

**change your  
narrative**

**HOW DO I SHOW GOD'S LOVE  
TO SOMEONE STRUGGLING  
BECAUSE OF ABUSE?**

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SHIFTING INCOMPLETE STORIES  
OF ABUSE TOWARDS

TRUTH



# How To Use This Book

Depending on what you are looking for, you can use this book in a variety of ways. Feel free to skim, read every line, or just check out our videos.

We believe important topics call for important conversations which is why some of our material is presented via videos. In order to access the videos, you will need to click the link if you are reading via a digital device such as Kindle. If you have a physical copy of the book, you can access the links via QR codes.

A QR Code looks like this and can be scanned using your device's camera:



On an iOS device, simply open the camera app and point your camera over the code. A notification will pop up, asking if you would like to head to YouTube.

On an Android device, you will need to download a QR code app. Our team recommends several options, all of which are free as of this printing:

- QR & Barcode Scanner
- QR Code Reader
- Free QR Scanner by Avira
- QR DROID PRIVATE
- Kaspersky QR Scanner

## **I Am Glad You Are Here...**

The goal of this book is to create an environment of support along with hosting resource and tools which guide individuals who struggle because of trauma towards wholeness, all while inviting God into the discussion. The fact you are here because you want to be used to show someone His love is amazing.

In our hardest moments and toughest questions, we have a natural instinct to reach out and ask, "Where is God?"

I do not believe God is scared or offended by that question. Instead, I believe it is healthy to wrestle *through* it. I believe the healthiest way to wrestle through that question, is to do so inside of a community of people who love Him, know His character, can reflect that character well, and show us how loved we truly are.

This is where you come in. I am glad you are here and are seeking to share insight which offers others guidance. I will be sharing everything from one specific perspective based off of my own life experience combined with my knowledge of God which comes from the Bible. While I hope these pages are meaningful, you have the unique ability to demonstrate God's love to someone you know inside of your relationship with them. That was the exact thing which kept me alive in some of my darkest days. It was also the example I needed so I could believe God did love me, and it led me to want to know Him more. So I applaud the fact you want to be there for someone else. It has the power to spark hope.

## Let's Admit, This Is Hard

I want to acknowledge its hard to know *how* to find ways to show love. Even with God's help, I believe complex trauma produces wounds which can take a long time to heal. Healing is not a one-time event. It is a process. Throughout that process, there are numerous obstacles. This must be acknowledged. There are times in which you may need to seek support for yourself or gain knowledge on a difficult subject.

But even with the challenge, I believe you have what it takes to make it through. We are rooting for each of you out there, during the journey, and in every step of it.

If you or someone you care for is in danger of harm, please contact one of the numbers below or turn to the resource section at the back of this book.

### For Immediate Help:

Covenant House- 1800-999-9999

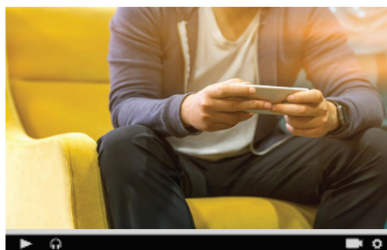
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Youth Crisis Line – 1800 Hit Home

Hopeline 1800-442-5673

<http://www.crisischat.org/chat>

Video: What Is Is Like To Call A Hotline?



<https://youtu.be/6IRGmusmp1M>

## **The Core Principles Of This Book**

In order to have a discussion on a hard topic, I need to frame it well. This means, there are a few key items I need to explain in order to proceed. Why? Because this book hinges on a specific foundation with core principles.

### **Principle #1 - Who is God?**

God is the Ruler and Maker of the universe. He created the earth, sky, and every living creature, including humanity. As Creator, He is both our God and our King. Yet, He doesn't stop there. He is a relational God who expresses Himself in relationships—both with us and Himself. God expresses Himself as Father, Son, and Spirit—who are three distinct identities and yet are all one triune Being. We know who God the Father and God the Spirit are because God the Son was revealed to us as Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in ancient Israel, 2,000 years ago.

### **Principle #2 - Why did Jesus come?**

When we were first created at the beginning of time, we were in perfect relationship with God. As Creator, God placed order and rules into His universe in order to maintain healthy boundaries in order to enjoy whole and right relationships. Yet, humanity rebelled against God's ways and chose to disobey. This disobedience is known as sin. It brought death into the world. Anytime someone acts selfishly, wrongs another person, is cruel, unkind, hateful, or harms another—this is against God's perfect order. This is not the world He designed or behaviors He intended humanity to engage in. It is out of His will.



### **Principle #3 - So, why did God let them disobey?**

Obedience is only so—if it is a choice. Mankind had to be given free will in order to choose to love, trust, and obey God. We often call this “free will.” We have the ability to choose to exercise our will to do what we want, but there are consequences to every action.

Again, it is not God’s intention for us to use our free will in ways which do not align with His character which is good, loving, kind, caring, compassionate, and healthy.

Yet, you and I engage in the opposite of these actions all of the time. So do the people we know.

This leaves mankind in dire need of a way to know how to choose right, how to act in a way which mirrors God’s character and be back in right relationship with God so we could know how to be in healthy, whole relationships with each other.

This is the backdrop which made it necessary for God the Son to come and show us how.

### **Principle #4 - So, I’ll ask again: “Why did Jesus come?”**

**To make a way for us to find wholeness.**

Remember, humanity broke God’s perfect order. The only way to put it back was for Someone who was perfect to make a payment for the wrong we had done.

It was necessary for God the Son, Jesus, to die on our behalf in order for wholeness and restoration of our relationship with Him to be possible again.

By Him coming, He not only made payment for the rift in relationship we had opened up by rebelling against Him, but He also showed us His nature.

### **Principle #5 - Who is God? What is His character?**

He is good. He is kind. He cares.

He is moved to compassion when He sees suffering.

He cried when He saw pain firsthand.

He wanted to be with people in their worst moments.

He revealed His nature more and more every time He got near humanity's brokenness.

He doesn't always change circumstances—but He always provides a way through them.

He promises to be with us.

He paid the way for us to have relationship with Him.

He has a plan for our life.

It is from these lens of truth from the Bible which will frame the rest of our discussion. I am excited to get started with you.

