



Finding My Voice
and Meeting Jesus
in My World
of Complex Trauma



Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 "Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him."

Why Do we Speak?-The Unseen Prison of Trauma

The Inside

Silence

Loneliness

Shame

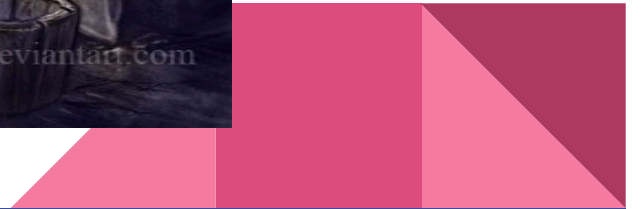


The Outside

Silenced

Left Alone

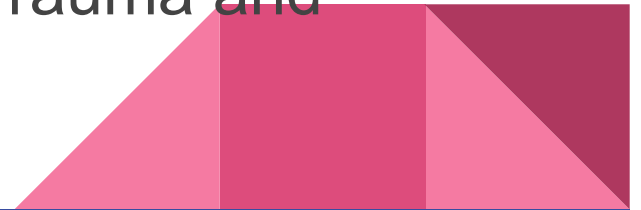
Shamed



Why Do we Speak?

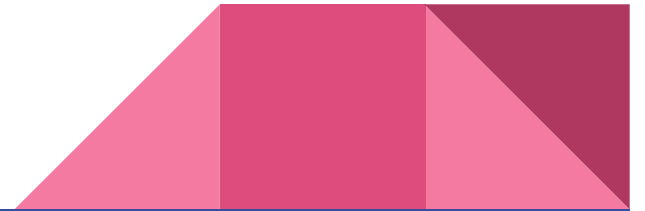
-With Witness Comes Freedom

1. We Break Free by Telling, Grieving, and Honoring our Trauma Story to Others and to Jesus
2. The Church as a Place of Witness to Trauma and Healing



Why Do We Speak: It's What Jesus Does

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free" (Luke 4:18, NIV).



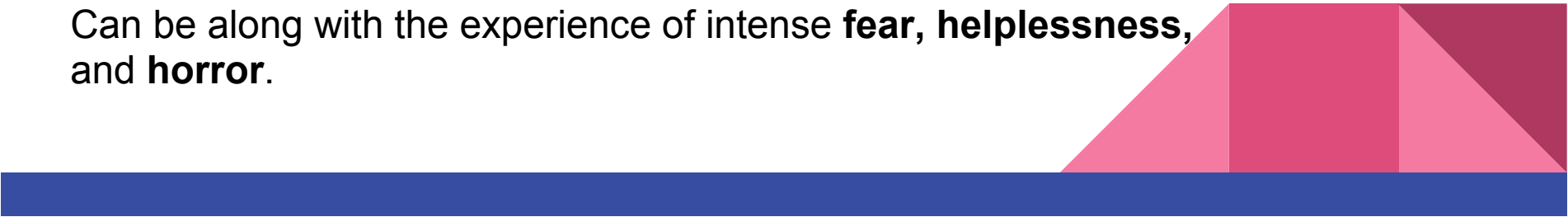
Trauma Definitions

Traumatic events **overwhelm** the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning (Herman, 33).

Trauma is any event or **experience (including witnessing)** that is physically and/or psychologically **overwhelming** to the exposed individual (Courtois, 5).

The person has **experienced, witnessed,** or been **confronted** with an event (or events) that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others (DSM V).

Can be along with the experience of intense **fear, helplessness,** and **horror.**



The Experience of Complex PTSD: The Rain Drops become a Flood

“Complex trauma encompasses **multiple and repeated experiences** of interpersonal trauma (usually starting in **childhood**), often becoming **chronic**” (Courtois, 19).

Trauma around **Relationship Attachment**

Interchange between **hypervigilant** and **dissociated** (Courtois, 20)

- Watching for relational danger
- Emotionally dead and detached from the self and the world



Key Aspects to the World of Complex Trauma

Central feelings: Toxic Shame, Abandonment, Trust (self and others)

Surviving A World of Complex Trauma:

- 1) **The World is dangerous and I am abandoned to navigate it.**
(Perceived confidence in navigating this world)
- 1) **The goal of relationships is not to be hurt.**
- 2) **The World is upside down where protectors are threats.**
- 3) **I am emotionally and relationally disconnected from the outside world.**
- 4) **My world is hidden and locked away and I hide with it.**
- 5) **There are different parts of me I use to navigate life.** (Fragmented self)
- 6) **I am ashamed of myself.**



