



# TRAUMA-INFORMED

## **MHC** Supporting Survivors with Compassion and Confidence

An interactive, scenario-based workshop  
presented by Madeline Stiers, Ph.D., LCSW-S,  
Chief Clinical Officer, Hope and Healing  
Center & Institute.



## GATEWAY TO HOPE UNIVERSITY

Gateway to Hope University is the training program of the **Hope and Healing Center & Institute**. We offer evidence-based, mental health training and ongoing support to faith communities, schools, and workplaces. Our mental health coach training program enhances your comprehension of mental health and empowers you to effectively implement it in practice. These courses will equip you with the tools to compassionately support those in distress and help build a community-based response to the mental health crisis.

### GATEWAY TO HOPE UNIVERSITY

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[www.gatewaytohopeuniversity.org](http://www.gatewaytohopeuniversity.org)

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The Hope and Healing Center & Institution is an expression of St. Martin Episcopal Church's vision to minister to those broken by life circumstances and a direct response to the compassionate Great Commission of Jesus. An independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization housed on the St. Martin's campus, the HHCI is a comprehensive mental health resource serving the Houston community and beyond.

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## Stress Spectrum

Stress can be viewed on a hypothetical spectrum, with tedious, everyday life events (e.g., traffic, work tasks, childrearing) on one end and traumatic events on the other.

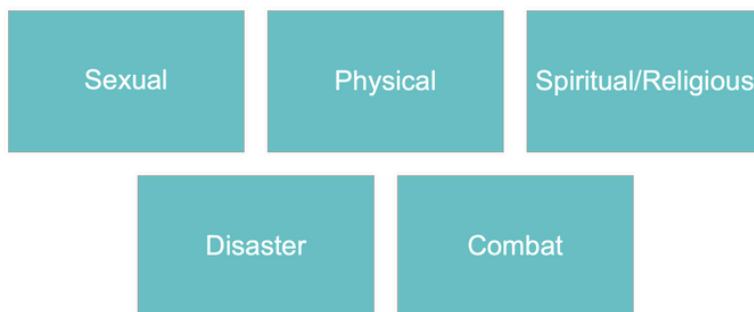


## What is Trauma?

- A traumatic event is a life experience that involves actual or perceived threats to the safety and well-being of an individual or to someone close to the individual.
- Traumatic life experiences overwhelm a person's coping strategies, causing extreme emotional, psychological and physiological distress.
- Exposure to traumatic life experiences can result in overwhelming feelings of terror, depression, extreme anger and helplessness.



## Types of Trauma



## What is Trauma?

Across the globe, exposure to at least one traumatic event is the norm.

60-70% of people experience one exposure

Women are more likely to develop PTSD

89.7% had been exposed to at least one event

- No right way to respond to traumatic events
- Overwhelm a person's coping strategies, causing extreme emotional, psychological and physiological distress
- Results in overwhelming feelings of terror, depression, extreme anger and helplessness



## Long-Term Effects of Trauma



Physical



Social



Spiritual



Mental



## Symptoms of PTSD

### Intrusive Symptoms

- Flashbacks (reliving the trauma over and over)
- Bad dreams
- Frightening and intrusive memories

### Avoidance Symptoms

- Staying away from reminders of the experience
- Trauma-related thoughts and feelings

### Negative Alterations in Cognitions & Mood

- Feeling emotionally numb
- Feeling strong guilt, depression, or worry
- Losing interest in enjoyable activities
- Having trouble remembering the traumatic event

### Hyper-Arousal Symptoms

- Jumpy and easily startled
- Feeling tense or "on edge"
- Difficulty sleeping
- Irritability or outbursts of anger



## Active Listening



Listening without the intent to respond



Delay your thoughts until after the person has finished talking



Fully hear what they said



Address what was said without jumping to conclusions that might not be accurate



## Approaching with Compassion



BE A FRIENDLY PRESENCE IN TIMES OF DISTRESS. UNDERSTANDING A PERSON'S WORTH IN THE MIST OF THEIR CHALLENGES OR COMPLAINTS



BE PRESENT. NOT DISTRACTED



OFFER IDEAS FOR SUPPORT, RATHER THAN TELLING



BE COMPASSIONATE TO KEEP THE DOOR OF COMMUNICATION OPEN FOR FUTURE HELP AND GUIDANCE



HOW DO WE DO THAT?