### **Core Principles - Video Discussion**



[https://youtu.be/EtrHq6\\_JHQ0](https://youtu.be/EtrHq6_JHQ0)

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE  
*of lost hope*

# What Is Abuse?

According to [Healthyplace.com](https://www.healthyplace.com), “Abuse is defined as any action that intentionally harms or injures another person.”<sup>1</sup>

While the most commonly discussed forms of abuse are emotional/psychological, physical, and sexual abuse—[Healthyplace.com](https://www.healthyplace.com) describes additional forms of abuse. These include:

- Verbal
- Financial
- Elder
- Spiritual<sup>2</sup>

For a full list of what characterizes each form, we welcome you to visit: [Healthyplace.com](https://www.healthyplace.com)

The Latin origin of the word abuse means “to wrongly use.”<sup>3</sup> Do you know what this means? Anything or anyone who has been abused has been treated in a way which was not part of original design or a healthy interaction.

To put it plainly—it was wrong. Anytime abuse occurs—it goes against natural design.

This is why there are devastating outcomes associated with any form of mistreatment from one person to another. And I am here to tell you that those negative impact are 100% valid, legitimate, and real. I have no doubt you carry a significant burden in which you might feel as if you have to carry it alone. But I am here to tell you—you do not have to. And you are not alone.

If you or someone you care for are struggling because of past or present abuse—you have every right to think and feel as you do. Because what happened to you—was wrong.

Though the journey to shift an incomplete story which was affected by abuse is long and comes with numerous challenges, I believe it is possible to find the wholeness you deserve. It was wrong that someone's choice to harm you has cost you such a steep price of healing—yet you are worth every step of the healing you were born to find.

Your name is not unwanted. Your name is not abused. Your name is not victim. Your identity is worth so much more.

## What Is Abuse? - Video Discussion



[https://youtu.be/653RgC1b\\_PM](https://youtu.be/653RgC1b_PM)



## **How Many Individuals Struggle?**

### **Physical**

1 in 4 women (24.3%) and 1 in 7 men (13.8%) aged 18 and older in the US have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

43% of dating college women report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors including physical, sexual, tech, verbal or controlling abuse.<sup>5</sup>

1 in 4 dating teens is abused or harassed online or through texts by their partners.<sup>6</sup>

### **Emotional/Psychological**

48% of both men and women reported experiencing psychologically aggressive behaviors by their partner.<sup>7</sup>

## **Sexual**

1 out of 3 girls and 1 out of 5 boys will be sexually abused before they reach age 18.<sup>8</sup>

90% of child sexual abuse victims know the perpetrator in some way. 68% are abused by a family member.<sup>9</sup>

For male victims, more than half (52.4%) reported being raped by an acquaintance, and 15.1% by a stranger.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly 6 out of 10 sexual assaults occur in the victim's home or the home of a friend, relative or neighbor.<sup>11</sup>

## **Neglect**

**CPS protects more than 3 million children.** Approximately 3.4 million children received an investigation or alternative response from child protective services agencies. 2.3 million children received prevention services.<sup>12</sup>

# Is It Okay To Ask About Abuse?

The fact you are asking, it a good thing. Number one, it shows how much you care for someone. And second, it shows a sense of care in how you approach them.

Depending on your relationship with the person, it is absolutely okay for you to ask. In some cases, it might even be your responsibility. Check your local and state laws under “mandated reporting,” as in many instances if you believe someone is in threat of danger or harm, it is time to act.

And yet, action is often only possible after having a conversation to know what factors could be creating stress or trauma for the individual you care for.

Check out our video below in which we will discuss:

- When is it time to ask?
- How should I approach someone?
- What should I say and not say?

## Is It Okay To Ask About It? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/Ddl9UibfkS8>



# What To Do If Someone Shares About Abuse

Learning that someone you care for wrestles because of past or present abuse can be incredibly painful. No one wants a friend or loved one to feel intense internal or external pain.

The reasons, cause and effect behaviors, and thoughts and emotions which come because of abuse range from short-term triggers to extreme distress. As you lean in and learn more, you can enter into conversations with a healthy perspective. In order to do so, we suggest to:

- Point To Help
- Educate Yourself
- Be Sure To Process

*For a more in-depth discussion about these points, check out the video below.*

## What To Do When Someone Shares? - Discussion



<https://youtu.be/lgf2lpqLbni>

## **Am I Causing Trouble If I Intervene?**

If you believe someone you care for is in danger of harm because of past or present abuse, it can be easy to become frozen, unsure what to do or how to help. It may even feel as if intervening would make things worse.

I know—because I have been there myself. But, there have been a few key factors which have helped me work through the options and know what is right.

**My Personal #1** – If it feels like time to act—it probably is. In truth, it is usually fear of repercussions which holds me back more than reasoning which says it is time. Over the years, I have learned to trust my gut.

**The Real #1** – If you are a mandated reporter, and you learn someone within your influence is in an threat of harm or danger—either at their own hand or someone else’s—it is time to act.

Legal requirements vary from state to state. I would encourage you to check with your local laws and follow the stated course of action. In addition—make sure you also are following your organization’s policy and procedures to make sure the right people have been informed and the person you care for is receiving the best form of support and guidance from your whole team.

# But, What If I Am Concerned About Family Or A Friend?

The truth is, there are not policy and procedure guidelines for relationships. And intervening can have ramifications for that person—and your relationship. This is valid. It is something which must be discussed. But if you are in a situation in which you can speak up and stop abuse, the time to do so, is now.

I do not know all of the ins and outs of your specific situation. But, you can talk with someone who can give direct guidance for what you are facing, provide you with educational tips which match your situation, and help you feel confident in taking your next step.

This is why I highly recommend you calling a hotline. They can help you gauge the situation and know what your options are to get someone help. As always, if you believe someone is in immediate threat of harm that you should call 911 immediately. Yet, the question remains, “What about backlash?” Let’s discuss the matter in the video below:

## Is It Betrayal If I Intervene? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/VGF7Zf0RyOI>

# **Does God Allow Suffering For “Purpose?”**

Let me be the first to say that simply believing in God, or seeking to follow Jesus does not mean traumatic life experiences disappear or the pain of current or past memories fades.

I wish it did.

But, the truth is, understanding the fullness of our relationship with Him does not mean we are promised an absence or removal of past pain—as if it never happened.

But, I refuse. I am not here to tell you or someone you care for that trauma has always is for a purpose, as if this would remove the pain.

I do not believe that God allowed abuse, trauma, or suffering in someone’s life at the cruel hands of others because He needed to teach them something or have them see a big picture of purpose.

To do so, in my mind, is against the nature of God.

He is not the author of confusion. He is not the father of lies. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, which means He desires for us to live in wholeness and to enjoy right, healthy relationships with Himself and others.

I refuse to believe He is the author of brokenness.

Therefore, I must also conclude that He did not write that script in a way which causes us pain so that He can somehow tell a bigger story and show how great He is.

