincts responded similarly. Even though the external factors of big *T* and small *t* trauma are different, the internal results can be the same.

Essentially, when a traumatic event occurs, either big *T* or small *t*, the mind abandons the normal method for processing sensory experiences and instead goes into a protective mode. What should have been processed as a memory becomes a fragmented struggle for survival. In other words, the entire traumatic event is broken up into its sensory pieces, and the natural fight-or-flight response is activated. If the trauma is not processed effectively through counselling, the body will hold on to the idea that it is not safe and will seek to protect itself at all costs. This is where triggers come from.

TRIGGERS

A trigger response occurs when the body reacts to a sensory signal in the individual's

environment such as a smell, taste, sound or tone of voice. For example, if you've ever been in a car accident, you will not forget the smell from the release of the airbag. Months after the event, you might catch the scent of something similar, and that signal will immediately send you back to the traumatic memory of the car accident. The body cannot distinguish between the current sensory experience and the original trauma. If left untended, post-traumatic stress disorder can develop as the body strives for survival.

Brooke's struggle with sleep, her subconscious defensive postures and her nightmares were signs that her body was still operating in the fight-or-flight mode. Digging a bit deeper into her memories, Brooke shared that most of the conflict and emotional abuse from her husband happened in the evening right before she went to bed. We were able to effectively pinpoint her triggers and through Eye-Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, Brooke was released from her trauma response and she regained her life.

To be clear, not every difficult situation in life can be traced back to a traumatic experience. We are resilient human beings created in the image of God. We all have a story, and we all make choices about how we interact or react within our story. Unfortunately, sometimes our stories include traumatic events that lead to physical responses, which affect our lives greatly.

**Name changed to protect privacy*

Dr. Mark A. Mayfield has been a counsellor to at-risk teens, families and couples for more than 10 years. He is the founder and CEO of Mayfield Counseling Centers in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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When your spouse struggles with **past trauma**

BY MARK A. MAYFIELD

Karen and Frank walked into my office and plopped onto my couch. Karen curled up in one corner with a pillow hugged close to her chest. Frank sat on the opposite end of the couch, staring out the window with his arms crossed and his brow furrowed.

I had been seeing Karen and Frank for marriage counselling for several months. They had been married five years, and those years were difficult and strained because Karen had experienced significant relational trauma prior to marrying Frank. Karen's trauma involved sexual assault from a dating relationship in college coupled with a verbally abusive father.

I settled back in my chair. "By how you're both seated on the couch, it appears you're not doing so well," I said. "Tell me how the week has been."

Neither Frank nor Karen responded immediately. After several minutes of silence, Frank said, "I can't seem to do anything right. Karen is either silent or emotional. I often feel like I'm tiptoeing around the house."

As Frank talked, I noticed that Karen hugged the pillow closer to her chest and began to weep.

This type of interaction is all too familiar when a spouse brings a history of unresolved trauma into the marriage. There is a struggle to understand the spouse's hidden pain, triggers and sometimes seemingly irrational responses. However, love and commitment to a spouse can create a desire to stick with and help him or her through those dark days.

Here is some information for understanding and helping your spouse as he or she deals with past trauma:



CONDITIONED RESPONSE

God designed our bodies to overcome, to thrive and to protect. When an individual is faced with danger (emotional, mental, physical or spiritual), the autonomic nervous system, paired with the brain's limbic system and cerebellum, will respond with fight, flight or freeze.

The brain fragments sensory information created by danger and stores it in subconscious areas. When a person experiences similar danger-based circumstances, he or she will react the same way, often with adverse effects.

For example, let's say you are going for a run. As you are running, a vicious dog rushes out of a nearby house and starts to chase you. Your subconscious response then takes over. Blood rushes to your major organs and your limbs to provide a swift escape. Once free from impending danger, your body will come back to equilibrium. But several days later, when you walk past a pet store, one of the dogs starts to bark, and you immediately feel the need to run. This is called a "trauma response trigger." Your conscious mind did not see a threat, but your body remembered the trauma from the day before, and your subconscious mind decided to kick in to protect you from the threat.

At varying levels, this is what happens in a marriage when one spouse has a history of unresolved trauma. A word or action from an unknowing spouse can trigger the subconscious of the trauma-sensitive spouse and send him or her into a fight, flight or freeze reaction.