## Validation



- It is recognizing and accepting the person's experience as true to them
- Creates space for redirection or suggestions
- Invalidation leads to:
  - feelings of rejection or judgment
  - shutting down
  - denying help or guidance
- Improves communication, relationships, and feelings of support, and can allow them to understand their worth in God



## Posing Questions

- Elicits more information and helps reflect on the situation
- Asking about alternative viewpoints can help people see other people's perspective
  - Is it possible that your family member did not understand what you were trying to share with them?
- Open-ended vs. closed-ended questions
  - How has this affected you? (open-ended) vs. has this affected you negatively? (closed-ended)
- Ask instead of giving direction
  - Would finding a therapist be helpful as you work through this difficult situation?
- Ask for clarification if you need it



## Blaming

- Does not resolve the situation
- Find understanding in the entirety of the situation and work towards effective solutions or next steps
- Inhibits ability to be honest
- Having a mental health difficulty is not the fault of the person, though they are the ones who have to find support and treatment.
- It may take people some time to feel comfortable taking the next steps in treatment. Forcing them or making them feel bad will not be effective in helping.



## Paraphrasing

Reflecting back words or sentences to the person

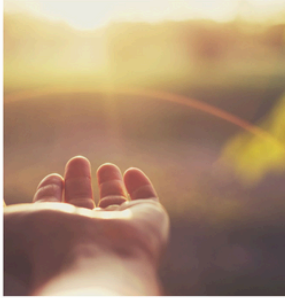
You can use exact statements or summarize what you have heard using different words/statements

Try not to overuse, only with important

Helps them to feel heard and understood



## Religious Support



- **Unhelpful:**
  - Everything happens for a reason
  - Telling them they are bad for having questioning thoughts about God
  - Telling them that God is punishing them, even if they feel that to be true.
- **Rather:**
  - Ask about their beliefs
  - What has changed? How do they feel God is present in their lives?
  - Reading scripture may offer support and love as they navigate these challenging times.



## Case Scenario

### Flashback

#### 01

##### Grounding and Soothing Strategies (RESTORE)

Practical tools to help them reconnect to the present moment:

- Breathing techniques
- Physical grounding
- 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Technique
- Short prayer or scripture of comfort

#### 02

##### Provide Choice

- Briefly acknowledge what happened
- Maintain a supportive environment, but then redirect back to the workbook
- Continue with a co-facilitator if needed

#### 03

##### Aftercare and Follow-up (REFER)

- Check in privately after group
- Additional support can help
- Provide resource lists (faith-based counselors, crisis lines, community mental health services).
- Encourage ongoing participation at their pace.



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## Using reImagine with Trauma

Using the 4 Rs:

- Recognize the trauma
- Refer if needed
- Relate to them through community, God
- Restore through the use of the workbook



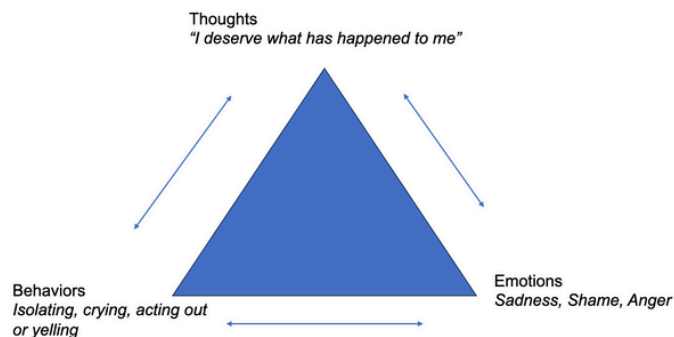
## Terms

- Feelings = emotions
- Thoughts = cognitions
- Behaviors = actions

Important to know when you begin the Renewing Your Mind lesson and, in general, most of the Mental Wellness section



## Cognitive Triangle



## Trauma & Thinking Traps

- Review thinking traps list in reImagine
- Unhealthy thinking related to the event
  - Not invalidation
- But some common ones are:
  - Catastrophizing
  - Labeling or name calling
  - Emotional reasoning



## Addressing Thinking Traps

- Avoid saying "you shouldn't think that way"
  - Although might be true, this just invalidates how the person is feeling and may cause them to shut down
- Instead say,
  - "That must be a painful/difficult thought to have after your experience. Can you tell me more about what you're thinking?"
- Validate
- Ask how they see that playing out in their life
- How does it affect their behaviors (cognitive triangle)



## Renewing Your Thoughts Lesson



THE RENEWING YOUR THOUGHTS WORKSHEET OUTLINES THE PROCESS THAT YOU WILL FOLLOW EACH TIME THERE ARE NEGATIVE OR UPSETTING THOUGHTS.