He can accomplish all of that without sin and death being the ink on the pages of a life. He does not need pain and suffering in order to write a beautiful story.

Often, when we are working with someone who is in pain, it will be tempting to want to say there is reason for the pain. But, I do not always know if this is helpful, especially if that person doesn't have a strong relationship with God.

I hesitate, in my own life, to counsel individuals who may not understand the complex nature of God by telling them that God is going to use the pain for purpose. I think it confuses them, as if He authored the pain.

God can teach without the backdrop of trauma. He draws us near without suffering, He can mold us for ministry without the sins of others as the prompt.

Therefore, I don't tell anyone that they must endure an arduous healing process because He needed to hurt them in order to heal them so they were ready.

I just don't believe He works that way.

Instead, I seek to be with them, model the character of God, speak value, build trust, and spark hope. To me, it is most important to override any lies about their worth and demonstrate God's love consistently.

# **But Can God Give Them A Purpose To Their Pain?**

I believe God can use anything, and if they would like to seek His voice to find out how He is going to redeem it, then I encourage anyone to do so. Because yes, God can redeem and restore anything. But just because He can fix something does not mean He was the One who broke it and allowed it to happen so He could show off.

I believe broken individuals go farther in their trust of Him if we first release any mental torment of believing He broke them, when the effects of sin and death are the culprits for a great deal of suffering—and He is not the Author of either sin or death.

## **Are There Ever Times When God Brings Pain To A Life?**

Yes. There are times in which we face consequences of our actions—our words, choices, and behaviors which align with sin or death. In essence, these are acts of rebellion against His ways. In these moments, we face discipline or consequences. But, this is not to be confused with trauma which is induced at the hands of others who are acting in rebellion to His ways.

We need to guide those we are seeking to love and demonstrate God's character to, to understand the fact that God will lovingly correct us, but that does not mean He is punishing us through the cruel actions of others.

We need to guide those close to us to understand our own normal desires to do things which are against

God's order—times in which we are unkind, mean, arrogant, hateful, prideful, envious, jealous, rageful, harm others, and so on. These are things which God will correct us on. Yet, He is a good and loving Father who teaches us. It says that it is His kindness which leads us to repentance. This means that despite whatever experiences we had with being punished as kids, God does not do it in a way which is cruel. He wants us to come to Him and understand how great His love is to heal us and lead us to be more like Him—kind, compassionate, loving, giving, and generous.

We also need to help them understand that others are responsible for their own actions. This means that if a person sins against someone—they cannot own it for them. Yes, it is our job to do the hard work to heal. But, we cannot own anyone else's sin or wrong choices.

This is good news, because it means we can be free of any guilt or shame we have attached to our identity based on their choices made against us.

But, how do we deal with guilt and shame?

### **Does God Allow Suffering For “Purpose?” - Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/TVEcW7vSACA>

# Guilt Versus Shame

When it comes to abuse, victims will often take a sense of shame into their identity and believe they are worth less than they are because of another's words or actions. I am here to tell you there is an important distinction between guilt and shame.

Guilt is the aftermath of an action. It can be healthy—as it lets us know *what we did* was wrong. But in the case of abuse, victims didn't do anything to trigger the mistreatment. Instead, an abuser uses shame to try to take power over an individual by claiming they have a right to name another person's identity. But it is not true.

Guilt can be healthy. Our words, actions, and behaviors have consequences. Guilt helps us to take ownership, learn, and grow. Shame, however, doesn't offer a solution. It just grips our thoughts & emotions in a vice. In a sense, it presents a false reality.

How do we escape the trap of shame? I want to continue this critical conversation in the video below.

## Guilt Versus Shame - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/sRzXXuxH-XE>



YOU'RE BRAVER  
THAN YOU BELIEVE,  
AND STRONGER  
THAN YOU SEEM,

**AND**  
SMARTER THAN  
YOU THINK.  
A.A. MILNE

# **Back To The Original Question:**

## **“How Can I Demonstrate God’s Love To Someone Struggling With Abuse?”**

Thought it was necessary for us to discuss guilt and shame, purpose, and core principles, the questions still remains, “How can I demonstrate God’s love?”

When someone feels deep pain, it is often fueled by mental health battles or traumatic life experiences. Those experiences often become the loudest voice in their life. It can blind them to be able to see themselves, those around them, or God clearly. Because of this, they need individuals to clearly, and consistently show them God’s nature, His character, and His love.

When someone faces the depths of abuse, they are often internally asking where they could find help. It does not mean they know how to take it or find it, but they are searching. This means, they are often asking the question, “Where is God when I am struggling with trauma?”

When I work with someone who is wrestling, and I am seeking to demonstrate God’s love to them, the first thing I want them to know is it is fair to ask that question. Being open enough to ask something so direct is not an offense or an assault to God. He is big enough to handle doubt and He is not moved by our own confusions. He knows our nature and the fact we live inside of a broken world which leaves us grasping, wondering how these things have happened.

To answer the question, “Where is God?” someone must start by seeking to understand His nature.

This is a question which must be wrestled. It is not something found in the line of a book or in one conversation, it is something which takes time. This is why I am so glad they have you. In your conversations, you become the place they can freely wrestle. Through it, you are able to offer an expression of His love, simply by being present.

When someone looks for answers to suffering, it comes from an incredibly vulnerable place. Blanket statements give disappointment from not having our specific needs, questions, or disappointments met. Conversations, however, allow room for doubt to become discovery.

In seeking to avoid blanket statements, I would rather provide context to what it might look like to wrestle.

I simply want to frame it in a way which offers you tools to wrestle through the question with someone instead of just read one possible answer it in a way which may not meet specific needs.

I promise I will share how all of these points became part of my own story, offering me a pathway towards wholeness. But, before I share my own story, I want to give someone you care for a chance to live theirs.

On the next page, I have listed 10 tips which helped me to wrestle, and I hope they offer a guide map for you to journey alongside someone you love.





## **10 Tips To Help You Wrestle**

#1 - Be Assured He Cares

#2 - Know He Has Shown Up To Others

#3 - Understand His Roles

#4 - Discover The “With” Factor

#4 - Recognize With Overrides Poof

#5 - Choose The Process

#6 - Seek Multiple Sources

#7 - Understand His Roles

#8 - Find Community

#9 - Seek Restoration

#10 - Permission Granted

# #1 - Help Someone Know God Cares

The first place to wrestle is in determining whether or not each of us believes God cares. Admittedly, there are many times in which our own hurts, confusions, past or present pain, and questions that we have for God get in the way of us believing He is there and He cares.

This is okay.