RELATIONAL ATTACHMENT

We are designed for connection and created for relationship. However, when we experience trauma, the innate need for connection is disrupted. As a result, maintaining a relationship with someone else becomes difficult. Why? Because below the surface, the body is scanning for danger. Emotional distance becomes the norm. Mutual empathy can be a difficult task. And trusting other people – even a spouse – becomes extremely hard. Remember

that these reactions or triggers have little or nothing to do with the spouse but are a reaction to internal stimuli.

Here are practical things you can do to help navigate your marriage through this difficult situation:

Listen. This step may seem too simple; however, it's extremely important: Take time to listen to your spouse. Don't just listen to the words, also "listen" to his or her body language, facial expressions and heart. Ask clarifying questions to explore deeper meaning. Listening in this way will help your spouse feel seen and heard.

Empathize. Empathy is working to put yourself in the other person's shoes without assuming responsibility for his or her emotions. What might it feel like to experience the emotions, thoughts and physiological expressions that your spouse is feeling? By empathizing with your husband or wife, not only are you attempting to work on comprehending his or her struggles and feelings, you're also jumping into the trenches with him or her.

Seek to understand. Seeking to understand allows someone to ask questions, be inquisitive and explore the nuanced perspective of another individual. Understanding will provide insight into how your spouse's past trauma is affecting his or her current functioning. In effect, you will begin to understand his or her triggers and fears.

Find outside support. Someone who has a history of trauma should not attempt to heal without help. Nor should a husband or wife try to fix what he or she sees as the problem. Seeking quality, qualified counselling is of the utmost importance for the spouse who is struggling and for the couple.

Dr. Mark A. Mayfield has been a counsellor to at-risk teens, families and couples for more than 10 years. He is the founder and CEO of Mayfield Counseling Centers in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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Psychological trauma:

How it impacts children and what you can do

BY DR. KARL BENZIO



The mind that experiences a trauma determines whether it will be traumatic or not. A young, immature mind is more likely to be traumatized than an older person. This is due to limited understanding and experience, and inadequate skills for processing a difficult event.

Think back to events you may have gone through as a child, such as a friend not inviting you to their birthday party, getting picked last in dodgeball, you or a best friend moving away, your favourite pet dying, rejection by a crush, or any other rejection.

If these types of situations are not properly processed with a godly perspective and with nurturing assistance, psychological trauma usually occurs. While these traumatic experiences might not be as intense as with more severe trauma such as abuse or sexual assault, these micro-traumas can have serious spiritual, psychological and physiological consequences. These make it more difficult to process the next hurt properly, increasing the probability that the hurt crosses the threshold from healthy learning experience into a damaging traumatic experience.

HOW PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA AFFECTS THE BRAIN

Psychological trauma is damaging to all three spheres (spiritual, psychological and physiological) in many ways. Recent research clearly shows three specific areas of our brain's emotional machinery (called the *limbic* system) that are prime targets. Trauma impacts these areas plus the decision-making circuits known as the *prefrontal cortex*.

The amygdala: This emotional centre becomes overactive when injured. So our emotions, which God uses as a warning system, become more sensitive. Our brain is on the lookout because we don't want to get hurt again.

The hippocampus: Our memory centre shrinks and becomes less active when we are emotionally injured. When a distressing situation occurs, our injured hippocampus sometimes can't distinguish past memories with their attached emotions from present perceptions.

The ventromedial prefrontal cortex: Our emotional thermostat is underactive when injured.



The emotional warning signs we experience can be exaggerated and our trauma-damaged minds produce impulsive, knee-jerk, survival-oriented, emotionally-driven dysfunctional decisions.

6 THINGS TO CONSIDER IF YOUR CHILD HAS EXPERIENCED PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

Here are some additional things to consider if your child has experienced emotional or psychological trauma:

1. Negative feelings

Uncomfortable feelings are okay, so allow your kids (and yourself) to feel them and talk about them. Jesus experienced many “negative” feelings – anger, sadness, grief and rejection – yet he never sinned. Really, these emotions are neither sins nor are they negative, but are a valuable warning system. But they can be very uncomfortable. They are like the check engine light on your car’s dashboard or a smoke detector. Nobody likes it when a warning light starts flashing or when a smoke detector screeches, but they can save you lots of money and maybe even save your life.

2. Communicate

Keep lines of communication open. So many things happen in your kids’ lives every day. If you aren’t spending lots of time together with positive communication and feedback, they won’t tell you anything about what’s going on. They will interpret events on their own, allowing big cracks for Satan to get in and plant lots of lies. On the flip side, when you communicate well you can share your perspective on situations (in age-appropriate ways). You can also be a role model for how to share thoughts and feelings. Kids rarely see parents do this, yet we expect them to know how to do it as if by magic.

