



## ***Member Care Update***

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### ***Ethnê-MC Update Issue 5: June 2009***

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This month, we are presenting two articles and a list of resources for dealing with trauma care. Our world is facing many traumatic events from women and children being raped and maimed in places like DRC, to fear communities face because of current, evolving events. War and famine ravage families and societies. Violence in Sri Lanka and greed run rampant in Zimbabwe are examples of global suffering in our world. Our God has equipped us with tools to bring His hope and help to victims of trauma. Please share these resources with your community leaders so we can better be the hands and feet of Jesus wherever we may be.

Next month, we want to continue this discussion, but focused on the care giver. Please consider sending your input for the following questions. What can we do to better care for ourselves while caring for the suffering and traumatized so we do not end up as casualties beside the road? What do you do that nourishes your spirit, cares for your body and renews your mind when faced with needs only God can meet? We would love to hear your stories so we can share them with our readers. Please email your response to [Linda Swanson](mailto:Linda Swanson).

### **Trauma Care**

By Pramila Rajendran

#### **What is Trauma?**

Trauma is when a person goes through some shattering experience such as death of loved ones, loss of property, natural disaster, war and persecution which leads to psychological and emotional stress. *Trauma brings insecurity, helplessness and vulnerability in the face of an emotionally distressing situation.*

#### **Symptoms of Trauma**

- a. Upset emotions
- b. Depression
- c. Denial
- d. Anger
- e. Grief
- f. Weakness
- g. Sleeplessness, Insomnia
- h. Lack of appetite
- i. Feelings of unworthiness
- j. Intake and increase of alcohol.
- k. Bitterness
- l. Nightmares
- m. Flashback memories
- n. Numbness
- o. Disconnected
- p. Disoriented
- q. Unable to trust other people
- r. Startled easily
- s. Palpitation
- t. Aches and pains
- u. Fatigue
- v. Difficulty in concentrating
- w. Edginess and agitation
- x. Muscle tension
- y. Avoiding people

## **Healing of Trauma**

When tragic events happen, it can take a while to feel safe and secure and gradually get over the hurt and pain. Treatment and support from family and friends can actually help a person toward recovery and beyond. *Whether the traumatic event happened in childhood, many years ago or yesterday, people can heal and move on provided the person in trauma allows herself/himself to work on it with the help of others.*

Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety. For example: natural disasters, persecution of minor communities and religion, war torn countries, etc. *But, any situation that leaves one feeling overwhelmed and alone can be traumatic, even if it doesn't involve physical harm.*

It's not the objective facts that determine whether an event is traumatic, but one's subjective emotional experience of the event. The more frightened, helpless and alone one feels, the more likely the person will experience feelings of trauma.

Trauma can be caused by a one-time event, such as a dreadful accident, a natural disaster such as earthquake, severe floods, severe epidemic, rape or a violent attack. Trauma can also generate from ongoing stress, living in a crime affected area or struggling with life-threatening or terminal illnesses such as cancer, leukemia, and also HIV, etc.

These symptoms and feelings basically last from a few days to a week, few months, and also for few years. But once the grief cycle for trauma is processed, it gradually fades away. There are times when the trauma victim is feeling better and feels healed but can still be troubled from time to time by painful memories or emotions which trigger a reminder of the traumatic situation and experience. However, after getting help, the person will hopefully have better coping skills to deal with these traumatic memories.

### **How to Grieve Well:**

Everyone needs to grieve after the traumatic incident happens. Whatever traumatic event occurred, each one needs to cope with the loss they have experienced. The natural reaction to any kind of loss is grief and grieving process. It is important to process the grief while it is still painful. It is advisable and good to turn to someone for support and talk to about how we feel.

*In order to heal from psychological and emotional trauma, the person must face and resolve the unbearable feelings and memories which have been long avoided. Otherwise they will return again and again to haunt.*

### **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

PTSD is the most severe form of emotional and psychological trauma. Its primary symptoms include avoiding things that remind you of the traumatic event, memories or flashbacks, living in constant fear with the possibility that terrible things will happen again, sweating and hiding where nobody can see you and screaming out while sleeping. If you have PTSD, it is important to see a trauma specialist.

### **Must seek professional help when emotionally and psychological affected**

Recovering from a traumatic event takes time, and everyone heals at their own pace and in their own time. But, if a long time passes and symptoms aren't going away, then professional help is needed.