Yet, we can give someone room to discover Him when we allow them to ask, “Could it be true that He does care?” And then, we must help to also ask, “What does it mean that He cares?”

If someone believe God caring means He eliminates the possibility of pain in their life, then I believe they short change the presence of God. Going back to the core principles of this book—pain, sin, brokenness, and other’s actions against us are not within the desires God had for humanity when He created us.

And I believe He absolutely cares when any of us are negatively impacted. He cares that the dark feelings are there. He reaches out in ways many of us aren’t aware of. I believe the fact you are reading this now is an indication that God wants to demonstrate His love to the individual you care for. And I think the more you show how much you consistently care, it will help someone to know that God cares.

On their end, they have to take a risk to let Him and you in and acknowledge the fact He does care—even if it

means they still have to wrestle through their confusions about God in the process.

And so, keep inviting them to wrestle. Because I believe if they begin their journey towards answering the question, “Where is God when I struggle?” with an openness to believing that He does care, they will come to see His goodness despite the pain.

This does not mean they do not also need professional, skilled care or help. Deep trauma requires a number of sources of care. But, we help them by giving them space to ask questions about God and then model the answers.

To begin wrestling alongside of them, help them go back to what He has said and done as revealed in the Bible. I will leave a few references and invite you to go with them to discover who He is. May your searching together give them confidence in His love.

**Isaiah 43:1-3, Isaiah 55, Ephesians 3:14-19, Romans 5:5, Romans 8:38-39, Ephesians 2:4-5, Jeremiah 33:3, Isaiah 30:18-21**

### **#1 - Be Assured He Cares - Video Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/RMBUEXYc2z4>

## **#2 - Help Them See How He Has Shown Up To Others**

When we are getting to know someone, or are trying to figure out their character and who they really are, we do this in two different ways. It is true, we gauge their trustworthiness by our own firsthand interactions with them. But, we also do it when hearing what others have to say about them and observing from a distance.

If someone is asking the question, “Where is God when I am struggling?” it leads me to believe they may not have a lot of firsthand interactions with Him. And this is okay.

That is why you are answering hard questions with them together, because sometimes we need to be able to build trust through observation and other’s stories.

Depending on your relationship with the individual, it might be the time and place for you to share how God has been there for you. Or, it may not be appropriate.

Remember, we want to keep the focus on the individual who is struggling. If they feel as if their pain or past is being overrun, they are unlikely to see that as loving. I admit, it is a fine line to walk. Most of the time, they need space for someone to listen more than talk about their own story. But, that does not mean your story is not valuable. Just use wisdom to make sure it is the right time and right amount of details of your own journey.

Secondly, if it is appropriate and they are open to searching in the Bible, we can point out several places



in the Bible in which God didn't only talk about Himself and His character, but He demonstrated His care and concern for others through His interactions with them.

In this way, they have a chance to observe from a distance and get to know how He has shown up on behalf of those who were struggling.

Just like before, I am going to leave references to places in the Bible where God showed Himself as faithful to those who were wrestling their own tough spots. I believe you can help them keep wrestling and keep finding out who God really is. This process helps them to set a foundation for them to be able to struggle through the deep questions of their heart.

**How God showed up to Elijah.** 1 Kings 19:4-13

**How God showed up to David.** Psalm 69 & 30, together.

Additional stories of God's faithfulness:

Lacey Sturm - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4VgMpk4KnU>

Tedashii - Start at 31:32 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkIZZM72jZ0>

Lecrae - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Bs6ctEFiGw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Bs6ctEFiGw)

## #2 - Know He Has Show Up To Others - Discussion



<https://youtu.be/TgN-ltAMaDE>

## #3 - Understand His Roles

Who is God? How we see Him determines our level of trust in Him. Our level of trust in Him determines how much access we grant Him into our lives and our pain. How much access we grant Him determines how much healing we are able to be walked towards discovering. How healed we are determines how whole we are.

But, it all begins in seeing God as He truly is.

To do so, each of us must recognize the fact He is not aloof. He is not distant. He is not somewhere out there. He is good. He is Father. He is Healer. He is Provider. He is the Great Physician. He is Teacher. He is Guide.

But again, these are just words and attributes until we discover how He is those things in our own life. I welcome you to help someone find out how God is who these roles are as you both continue to unpack where He was in others' lives and where He can be in theirs.

Once more, I welcome you to journey with someone to understand His roles by digging into what He has said about Himself. You can do this with them, by diving into these references:

**He is the path to life** – John 14:6

**He is near**—Psalm 34:18 & 145:18, Joshua 1:9, John 14:16

**He is compassionate** - Psalm 116:5

**He keeps His promises** - 2 Peter 3:9

**He sees value** – Matthew 6:26, Matthew 10:29-31

**He is Healer** – Exodus 15:26

**He is Teacher** - John 14:26

**His love will never end** – Psalm 86:15, Romans 8:38-39, Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:18-19, Zephaniah 3:17, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 107:8-9

You can also help them get to know who God is by checking out these videos:

### **Who Is God?**

Truth Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJb3vnyD3gY>

### **What Are The Attributes Of God?**

Got Questions Ministries

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJWn\\_c0n-3M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJWn_c0n-3M)

## **#3 - Understand His Roles - Video Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/MJkbSlvDoao>

## # 4 - Help Them Discover The “With” Factor

Sometimes, when I imagine where God is when I am suffering or hurting, the picture I see is of a rescue worker who is walking someone through a building which is on fire. They can not magically whisk the individual away from the crisis—but they can walk with them and provide them a way out.

Sometimes the way out is quick. Other times, it is a dangerous and desperate fight to get out of there. But in it—there is a guide, a counselor, someone who is saying, “I am clearing a way for you, we are going to make it through this.” In those moments, the “with factor” is the most important thing.

We must help those who are suffering understand the significance of Emmanuel, “God with us.”

It is vital for anyone who is hurting to grasp the fact God does not care for us at a distance. He wasn’t and isn’t a rescue worker, calling from outside of a burning building, shouting, “Hey, get out of there.”

No. He is the One beside us, in the smoke, in the dark, helping us to take one step at a time through hellish spaces, out towards the light. Not only did Emmanuel come near when He was born in Bethlehem, two millennia ago. He promises that through His Spirit He will be near us. Through relationship with Him, we discover He is there as Emmanuel in our struggles—even the darkest ones such as suicidal thought. He is the Author of Life. He is the Way. He is Truth. These things

mean He is light in our dark and clouded thoughts. It means He has never and will never leave us alone. There is a way for us to face the darkness and not be overcome by it.