TAKE YOUR TIME AND DO NOT RUSH THIS PROCESS.



IT WILL TAKE TIME TO LEARN EACH OF THESE STEPS.



## Renewing Your Thoughts Lesson

### 1. Recognize

Try to notice when you feel upset or when unhealthy thinking is happening. Write down a brief description of the situation or problem that is bothering you.

What happened?  
What was the trigger or event?



## Renewing Your Thoughts Lesson

### 2. Review

List out the thoughts (e.g., "I'm no good. No one really likes me."), the feelings that those thoughts cause (e.g., sadness, anger), the physical symptoms (e.g., rapid heartbeat, sweating), and behaviors (e.g., crying, yelling, isolating) that you have because of the situation or problem.

What am I thinking?  
What am I feeling?  
How is my body responding?  
What behaviors am I doing or what urges do I have to do?



## Renewing Your Thoughts Lesson

### 3. Realize

While looking over the *Common Thinking Traps* list, identify which traps your thoughts are falling into in relation to the situation or problem.

What thinking traps could this be falling in to?

**Remember > thinking traps are extreme thoughts that are rooted in false truths.**

Having a negative thought when something negative happens is **not a thinking trap**.  
For example: Flat tire



## Renewing Your Thoughts Lesson

### 4. Renew

When you recognize the unhealthy thinking traps you are falling into, challenge them in the following way:

- a. **Examine the evidence** – Check the facts! What solid evidence do you have that your thoughts are true? Try to find solid, hard evidence against your thoughts. Remember, how you feel and what you think about the situation are not facts.
- b. **Double standard** – If your thoughts are self-critical, ask yourself, "Would I say this to a close friend who has a similar problem? Am I being harder on myself than I am on other people?"
- c. **What does God say?** – What do you think God would say to you in relation to your thoughts? Are your thoughts true from His perspective?
- d. **What would you say to a child?** – If a child came to you with the same situation or problem, what would you say to them about the way they are thinking/feeling? How would you comfort and encourage them?



## Renewing Your Thoughts Lesson

### 5. Rethink

Now that you have identified your thinking traps and challenged your initial wrong thoughts, write down your new desired healthy thoughts, feelings, physical symptoms, and behaviors related to the situation or problem. You may not feel these thoughts are true initially, but the more you replay them in your mind, the truer they become.

Tip: Picture an old cassette tape. Imagine you are taping over your old, unhealthy tapes (thoughts), with new, healthy recordings.

**New thought**

New feeling

**New physical body response**

New desired behavior



## Case Scenario

### Spontaneous Disclosure

#### 01

##### Key Points

- First disclosures are *fragile moments*
- Trauma-related thoughts often center on permanent danger or brokenness
- Helpers' own anxious thoughts can block support

#### 02

##### Jordan's Reported Thoughts & Feelings:

- Automatic Thought: "I'll never be safe because the memories keep coming back."
- Emotion: Fear, shame, vulnerability.
- Behavior: Withdrawing, difficulty sleeping, not talking much.

#### 03

##### Steps to Follow:

- Recognize What Happened
- Review and Identify Automatic Thoughts
- Validate Before Challenging & Identify thinking traps
- Introduce Questioning & Gentle Exploration
- Alternative Thought Development & Emotional & Behavioral Links



## Case Scenario

### Domestic Violence

#### 01

##### Key Points

- Thoughts *drive* emotions and behaviors
- Cognitive restructuring is not about forcing positivity
- Survivors benefit when helpers manage their own thoughts and emotions to stay compassionate and steady.

#### 02

##### Maria's Reported Thoughts & Feelings:

- Automatic Thought: "I can't survive on my own. He's the only one who will ever love me."
- Emotion: Fear, shame, sadness.
- Behavior: Returning to her partner

#### 03

##### Steps to Follow:

- Recognize What Happened
- Review and Identify Automatic Thoughts
- Validate Before Challenging & Identify thinking traps
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## PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

Gateway to Hope University is the training program of the **Hope and Healing Center & Institute**. We offer evidence-based, mental health training and ongoing support to faith communities and organizations such as yours. These courses will equip you with the tools to compassionately support those in distress and help build a community-based response to those in mental health distress.

**Empower Faith Communities** – A FREE 90-minute foundational training, perfect for anyone looking to support mental health in faith settings.

**Mental Health Coach Training** – A comprehensive, self-paced certification ideal for those planning to lead, facilitate groups, or offer deeper emotional and spiritual support.