My Trauma Map: A Shattered Self



- Fragmented identity: Many James' but no self.
- A hidden internal world.
- Great shame of my shattered identify.
- Fear of becoming like the perpetrator

My Trauma Map: Living in Voicelessness



-The the Eternal Voiceless Scream of Terror:

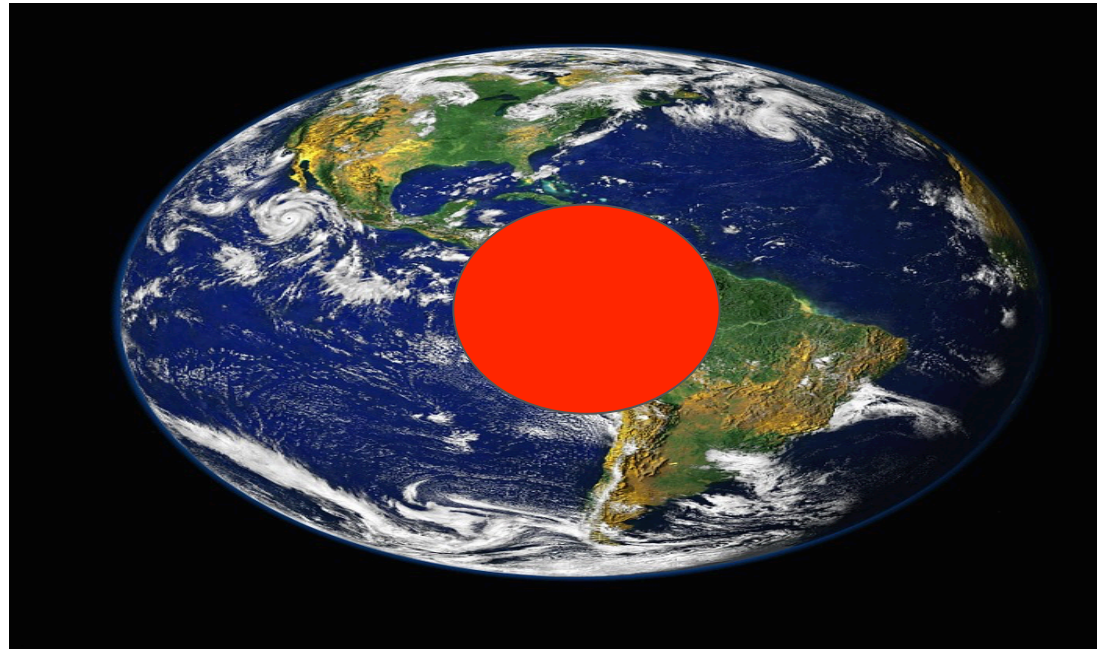
Always present, never

voiced.

-Living in the unspeakable.

-The Past invades the present.