In times in which I have felt the darkest in my own life, I constantly read and re-read Isaiah 43, in which God is speaking and He says, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” (Isaiah 43:1-3 NIV)

He is Emmanuel, He is with the one you care for. And as you help them to discover the with factor, you will be able to continue to be with them as they wrestle out the truth of where God is, even in their darkest struggles.

#### #4 - Discover The “With” Factor - Video Discussion



[https://youtu.be/mBrHmK\\_aqqU](https://youtu.be/mBrHmK_aqqU)

## **#5 - Help Them Recognize With Overrides Poof**

I admit. I like poofing problems away. I am American. I want fast answers. I want magical solutions. I loathe a process in which I have to undergo multiple rounds of micro-changes in order to reach a new outcome.

I even admit that when I see someone struggling or in pain, I want to provide a poof. I just don't think God works in a lot of "poofs."

Can He do anything and create a pathway in a snap?

I think He is powerful enough to. But I think, at times, He is loving enough not to.

This does not mean He won't remove the weight of a burden or provide freedom in ways which are quick. I have experienced that many times and am grateful for the immediate release of pressure.

It also does not mean that there are not situations in which we need to make instant decisions which will radically change our life because we must protect ourselves. This can include getting professional help, calling authorities, seeking treatment, or talking with someone.

But, there are also a ton of times in which the instant change is not possible. For me, at least, God has let me wrestle through a process of healing because I needed the time and space to explore the hurt or confusion.

And He was loving enough to give me that time and space.

Because here is the thing, inside of that space, I had Him. I have come to discover that “with” overrides “poof.”

We can help those we love to be able to see how being with God can help them to work through those dark thoughts. This can help them to find strength to keep fighting for life, hope, and wholeness. That being said, this should always be paired with skilled, professional help as well.

## #5 - Recognize With Overrides Poof - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/pkbsQfOhBrU>



## **#6 - Help Them Know That Healing Is A Process**

When I was in my early twenties, I had a friend who had a four-hundred-pound object crush her leg. She was fortunate it did not break. But, she did have a horrific bruise which was there a year later. Unsure what to do in order to have it heal, she consulted with a doctor who told her to see a massage therapist. The massage therapist let her know that the impact to her leg had crushed a number of her capillaries and there were numerous dead cells and dead tissue in her muscles—thus causing the sickly yellow and black bruise. The only way to get it out was to gently massage it for months in which she had to flush it out through therapy and by drinking a lot of water. It was painful. It was not quick. But, it was the only way to heal.

Many times, I believe 400 pounds of a devastating situation comes into our life and we too have areas which are bruised beyond normal repair. This can lead to mental health battles, dark thoughts, addictions, and numerous coping mechanisms which numb the impact of the situation—but do not heal it.

Eventually, we must connect with the right type of therapist and find a way to flush it out. This doesn't happen by denying the situation—but instead by tending to it.

Jesus has promised to be our Guide, Healer, Teacher, and Great Physician. But, we must allow God to work on those tender areas of our thoughts and emotions. Sometimes this happens through pastoral or



professional counseling in which someone can help us to see where God was and how He can restore us to wholeness. Other times, we discover it through our own pursuit of Him and by getting to know His goodness through His own words.

The fact you are seeking to demonstrate the love of God to someone who is struggling tells me you are able going to be used by God to come alongside of them through the process. By helping them to understand there is not a poof moment when it all goes away, you help them to see not only does healing take time, but you are willing to take that time with them.

With overrides poof, because when we are with our Healer, we unfold the depths of the healing.

Because healing is a process, not an event.

## #6 - Healing Is A Process - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/eqBPLhVCWRM>

## **#7 - Help Them Seek Multiple Sources**

If someone is asking the question, “Where is God when I am struggling?” it is due to the fact they have faced legitimate and valid situations which deserve to be acknowledged. It would be easy to simply say, “Oh He was right there all along.” and leave it at that. But, it is more important to get into the thick of the question and unpack both the character of God and how we can journey to find Him in a way which helps us to discover the answer to “Where were You?” along the way.

With that being said, I do believe it is important for anyone who is struggling to have spiritual guidance and counsel as they go through this process, but I also believe it is vital for them to seek multiple sources of help.

If they are struggling with suicidal thought, their first source for seeking help may not be from a faith-based source. And that is okay. Help them to know they have the freedom to seek help in whatever means necessary. Help them to know they have the right to seek multiple sources of skilled care. Faith-based care and trained professional care do not have to be at odds with one another. It is not a one or the other game.

While many of your discussions with them may be focused on wrestling the spiritual side of the question, “Where is God when I am struggling?” it does not negate the fact they may need to seek immediate, professional help if they are ever in danger, threat, or harm.

Additionally, even if they are not in immediate danger, they should know they are still welcome to seek skilled, professional care. Part of your role in their life may be to help them find that care.

Qualified professionals can take time to find. I would not want them to be unable to begin a process of seeking help because they cannot find someone. Help them to avoid feeling desperate because they do not know where to turn.

To get started on where those sources of help are, please turn to the Resource Guide at the back of this book.

## **#7 - Seek Multiple Sources - Video Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/vxp8m6b7kk4>

## **#8 - Help Them Find Community**

In order to walk a path towards wholeness, each of us must grow in our relationship with God. But, we also need something else—community. Both are part of His plan of restoration.

The fact you are reading this because you care for someone and want to demonstrate His love to them tells me that you are providing that kind of community.

The more you are able to invite them into places in which it is safe to explore the hard things of faith and doubt and hurt and struggle, inside of meaningful relationships, the more they have a chance to find God in the struggle.

You may desire to point them to events which happen inside of church buildings. This can be good. It is where many healthy relationships form. Just make sure that they are actually connecting with people, or else they may start to feel as if God Himself is distant. Getting connected to a church does not mean simply sitting inside of a building and absorbing knowledge about God. Instead, it is friendship, accountability, guidance, counsel, a place in which to be honest about what you are going through. It is a place to listen and be listened to—to give and to take. It is a family.

And I want to say I am proud of you for offering that sense of family to them.

As you help them in their search to find community, recognize it might happen both within and outside of your own faith community. They may need to connect with resources such as Celebrate Recovery, GriefShare, skilled counseling connections, and other mental health helps listed on other ministry websites.

Encourage them to ask for a meeting with one of the leaders at the church. Ask your leaders what local resources they know of—both inside and outside of the church which can help the person you care for. If they cannot point you in the right direction, feel free to reach out to a new community. And when they find an option, offer to go with them into that new space together.