**EMPOWER FAITH COMMUNITIES**  
BECOME A BEACON OF HOPE!

**About Us**  
Gateway to Hope University is the training program of the Hope and Healing Center & Institute. We offer evidence-based mental and behavioral health training, resources, and ongoing support to individuals, faith communities, schools, and workplaces. We're passionate about spreading the word and breaking the stigma around mental illness. With our trainings, you'll have the power to change lives and respond effectively and compassionately to those who need it most.

**About EMPOWER Faith Communities**  
This free online training equips faith leaders, volunteers, and communities with techniques for identifying mental distress, responding compassionately, and building a network to quickly connect those in mental distress with professional care.

**Benefits of Taking This Training**

- Deepens your understanding of the most common mental and behavioral health topics.
- Provides you with the knowledge to aid those struggling with mental and behavioral health illness.
- Equips you with the skills you can quickly implement.
- Empowers you to be part of the solution that eliminates the stigma surrounding mental and behavioral health.

**You Will Learn:**

- The definitions of "mental health" and "mental illness," how psychological distress manifests itself, and how mental illness impacts a person's life.
- The main symptoms of mental and behavioral health disorders.
- The truth behind misconceptions surrounding mental and behavioral health disorders.
- How and why people withdraw, the nature of suicidal thoughts, and how to help someone who is contemplating ending their life.
- How to communicate with someone in mental distress, provide them with resources for assistance, and discuss mental and behavioral health in your community.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

Gateway to Hope UNIVERSITY  
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**Mental Health Coach**  
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**About Mental Health Coach**  
Looking to further your mental health education? Purchase our Mental Health Coach Training. We equip you and faith communities to respond compassionately through our evidence-based training to help those in mental distress, lend support, and serve as a mental health resource to their organization. This online training includes mental health coaching and one specialization in an area of your choosing: Addiction & Behavioral Health Disorders, Aging & Elder Care, Child & Adolescent Mental Health, and Trauma. Additional specialty trainings are available for purchase.

**Benefits of Taking This Training**

- Provides you with information, skills, practical scenarios, and actionable steps that guide your Mental Health coaching in your community.
- You'll learn how to offer help, hope, and encouragement to those that need guidance throughout their journey to mental health recovery and wellness.
- Registration includes reimagining by Matthew Stanford Ph.D., support group curricula, and access to a community map and our Mental Health Coach forum, where you can connect with other Mental Health Coaches.

**You Will Learn:**

- How to recognize signs and symptoms of the most common types of mental illness, and faith's role in healing.
- Educate others on mental health, reduce stigma, and your role as a Mental Health Coach.
- Learn ethics, guidelines, intake procedures, and key coaching skills to create a safe space.
- Support those experiencing mental and behavioral health challenges, their caregivers, and loved ones as they heal.
- Build a professional mental network, refer those you coach to mental health professionals, and get your community engaged and involved.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

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# GATEWAY TO HOPE UNIVERSITY




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## HOPELINE & GRACE CARDS

 **The Hope Line**  
(832) 831-7337

Relational Issues | Work Stress | Recent Trauma | Mental Health Resources

**Open daily, 5 PM - 8 PM CT**

www.hhci.org In case of emergency, please call 911.

 **La Línea de la Esperanza**  
(832) 831-7337

Problemas Relacionales | Estrés Laboral | Traumas Recientes | Recursos de Salud Mental

**Abierto todos los días de 5 PM - 8 PM CT**

www.hhci.org En caso de emergencia, llame al 911.

 **Grace, Friendly AI Assistant**  
Have questions about mental or behavioral health? Talk to Grace.

Our friendly AI assistant can guide you in supporting yourself or a loved one.



 **Things you can ask Grace:**  
"Am I depressed? Do I need medication?"  
"Is my child an addict?"  
"What do I do when my family member lashes out at me?"  
And much more!

In case of emergency, please call 911.

 **Grace, Asistente de Inteligencia Artificial Amigable**  
¿Tiene preguntas sobre salud mental o conductual? Hable con Grace.

Nuestra amigable asistente de inteligencia artificial puede guiarlo para que pueda ayudarse a sí mismo o a un ser querido.



 **Cosas que puedes preguntarle a Grace:**  
"¿Estoy deprimido? ¿Necesito medicación?"  
"¿Mi hijo es adicto?"  
"¿Qué hago cuando un familiar me ataca?"  
Y mucho más!

En caso de emergencia, llame al 911.