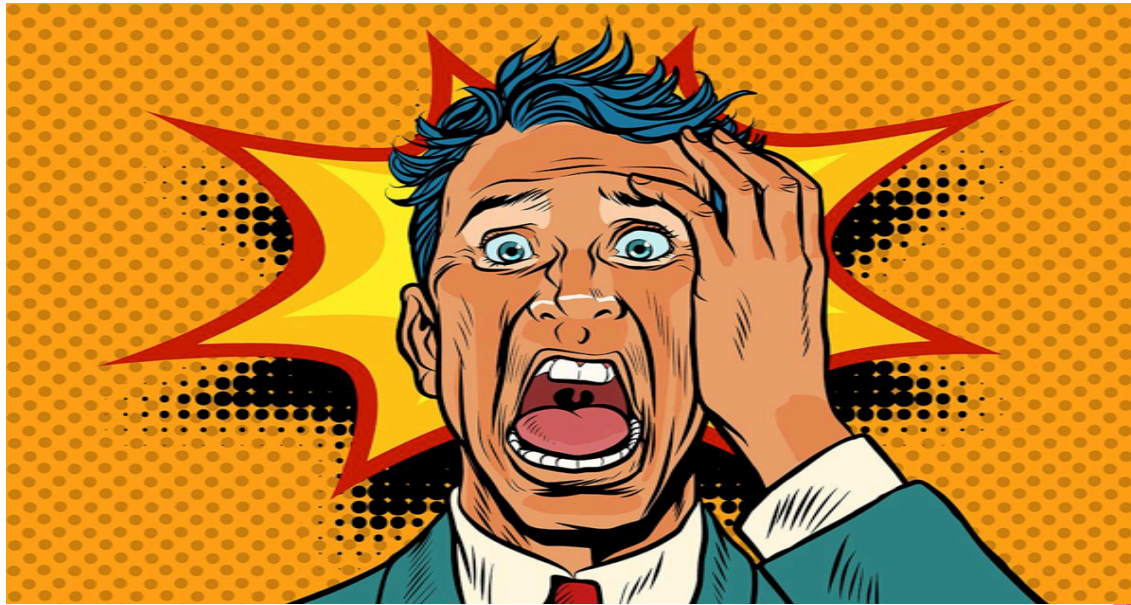
My Trauma Map: A Constricted World



- Avoiding reminders and reexperiencing of traumas
- Managing an intricate and stifling world built around managing and avoiding the pain of trauma
- Avoiding relational danger



My Trauma Map: Danger and Catastrophe Everywhere



- Catastrophizing and Seeing (Relational) Danger Everywhere (Abandonment).
- Overreaction of fear especially with my kids.
- Intense fear of hurting others or being a burden to them.

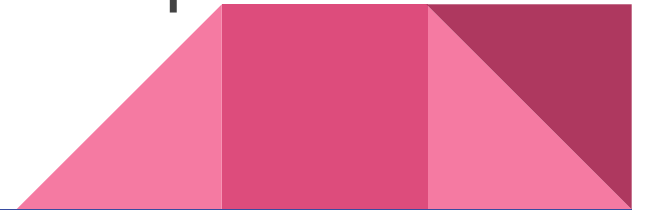
Living in the Dark In Between



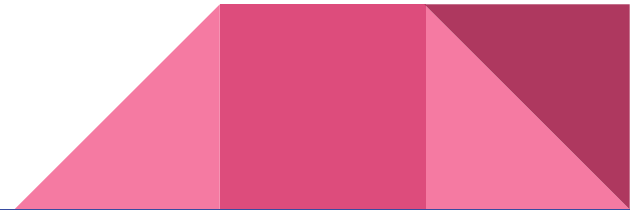
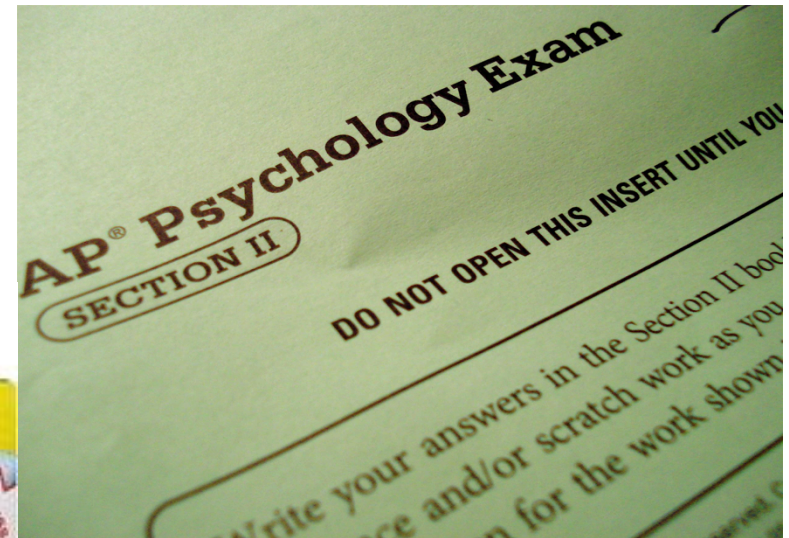
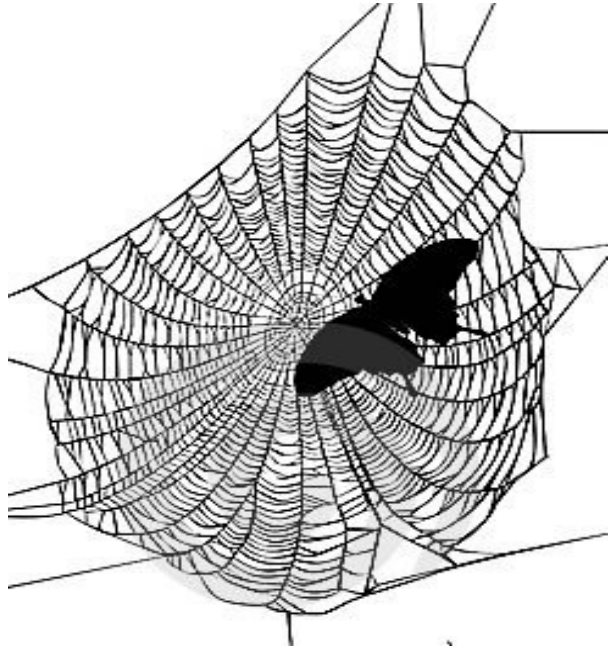
- Living the Ache of Emotional Numbing
- Living in nothingness; feeling an inner deadness, like a phantom
- Detached from the world and its order