At the end of the day, we all need at least one friend who can walk with us as we continue to find how God is part of our journey of wholeness and we can mutually support one another. I am grateful you are providing that for them. I truly believe this is vital for them to have as part of their story.

## #8 - Find Community - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/GUZfGeL9610>

## #9 - Help Them Seek Restoration

When I learned about the meaning of the word “restoration” it changed a lot for me. I had previously believed restoration meant erasing my pain or making my challenges disappear. To me, restoration was a “poof” more than a process.

And then I began to study what it meant.

Restoration means to return to the original starting point. It also often implies that the process of returning increases the original value. But to be clear—it is a process.

So, when we ask the question, “Where is God?” and we ask inside the context of restoration, we have to also ask, “What was the original starting point? If God offers us restoration, then where is He taking us?”

To answer that, we have to walk with someone back to the beginning, to the start of time when man enjoyed a perfectly whole and complete relationship with God. Sin and selfishness had not polluted the relationship. This meant inside of the original starting point man enjoyed a full understanding of how loved they were. They freely expressed that love back to God and enjoyed all of creation inside of perfection. There was no death. There were not painful childhoods or traumatic memories. Abuse was absent. Depression didn’t exist. Darkness had not entered the world.

But as long as we are part of a broken world, one in which sin and death are still part of our every day, there will be suffering. But, that does not negate the original promise.

God promises to restore all things. Some of this is done once we enter eternity with Him. But, some of it begins here and now despite depression, dark thoughts, painful childhoods, and traumatic memories. He begins that process of wholeness in our present.

By knowing Him, having Him guide us through healing, and discovering truth about ourselves, we are able to take those steps towards the original starting point. It is relationship with Him which helps us to do that.

We all are walking towards wholeness and healing—and as we invite Him into the process, we find we are able to find the hope we have been looking for. Helping someone you care for to be able to see restoration as a possibility, gives them the ability to see their story as redeemable.

## #9 - Seek Restoration - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/NEZb0iZNI9g>

## #10 - Permission Granted

“What do I do if I believe in God, love Him and want to be loved by Him—but I still feel the pull towards these thoughts and feelings?”

The person you care for—may be asking that. I don’t think we are always honest about this question. I don’t think a lot of us acknowledge that struggle. Yet, I think a lot of individuals who struggle feel that way. I believe you champion for their wholeness when you help them to find an answer to it.

Sometimes I think there is pressure to be “better” or “fixed” by the end of a message, a counseling session, a conversation with a friend, or a church service. Inside of our culture, we assume a solution will appear quickly and be adhered to immediately. But, it simply isn’t true. Remember, healing is a process, not an event. This means we have to allow someone room for moments when they aren’t okay.

None of us can provide words which erase, eliminate, or diminish the story someone already lived. Restoration isn’t about denying the past—but returning to a place of wholeness after acknowledging it and discovering healing. As you have listened and been there for them, you being in their life has hopefully brought that sense of acknowledgment and validation.

My hope is that your discussions, along with the tools and resources in the back of this booklet would offer them just a little bit more courage and insight than they might have had before—making it possible for them to keep journeying towards wholeness.



Keep giving them permission to be human.

While I do not want anyone to have suicidal thoughts, I also do not want them to feel shame for feeling them, as shame often pushes us farther from help or hope.

There is a stigma within the church world that we can not love God or be loved by Him if we also struggle with mental health. It is as if the two are not allowed to exist in the same space. When in fact, we are told that we will daily strive with our human nature and to hold onto the truth of who God is and how we are loved by Him. We must be granted permission to struggle as we begin to trust His love and learn His voice.

In addition to that, keep letting them know they have permission to get professional help. It does not eliminate God's work in their life. The two are not in competition, but can work in tandem. God can and does work through both.

Our entire team believes in you and the individual you love. We are rooting for them to find wholeness.

## **#10 - Permission Granted - Video Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/tKnlttoo5lw>



**I AM MOVING**

**FROM BROKEN TO WHOLE**

**FROM DARK TO LIGHT**

**FROM FORGOTTEN TO KNOWN**

## Reiterating Why You Offer Support

When an individual struggles with trauma, they often are caught in a mental battle of wondering why they are worth your time, effort or love.

The question in their mind constantly is, “Why someone would want to help me?”

They may also believe help will be temporary until someone sees them as a burden or as a person who is just “too much.”

Because of these factors, It is important for those offering support to be a continual source of reassurance in why you want to support them, why you want to see them reach a place of wholeness.

This does not mean they dictate our lives or we cater to every whim. That is not what I am talking about. Healthy boundaries are important in every relationship, even ones which have serious complications in the midst.

Yet, I believe one of the best things we can do for someone who is struggling because of abuse is to continuously and consistently reiterate *the why* behind our actions.

So, “Why would anyone want to help someone who is fighting to shift the story of abuse?”

I wholeheartedly believe it is because our care for that person gives us compassion and insight into three things: their future, their pathway, and their value.

## **Their Future**

You have an intrinsic belief that as someone you care for walks a path of wholeness and healing—they have a future.

## **Their Pathway**

You may not have the professional skill to offer the treatment or healing needed, yet you want to be with them on their pathway as they seek it out. You want to offer tangible guidance and see them win in the journey.

## **Their Value**

You have a foundational belief—that the person you care for has value. When you speak with them—it is directly tied into a personal reason why you believe they matter, have importance, and that the outcome of their life is important to you.

### **Reiterating Why You Offer Support - Video Discussion**



<https://youtu.be/fP4Xpr9jDz0>

# Building A Mental Health Safety Plan

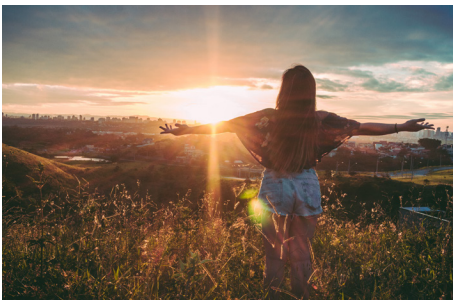
If you are taking a stand to heal from abuse, you know mental health often fights back. Taking action each time is a battle which is not easy. Yet, we hope that having a pathway can help you continue to seek wholeness.

**Please note:** Even with the best of plans, there are times in which a crisis is stronger than our plan. In those moments, seek immediate, professional help. The following ideas on how to fight back are not intended to take the place of professional help.