Background materials and experiences from which this article was written:

1. Dr. Dheeraj, Psychiatrist at Graham Staines Hospital and Dr. Prassanna CMC Hospital, Vellore took Trauma Counselling Workshop in Orissa on 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Dec 08
2. Dr. Clemence, visiting professor at SAIACS, Bangalore, 1996.
3. During Tsunami and persecution of minorities
4. Pramila Rajendran took seminar for IMA Staff “ How to Grieve Well” at Hyderabad - Oct 08
5. Narramore Counselling Seminar at Chiangmai, Thailand 17<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 04

*Pramila Rajendran works with India Missions Association ( IMA ). She is Membercare Consultant and HRD Director. She is married to Dr. K. Rajendran and they have two children, daughter Preeti a Clinical Psychologist and son Pradeep Free Lancing with Media*

## **Taking Care of Yourself and Others in the Immediacy of a Crisis or Emergency**

By Dr Brent Lindquist

I just recently completed training in psychological first aid. This developing form of emergency response focuses on providing emotional mental health resources in the middle of or immediate aftermath of a crisis or traumatic event in many contexts, but particularly in the United States. However, in a cross-cultural environment, you might be the only one to provide psychological first aid. Therefore, I want to give you a few ideas about how to be a responsible responder. I take my comments from a presentation that Dr. Pat Santucci gave at a recent medical research corps conference.

### **1. Reduce arousal**

A primary purpose of you as a Psychological First Aid resource person is to help reduce the arousal of the survivor, as well as yourself. You will be no good to anybody or yourself if you are overly aroused. For the survivor, this means you seek to protect, respect, select, and direct the survivor to appropriate resources and information so that they can become safe or safer.

### **2. Decrease behavioral disorders**

It's important to help the survivor resume normal activity or resume some semblance of normal activity as soon as realistically possible. This may include trying to get them involved in activities like helping other people. It also means that you try and help them stabilize by getting their children on normal schedules for meals and going to sleep at a regular time.

### **3. Decrease cognitive impairment and facilitate coping**

Focus on developing information and coping skills. It is important not to give information that may be false or you don't know about or are guessing about. However it's also very useful to help them think through how they could continue to cope, working with them to process how they can take care of themselves.

### **4. Distress data decisions**

To a certain extent, I'm assuming that you may be in and out of the particular staging area while providing care. It's important for you to continue evaluating people over time. Some people may do very well, coping and moving forward. Other people may be doing increasingly unwell, struggling with their recovery. When you see somebody struggling, it's very important to communicate to other people, particularly the people in charge, that somebody may be stuck. Early identification helps a lot.

## 5. Educate and Empower

In these initial stages, help people take responsibility to care for themselves rather than only giving them care. This helps to restore dignity to the survivors and helps them as they recover and cope. Education will help them understand some of the issues they are dealing with and to develop appropriate thinking strategies to continue in a recovery posture.

## 6. Follow-up

Follow-up is very important. Sometimes, this is where the difference is made between surviving and thriving for both yourself and the survivors. If you can't provide personal follow-up to survivors, encourage them to accept your teammates as care givers and realize each of you will be helping in different stages of their recovery. You also must check to see how you are doing—you won't help anyone if you are over stressed, and over committed. Taking time off to care for yourself is extremely important.

Hopefully these six guidelines for coming alongside those who've suffered trauma will enable you to be a better caregiver in a traumatic event.

*Dr. Brent Lindquist is President of Link Care Center, a Counseling Center for Missionaries, Pastors and our local community. Though located in Fresno, California, [Link Care Center](#) provides care for people living and working around the world. Dr. Lindquist passion for equipping people to be effective in life and ministry*

## Resources and Websites for Trauma Care

1. [International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.](#) (ICISF) is a non-profit, open membership foundation dedicated to the prevention and mitigation of disabling stress through the provision of: Education, training and support services for all Emergency Services professions; Continuing education and training in Emergency Mental Health Services for Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Social Workers and Licensed Professional Counselors; and Consultation in the establishment of Crisis and Disaster Response Programs for varied organizations and communities worldwide.
2. The mission of [Barnabas International](#) is to edify, encourage, and strengthen servants in ministry. We creatively seek ways to fulfill our charter through personal, small group, and conference ministries. Our ministry priorities are targeted toward missionaries, pastors, national church leaders, and their families.
3. [Mission Training International](#) serves mission boards, churches and other sending organizations by developing and equipping their cross-cultural workers for the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom.
4. [Psychology for Living](#) is the website of the Narramore Christian Foundation, a Christian mental health organization dedicated to preventing and solving human problems, anxiety, depression, relational conflicts, and psychological disorders through psychological counseling. NCF is also dedicated to training lay-persons, Christian workers in the fundamentals of Christian counseling, psychology and psychological disorders.
5. [Living Through and Surviving Traumatic Events](#), 2005: Volume 2, Number 2, by Kirsti A. Dyer MD, MS, FAAETS, FACW, NCBF, CWS
6. [National Center for Crisis Management](#) is now working in collaboration with the American Academy of experts in traumatic stress.
7. [Victims of Disaster: Helping People Recover from Acute Distress to Healing and Integrations](#)

Please note—We greatly desire to hear what is on your mind. What Member Care needs do you face? How are you finding ways to confront those needs? What issues and concerns would you like to learn about?

Your articles should be about 500 words long. Links to web sites, articles, resources and events would be wonderful. You may write to me at: [LindaSwanson@Linkcare.org](mailto:LindaSwanson@Linkcare.org). I look forward to hearing from you. Your lives are full of daily challenges and it will take your time and energy to contribute. May I say in advance, “Thank you for making our community stronger and more able to serve those who serve!”