Three Witnesses

1. Unexpected Witnesses
2. An Enduring Witness
3. The Witness of Commonality in Scripture



Unexpected Witnesses: A Start to the Journey



The Survivor Journey: An Enduring Witness

Establish Safety
and Agency

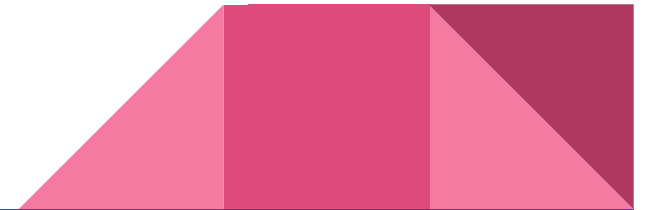
Remembrance
and Mourning



Reconnection

Commonality

“And he had laid his hand on mine with cheerful countenance,
strengthening my resolve, he led me to the secret things
below” (Inferno, Canto III, 19).



An Enduring Witness with Two Gifts

The Gift of Voice

The Gift of Grief



The Gift of Voice: A Witness to the Truth

A Compassionate Witness to the Truth (Truth as a Gift Not a Weapon)

1. Giving Compassion and Affirmation that I was not able to give myself (e.g. “That must be tiring.”).
2. Burning the Map: Injecting Reality (e.g. “He victimized you.” “That was cruel and unfair.”).
3. Burning the Map: Bringing Light to My Control (e.g. Separating my responsibility from others).



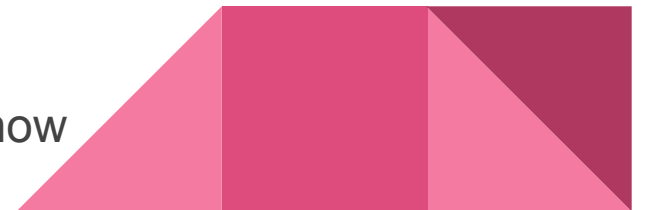
The Gift of Voice: Accepting a New Lens

Beginning to Build a New World

1. A Lens to View My Pain: Opening Up the Reality of CPTSD
2. Sobering Sorrow: Coming to Terms with the Reality of My suffering

My pain is real, my pain is valid... It's freeing to know, to speak this language, but it has a certain sobering sorrow to it... It's a deep sigh, a drooping of the arms... Has it really been that long? Has it really been that hard?

1. Drawing a New Map and Beginning to Understand how I move and who I am in this new world.



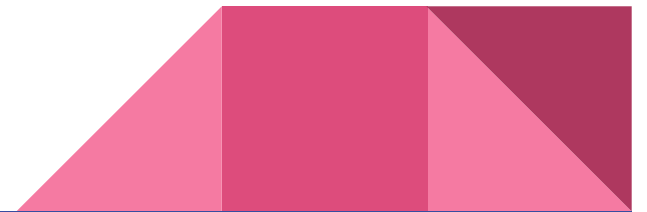
The Gift of Grief: Feeling Again

Feeling the Negative Emotions:

1. Feeling for me.
2. Exploring sadness and anger as positives.

Exploring My Experiences of Emotional Numbness:

1. Feeling life a shadow, ghost, detached from the world and describing it.
2. Mourning being missed and alone.
3. Finding abandonment underneath.
4. Reattaching to the World.



The Gift of Grief: Practicing Anger

The Validity of Anger

1. We should be angry at sin and evil.
2. Practicing anger acknowledges what is already there.
3. If we deny anger, we deny a large percentage of scripture (about 40% of Psalms and a whole book of the Bible).
4. The fear of the Anger Cliff.

The Blessing of Anger

1. Anger allows you to tell the truth about your emotions and the sins you experienced.
2. Anger drives you out of emotionless detachment.
3. Anger ironically builds separation and then compassion.



The Gift of Grief: Practicing Lament

Is it your way to bring to loss, to strip all we hold onto for safety and control, to strip it all away, to crush us, and then meet us in that loss and give us fully you?

Lament as a Way to Express When God's Ways Don't Make Sense (Complaint)

The Parts of a Lament (ABS)

1. **Address to God ("O God")**
2. Review of God's Faithfulness in the past
3. **A complaint**
4. A confession of sin or a claim of innocence.
5. A request for help
6. God's response (often not stated)
7. A vow to praise, statement of trust in God



The Gift of Grief: Journeying into the Depths of My Story

Telling and
Honoring My
Pain Story.

