

Beyond Disaster is a booklet developed by the Trauma Healing Institute. It contains many of the concepts used in *Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help*, but it was created for a specific purpose. It is a stand-alone booklet designed to encourage people who are currently going through a crisis or have just recently gone through one. This could be an epidemic like a coronavirus, other natural disasters such as an earthquake, tsunami, hurricane, flood, or fire, or even events caused by people.

The booklet contains an introduction called “Start Here” and six chapters. All seven sections contain helpful information, Scripture passages, and reflection questions. Several of the lessons also contain activities that can be done as a group or individually during the week before the next meeting.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET?

You can read this booklet and reflect on it on your own, but the experience will be even more helpful if you are able to go through it with a friend or small group.

During this time of “shelter in place” (staying at home), you can study it in family these lessons which will be offered to you once a week for 7 weeks.

The first needs that are usually met in a crisis are physical—such as having enough food, clean water, shelter, and, in epidemics, face masks, disinfectants, and medical care. However, people’s emotional and spiritual needs are just as important and also need to be addressed. This booklet is designed for Christians to begin addressing their fears, doubts, and emotions. That is why we call this “spiritual first aid.” Using this booklet can help people begin to recover emotionally and spiritually from trauma they have experienced.

If you have survived a disaster, this booklet can help you with practical ways to care for yourself and your loved ones. It also can help you recover emotionally and spiritually from the trauma you experienced.

The Bible passages in this booklet can be a source of comfort and hope as you go through the process of healing.

If you're feeling overwhelmed and not ready to interact with this booklet, Start with the practical tips in the very first lesson, the introductory one (Lesson 0). These are the best ways people have found to deal with shock. Save the rest until you are ready.

Prior to reading lesson 0 together, share the following section:

Say (Group leader)—I'm going to read a list of some normal reactions to trauma.

Each person responds to traumatic experiences differently. Here are some normal reactions you may have. They will often go away with time:

- You may find that your heart begins to pound fast and you breathe fast. You may have headaches and stomachaches. You may feel shaky or exhausted.
- You may have trouble sleeping or have no appetite.
- You may be confused and not be able to concentrate or make good decisions.
- You may feel anxious, overwhelmed, or depressed. You may blame yourself for what happened. You may be irritable and angry.
- You may want to be alone.
- You may try to avoid how you are feeling (for example, spend too much time on social media, use alcohol, work non-stop, overeat, and so forth).
- You may do things that, in the end, will bring you harm, like smoking, drinking alcohol or using drugs, or spending more than you can afford.
- You may have accidents.

Discussion: After reading through the above information, you as the leader might want to begin by sharing something that you have experienced during the crisis. This will help others be more comfortable to share.

Ask: Would any of you like to share about what you have been feeling? Allow for sharing.

Leading the lesson

- Ask different members to read the lesson aloud.
- As you read though the list of basic practices, ask members to share about personal experiences related to the list. Do they have other good ideas to share?

(Remember to ask questions and allow folks to share)

- Discuss the “For Reflection” questions.
- Ask members to share other Scripture verses that have encouraged them.

Closing—Prayer and song.

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