One such resource which has a fantastic list of tools and resources for creating a safety plan is *Challenge The Storm*. You can check out their advice here: <http://challengethestorm.org/safety-plans-mental-health/>

They even have a sample plan that any of us are able to use to help us learn how to build our own plan. You can check that out here: <http://www.knowresolve.org/docs/safety-plan-web.pdf>

## Building A Safety Plan - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/RwLBmGW4-Wg>

## **Safety Plan Resources**

**BeyondBlue App** provides tools to build and implement a safety plan.

### **Suicide Prevention Lifeline – Safety Plan Template.**

[https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown\\_St StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown_St StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf)

1 page safety plan print off with space to write in warning signs, coping strategies, and more.

### **Get Self-Help**

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlan.pdf>

Offers a second safety plan print off, with tools and resources from the UK.

### **Therapist Aid**

<https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheets/suicide/none>

Offers free worksheets for building a self-harm safety plan, suicide assessment, and warning signs.

### **Nick's Experience With Using A Safety Plan**

[https://youtu.be/jW2Hvv\\_vN40](https://youtu.be/jW2Hvv_vN40)

One young man's story of how he uses a safety plan in times which feel challenging.

## The Obstacles In Offering Help

It is fair to talk about the obstacles someone you care for may meet along their journey. It is incredibly tough to watch them face one or all of the following. I acknowledge the fact these moments can create tremendous setback or make it difficult for them, or maybe even you, to want to continue to fight for wholeness. I encourage you to continue to seek support and encouragement for yourself as you journey alongside of them. May you have the strength to continue to fight on.

- Help Seems Hopeless
- A Question Of Worth
- Lack Of Energy
- Disappointing Attempts

*For a more in-depth discussion about these points, including guidance on how to overcome them, check out the video below.*

### The Obstacles In Offering Help - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/P3DTsdnz8hA>



# Am I A Failure If Someone I Care For Won't Stop Hurting?

If someone you care constantly struggles because of their past, it can be incredibly painful.

You likely have noticed your own sense of worry, fears, and emotions for that person. This is natural, because you love them and want them to be healthy.

But the one things we don't talk about is the fact that beneath all of this, you may also feel a sense of failure.

If you feel as if you have failed at being a good friend or supportive loved one because the individual you care for has not found complete healing yet, I want you to know I understand. Your feelings are valid. But, you are not a failure.

In this instance, we need to change the parameters for what true success and failure really are. Let's continue the conversation in the video below:

## Fighting The Feeling Of Failure - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/3sffgEGhzE8>



# What To Do When A Loved One Pushes Back

Getting push back when you try to help, is frustrating. As you engage with them, remember it is important to:

1. Go at their pace.
2. Own what is yours.
3. And yet, know this may not be about you.

Recognize push back is often overcome by:

- Being consistent.
- Stating why you are for them.
- Reaffirming them.
- Apologizing for previous disappointments.

Lastly, be honest. It might be good to share how their behavior made you feel.

*For a more in-depth discussion about these points, and how to overcome them, check out the video below.*

## When A Loved On Pushes Back - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/RZvb4ZRt6rA>

## Turning The Battle At The Gate

I have been with individuals that I loved in some of their most desperate times. It is a privilege to be there for them. I want to be a representation of God's love and goodness. I want to be a voice of life and hope to them.

But, I also must admit it is incredibly painful to me personally. I become weary and drained. I fight my own worries that they are not going to be okay or that I did not do enough.

While I admit it is a constant fight of my own which I go back and forth on, I found one place in the Word which has given me personal hope as I watch others struggle.

*He will be a spirit of justice to the one who sits in judgment, a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.* Isaiah 28:6 NIV

I need to know that God is going to give me strength when the fight for life and hope has reached the very gate, about to crash into the last place of safety I have left. My prayer for you, is that you too would discover this source of strength for the places in your own life where they battle has come up to the very gate. He promises to be with you, just as much as the loved one who struggles.

May it be a source of hope, peace, and personal strength for you as you continue to demonstrate the love of God to those who struggle.

## The Goal Is Wholeness

Wholeness is about a state of contentment and peace in a life. It doesn't eliminate the past or any previous pain, instead it acknowledges how that pain has affected us—all while striving to form a new narrative.

Wholeness is about freedom—and I believe it is possible for each individual to discover for themselves.

Is it easy? Not at all. The pathway can be long and come with obstacles which may make us feel as if we may not make it.

But with the right support and tools—I intrinsically believe we can.

I welcome you, and those you care for, to find it.

### The Goal Is Wholeness - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/tG18UzeL26w>

## Identity Goes Beyond The Struggle

In the core of who I am—I am convinced none of us are defined by our struggles. Our identity goes far beyond what anyone stole from us, did to us, or how they disappointed us.

While it may be true you or someone you love has faced a deep struggle or have been treated in ways they did not deserve, I believe it does not have to be the key identifier of what makes an individual—them.

Wholeness is still available. Though it requires a journey, it's a pathway to be free of pain's influences—as if it was the only thing to define a life. I believe each of us still have life in front of us and it is filled with the ability for hope, the ability to make a difference in other's lives, and the ability to go out there and have positive and meaningful impact.

### Identity Goes Beyond The Struggle- Video



<https://youtu.be/CnMJlc8PIRE>

**CREATE A**  

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**TRAINING PLACE**  

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**AND STRATEGY SPACE**

## What Kind Of Help Exists?

Due to the intensive nature of abuse and the fact it speaks to deep internal struggles, finding help for trauma usually begins by sharing with a skilled professional. This often happens after someone tells a trusted individual who can help them connect with that skilled professional.

If you are the individual they turn to, be sure to encourage them. Reiterate that anything which is locked inside of their thoughts and feelings deserves a place to be processed in a safe environment which can give them actionable guidance and tools.

Additionally, there are a host of tools which can help you both find steps to taking action. These include:

- Apps Which Offer Mental Health Support
- Communities Which Offer Support
- Finding A Professional

### What Kind Of Help Exists? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/A7CNzHsrg0M>





## Your Invitation To Shift The Story

If you, or someone you care for, are looking for a way to walk a journey to shift an incomplete story towards truth, you are invited to change your narrative.

Come on a journey through twenty video-based pathway markers which offer guidance on how you or someone you care for can seek wholeness. Change Your Narrative believes everyone has the right to be able to take back the pen of your story.

## Come On A Journey To Find Wholeness...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThTdleKhcCY&t=6s>

## **Please Note:**

All statements and views within this book, the **change your narrative** website, and the videos on our YouTube channel are strictly opinion based. They are not intended to be utilized as professional treatment or care. If you or someone you care for struggles with mental illness, depression, suicidal thought or destructive life choices, I highly recommend seeking out professional help.