3. Process traumatic events promptly

Process adverse events ASAP. Helping your child understand exactly what happened – the truth of the situation – minimizes the psychological, spiritual and brain damage we discussed above. In fact, it helps your child grow confidence in himself, you

and God. And again, it doesn’t allow Satan the fertile ground to plant the lies he so desperately wants to.

4. Discuss events

Be the translator of life for your children. When something bad happens, ask them how they saw it, what they thought and felt, and what thoughts about themselves, others or God came out of that situation. You can talk about what actions they took, what options they had, and why they chose one option and rejected the others. You can learn what is going on in their mind and correct any misinterpretation they took from the event. This also gives you a great window to look at their inner workings and maturity level.

5. Illogical actions

If your child does something illogical, remember that it seems logical to them based on the information (or misinformation) they have stored in their memory banks (the hippocampus). You need to be a detective. Ask them questions to figure out what misinformation (lies) bubbled up from inside to make the illogical option (to God and you) seem very logical to them. Use the questions from tip number 4 above.

6. Make a comeback

Finally, don’t allow your kids to set a premature finish line. Your child’s life may not be going the way they want it to. They may have even gone through something horrible and tragic and experienced psychological trauma from it. Your child may be tempted to think that life, like some lopsided game, has been decided because of these traumatic events. They may believe that the terrible circumstances they encountered define their life. Let them know God is the author of great comebacks. He has an awesome one specially designed for them.

Dr. Karl Benzio, MD, is a board-certified psychiatrist and medical director of Honey Lake Clinic in Greenville, Florida. He is also the founder of Lighthouse Network. Dr. Benzio is a member of the Physicians Resource Council of Focus on the Family.

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Helping teens caught in **mass violence**

BY MARIE ISOM

On July 20, 2012, a gunman entered the Aurora Century 16 Movie Plaza and killed 12 people, wounding 70 others. My daughters, Michelle and Elizabeth, and I survived with no physical injuries, but a young woman sitting next to Michelle died, as did my daughters' childhood.

The sense of safety that loving families provide to kids can be robbed by man-made tragedies, such as shootings, bombings, abuse or molestation. My husband, Scott, and I didn't want the experience in the theatre to permanently cripple our girls' sense of security. Here are a few ways that helped us move closer to God and to each other – and away from the fear that constantly threatened our family.

INDIVIDUALLY TOGETHER

*“If one member suffers, all suffer together.”
(1 Corinthians 12:26)*

That first night, we huddled together in the living room. We didn't sleep; we talked, we listened to the news, we held each other. Over the following days, we realized Michelle and Elizabeth had completely different ways of processing the

tragedy. We gave them the space they needed. Each had to heal independently, even as we needed to heal together.

Scott and I vowed to be available, day or night, for our girls, regardless of the inconvenience. Michelle recalls that her dad was a really strong presence – that she knew he would be there to bring home Chipotle, fix something or be a listening ear if she was stressing out. Elizabeth agrees and recently said that one thing we did that really helped was being told, again and again, “I love you, I believe in you, and you are going to make it through this.”

RELYING ON GOOD COUNSEL

*“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”
(Proverbs 11:14)*

Scott and I knew that we needed the wisdom of a professional counsellor. Hannah Morrell, a pastoral, Christian counsellor, helped the girls better understand how we live in an unsafe world, but God has said that he will never leave us or forsake us. She reinforced that nothing was wrong



with any of the emotions they experienced – sadness, fear, depression.

Hannah explained that emotions are given by God as good or bad indicators, with some emotions being a bit like a fever that tells the body something is wrong. The key is to work through the emotions rather than ignore them. They had to work through their immediate emotions – including their anger toward the shooter, and eventually forgiveness – to move forward in the healing process.



ability to live life. It was a decision that we had to make every time the front door closed behind us. Eventually the hyper vigilance diminished, but the timing was different for each of us.

The important thing, we felt, was moving forward, whatever that meant to each one of us. We choose to rest in God’s peace each time fear rears its ugly head. Over time, my girls and I have learned that we may have moments of fear, but it is our choice whether that fear controls our day-to-day activities.

WORKING THROUGH SURVIVOR’S GUILT

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:15-16)

Trauma experts say it is common to experience guilt or shame for surviving a tragedy. Michelle recalled that the constant verbal reminders from her dad and I that she was loved and had a place on earth with people who cared and needed her helped her move out of that dark place. She said, “I finally accepted that I could continue to question *why*, or I could recognize I have the potential to make a positive impact with my life, and move forward.”