Grieving and
Accepting my
Broken



Grieving the
Absence of
Help (People
and God)

Reaching the
Bottom

A Survivor Identity

The Witness of Commonality in Scripture

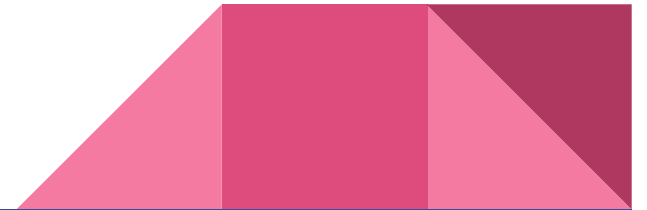
The Gift of Commonality:

What it is not:

1. Not going to scripture to avoid my pain, or downplay it, but to express my pain.
2. We silence the reality of our soul before God when ignore our pain.

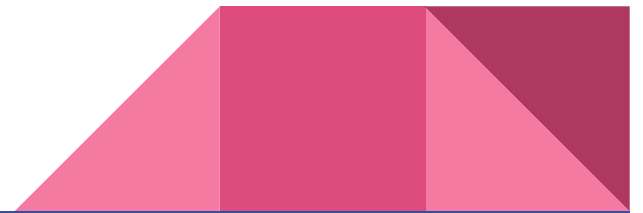
What it is:

1. Finding my Story and Voice in Scripture
2. Communing with the Traumatized in Scripture
3. Meeting With Jesus Along the Road of Suffering



The Witness of Commonality: Lamentations 3:1-24: Angering with God

1. 3:1-15: Angering about God's Actions and their impact on you
1. 3:16-18: Coming to Exhaustion and Hopelessness
2. 3:19-24: Experiencing Hope Renewed



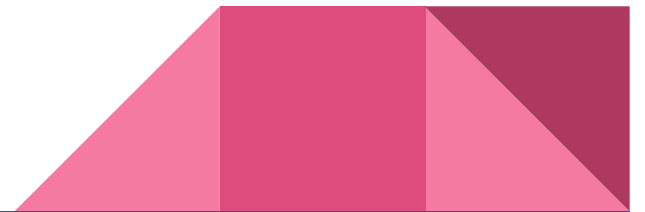
The Witness of Commonality: Habakkuk 3: Dreading the Future

1. 3:1-2: Recalling God's Work and Asking him to Act Like he Used to
1. 3:3-15: Remembering and Reimagining God's Work
2. 3:16: Feeling the Dread in your Body
3. 3:17-19: Discovering Worship and Strength



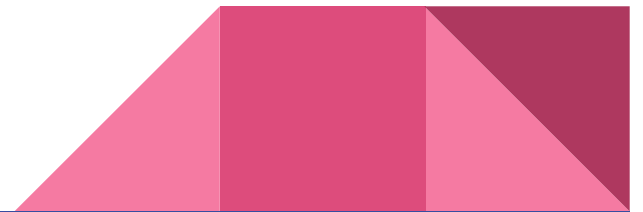
The Witness of Commonality: Job 3:1-26: Grieving a Broken World

1. 3:1-10: I Don't Want to Live in a World Ordered Like this:
Un-creation Seems Better
2. 3:11-19: The World of the Dead Seems More Fair
3. 3:20-26: My World is Shattered and is a Place Where
Bitterness and Fear Reign



The Witness of Commonality: Sitting in My Pain with Jesus


1. Turning My face to the Road of Suffering (Luke 9:51)
 - *When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.*
1. Grieving and Submitting in the Garden (Mark 14:32-40)
 - Meet with him in his tears, his distress, his dread, and his faith (vv. 33-36)
1. Expressing Forsakenness (Psalm 22)
 - Meet with him in his forsakenness, his experiencing of God not being there for him (vv. 1-2, 11, 19)
1. Dwelling on Saturday (Psalm 88)



The Witness of Commonality: Finding Purpose in the Ministry of Carrying Death

2 Corinthians 4:7-12 (ESV):

*⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰**always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies. ¹¹For we who live are always being given to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹²So death is at work in us, but life in you.***



The image features a solid blue background. In the top right corner, there is a decorative geometric pattern consisting of several triangles in different shades of blue, including dark blue, medium blue, and light blue, arranged in a way that suggests a folded corner or a stylized architectural element.

THANK YOU!