THE WORLD ISN’T SAFE; EVIL IS REAL

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

We each had to wrestle through a new normal. Something as simple as a balloon popping unexpectedly or an acrid smell of smoke could set my heart pounding; I would scan the room for an exit. But we forced ourselves to continue living life. One man would not rob us of our

THE EXPERIENCES THAT FORM US

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:21)

All of our kids’ experiences – the good, the bad, the tragic – form them into the adults they will become. Somehow, as time passes, God miraculously works these experiences out for the good of those who love him (Romans 8:28), and my children are no exception.

God is creating in us a hope to help others. Michelle hopes to become a victim’s advocate and help others who have been through traumatic events. I suspect Elizabeth, with her artistic flair and creativity, might one day use those skills to do the same.

My children’s lives are forever changed, but even as they make their choices in the day to day, God is making something of value out of what we experienced. Neither my children nor I have been overcome by the evil we lived through. And my hope is that God, in time, will continue to use us to overcome evil with good.

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Five characteristics in becoming a trauma-competent **healing parent**

BY JAYNE SCHOOLER

Some years ago, at a retreat for adoptive moms, I asked the question: “What do you wish you would have known before you fostered or adopted?” I wasn’t surprised by the answers.

- *I wish I had known that I could get so angry at a child I really loved.*
- *That this would expose my wounds and hurts.*
- *The impact this would have on my marriage and biological children.*

Twenty-six women had an opportunity to share what they felt inside and had never verbalized to anyone. I asked three more questions.

“Have you ever had regrets about fostering or adopting?” All 26 women raised their hands.

“How many of you would do this all over again?” All 26 women raised their hands again.

“Why would you do this all over again?” I asked and heard answers like:

- *I have learned so much about myself and am a better parent.*
- *This whole experience transformed my family. We all are more compassionate.*
- *I know I can make it through hard times, as God helps me.*



What were some of those things that these parents learned along the way that so transformed them and their families? They learned what it took to be a trauma-competent healing parent. What does that look like for foster and adoptive parents?

1. A trauma-competent healing parent is one who understands the life-altering impact of trauma.

Early traumatic events change children at the core of their being. A healing parent understands that. As Dr. Bruce Perry states, “Children are wounded in the context of interpersonal relationships. Children can only be healed in the context of healthy, nurturing interpersonal relationships.” Wounded children can move from brokenness to wholeness with parents who will journey with them.

2. A trauma-competent healing parent is one who can view life through the lens of a wounded child.

Children experiencing early traumatic events look through a tarnished lens at the world around them,

the adults in their lives, and even themselves. They look through a broken lens, shattered by the abuse and neglect that has stolen their innocence. Wounded children see the world as unsafe. They don't see adults as safe people but as harmful people. They see themselves as damaged and unlovable. Life experiences have created those broken lenses. Although it would be painful for a parent to put on those broken lenses and see life as their child does, to be a healing parent, one needs to do just that and see life as their child sees it.

3. A trauma-competent healing parent is willing to set aside preconceived ideas of how to give care/parent.

They are eager to say, "I have parented before and been successful. But I know I am going to need to learn new ways of thinking, new methods and new skills. I know that I will need to learn how to nurture this wounded child and provide enriching life experiences. I know I need a teachable mind and a heart willing to learn new ways of relating to a child."

4. A trauma-competent healing parent is one who knows he/she must learn to manage his/her emotional responses.

Parents loving and living with a child with a traumatic past know there will be challenges to them personally. They need to prepare for those challenges by learning to manage their emotional responses to a child's behaviour. When a parent enters his child's world, he may bring his unresolved issues and pain from his past. Dr. Daniel Siegel, a renowned author, says that it is important that a parent develops a coherent narrative of his/her life story. That involves being willing to look at one's history and do the healing work required to grow into an emotionally healthy parent.

A second part of learning to manage emotional responses is learning about mindfulness, being aware of oneself, and how, as a parent, one responds to a child. Third, which is a challenge, is to learn the *art of not taking things personally*. When a child screams, "You are not my real parent," that feels so hurtful. When a parent realizes that cry comes from a broken place, he learns to respond differently with compassion, nurture, and connection.

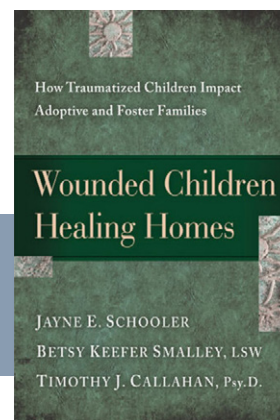
5. A trauma-competent healing parent is one who asks for help.

Asking for help sounds like a simple thought, but beneath it are many challenges for foster/adoptive parents. Being willing to ask for help means a caregiver faces the reality that he/she doesn't have all the answers. They must be open and vulnerable to others.

I could tell by the look on the faces of those 26 women and the laughter and freedom in the room, that they left the retreat differently than when they had come. They openly faced their own hurt, frustrations, and challenges and learned new ways to grow into a healthier trauma-competent parent for their wounded child.

Jayne Schooler and her husband, David, are adoptive parents and serve full-time with Trauma Free World, a division of Back2Back ministries. She is the author/co-author of eight books in the foster and adoptive field and is one of the primary authors of the Trauma Free World's Trauma Competent Care giving series and trains internationally.

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If you or someone you know is a foster/adoptive parent of a traumatized child, we recommend Jayne Schooler's book, co-written with Betsy Keefer Smalley and Timothy J. Callahan, *Wounded Children, Healing Homes*. You can get your copy at Shop.FocusOnTheFamily.ca/JayneSchooler.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Books for **adults**

Unshackled: Finding God's Freedom from Trauma

BY DR. ELIZABETH STEVENS (F01901B)

When a Woman You Love Was Abused

BY DAWN SCOTT JONES (C01936B)

When A Man You Love Was Abused

BY CECIL MURPHEY (C01365B)

The Wounded Heart

BY DR. DAN B. ALLENDER (BP834)

Men Too: Unspoken Truths About Male Sexual Abuse

BY DR. KELLI PALFY (C04584B)

Wounded Children, Healing Homes

BY JAYNE SCHOOLER, BETSY KEEFER SMALLEY

AND TIMOTHY J. CALLAHAN (C02297B)

Find these titles and more at [Shop.FocusOnTheFamily.ca](https://shop.focusonthefamily.ca)

Books for **kids**

How to Help Your Hurting Friend

BY SUSIE SHELLENBERGER (C02665B)

Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen?

BY CHRIS MORPHEW (C04479B)

Find these titles and more at [Shop.FocusOnTheFamily.ca](https://shop.focusonthefamily.ca)

Focus on the Family Broadcast

“Redeeming a Marriage and Childhood Wounds”

WITH RUSS AND TORI TAFF

“Healing Childhood Traumas (Parts 1 and 2)”

WITH STEPHANIE FAST

“What to Do When Tragedy Impacts Your Family (Parts 1 and 2)”

WITH DR. H. NORMAN WRIGHT

“Finding Hope Again (Parts 1 and 2)”

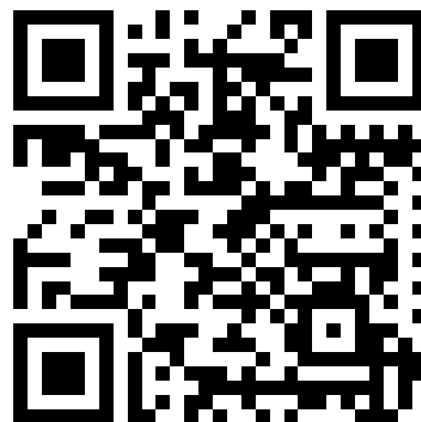
WITH KAY WARREN

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WITH TARA LALONDE, PhD



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WE'RE HERE TO HELP

We know that life can be overwhelming, and it can sometimes be difficult to know how to navigate the trials we face – whether it's trauma, addiction, depression and anxiety, broken relationships, or prodigal children. Whatever you may be dealing with right now, we want you to know you're not alone.

We are here for you with prayer and counselling support.

Every weekday our team prays together for the needs of families all across the country. You can email prayer@fotf.ca or submit your prayer request online at FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Prayer. Or if you'd like to receive prayer over the phone, call our team at **1.800.661.9800**.

We also offer a free, one-time phone consultation with one of our in-house counsellors. Our counselling staff are all committed Christians and registered (Masters level) counsellors with ministry experience. We can also refer you to a specialized counsellor in your area (fees will apply). Call us at **1.800.661.9800** or visit FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Counselling to learn more.

***“Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.
He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
and burst their bonds apart.
Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!”***

PSALM 107:13-15



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19946 80A AVENUE, LANGLEY, BC V2Y 0J8 | 1 800 661 9800 | [FOCUSONTHEFAMILY.CA](https://FocusOnTheFamily.ca)