**If you are in immediate harm or danger call 911.**

## **Additional Resources:**

24/7/365 Crisis Call Center Hotline:  
1 (1800) 273-8255

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1 (1800) 273-8255

Text "Answer" to 839863

Chat with a Soul Medic:

<http://remedylive.com/soulmedics/>



## **Resource Guide:**

Apps Which Offer Support  
Communities Which Offer Support

### **Resources For:**

Survivors

Parents

Families

How To Support A Loved One

Ministry Leaders

Teachers

Men

Teenagers Who Struggle

Teenagers Whose Friends Struggle



## **Apps Which Offer Support**

**TalkLife** offers online support similar to group therapy. Share anonymously or with your name.

**Moodpath** offers 14 days of check ins, providing an overview of your emotional well-being. Plus 100+ exercises.

**Happify** includes games and activities which elevate mood and build resilience through CBT, mindfulness and positivity.

**What's Up** aids individuals in discovering the cause of feelings and thoughts through guided questioning.



**Self-Help For Anxiety Management (SAM)** offers an anxiety toolkit which tracks thoughts and behaviors, while also offering tools to combat negativity.

**Panic Relief** provides coping strategies, exercise, and breathing techniques to help move through a moment of panic.

**PTSD Coach** provides ways to understand PTSD along with how to find additional help.

**BeyondBlue App** provides tools to build and implement a safety plan.



## **Communities Which Offer Support**

### **Rape, Abuse And Incest National Network**

<https://www.rainn.org/>

1 (800) 656-4673

Provides connections to over 1,000 national sources of support for survivors.

### **The National Domestic Violence Hotline**

<https://www.thehotline.org/resources/victims-and-survivors/>

1 (800) 799 – 7233

Provides an extensive listing of support options, resources, videos, and chat or hotline features for numerous abuse situations.

### **1 in 6**

<https://1in6.org/helpline/>

Provides support specifically for men.

**Love Is Respect -**

<https://www.loveisrespect.org>

1 (866) 331 – 9474

Offers education, support and advocacy to those facing complicated dating issues, along with a live chat feature connecting you to trained advocates.

**The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline**

<https://www.childhelp.org/hotline/>

Provides 24/7 support with trained support counselors in numerous languages.

**Lifeline Crisis Chat -**

<https://www.contact-usa.org/chat.html>

Offers free, online chatting with trained individuals.

**To Write Love On Her Arms -**

<https://twloha.com/find-help/>

Offers a search for free or low cost therapy options to connect with a therapist.

**Anxiety And Depression Association Of America -**

<https://adaa.org/supportgroups>

Provides a listing of support groups, including a search feature to find a group near you.

# Resources For Survivors

## Understanding Trauma

### Why Are Shame And Trauma Connected?

Kati Morton

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noYwPItBdRU>

Defining shame and trauma, how they affect us, and how to break the cycle. She discusses ways to move through the feeling of shame and heal. Note: Some ideas are more progressive than others. Each viewer needs to consider the path they do chose and get wisdom for their own journey and if these steps are right for them.

### The Impact of Trauma

TED

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk>

Offers Insight into the effects of trauma and how early adversity affects a life. Advocates for communities to rally for healing.

### The Three Secrets Of Resilient People

TEDxTalks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWH8N-BvhAw>

Lucy Hone discusses three ways to administer self-care in the midst of painful circumstances.



## **Emotional Abuse**

### **What Is Emotional Abuse?**

<https://www.statepress.com/article/2017/02/spopinion-emotional-abuse-is-dangerous-trauma>

Educational insight on the effects of psychologically aggressive behaviors, complete with statistics.

### **5 Must Know Signs Of Emotional Abuse**

Kati Morton

[https://youtu.be/A5fw-IT\\_phU](https://youtu.be/A5fw-IT_phU)

Kati discusses ways to identify emotional abuse and what to do next.

## **Tools and Resources**

### **Expressive Writing: Words That Heal**

By James W. Pennebaker

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1611580463>

Offers insight into the benefits of processing trauma by writing—along with specific exercises and prompts on how to find resolution.



## Resources for Parents

### Parents Anonymous

<http://parentsanonymous.org/programs/parents-anonymous-groups/adult-group/>

Offers a network of in-person support groups. From website: “Groups offer a caring and supportive environment where parents and caregivers support each other and explore new parenting strategies, address underlying emotional issues, and create long lasting positive changes in their families.”

### How To Recognize Abuse

<https://ourkidscenter.com/learn/how-to-recognize-abuse/>

Downloadable PDF answers the question, “How do I recognize abuse?” and “What should I do if I suspect Abuse?”

## **ChildWelfare.Gov Tip Sheets**

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/resources/tip-sheets/>

Description from website: “Tip sheets are designed for service providers to share with parents and caregivers in the context of a particular concern or question. They are not intended to tell the whole story; they merely provide a starting point for a discussion between parent and provider that is grounded in the protective factors.” Tip Sheets can be found in English and Spanish.

Sample Subjects (direct from website) include:

- How to Develop Supportive Communities
- Keeping Your Family Strong
- Connecting With Your Teen
- Building Resilience in Children and Teens
- Preventing Child Sexual Abuse
- Parenting After Domestic Violence
- Helping Your Child Heal From Trauma

## **Helping Your Teen Through An Unhealthy Relationship**

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/blog/unhealthy-teen-relationships>

Article offers guidance for concerned parents to understand what their child is facing, how to discuss difficult subjects and what resources are available.

## **Parenting Children and Youth Who Have Experienced Abuse or Neglect**

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/parenting\\_CAN.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/parenting_CAN.pdf)

Printable PDF guide to understanding preventative measures parents can take to safeguard their families, along with tools and resources for youth who have experienced trauma and need strong family support through their healing journey.

## **Helping Your Child Heal From Trauma (tip sheet):**

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/resources/tip-sheets/>

## **Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma**

(factsheet): <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/child-trauma/>

## **Healing The Harm Done: A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Overcome the Effects of Sexual Abuse**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/097436262X>

Guides parents through an understanding of their child's perspective—along with offering support and care for parents in their own grief or pain.

## Support For Families

**The National Alliance On Mental Illness** has a directory of support groups for you and your family.

<https://www.nami.org/find-support/nami-programs/nami-family-support-group>

**The Society For Adolescent Health And Medicine** has a comprehensive listing of additional support options.

<https://www.adolescenthealth.org/Resources/Clinical-Care-Resources/Mental-Health/Mental-Health-Resources-For-Parents-of-Adolescents.aspx>

**The Depression And Bipolar Alliance Support Alliance** offers connection to local chapters.

[https://secure2.convio.net/dabsa/site/SPageServer/PageServer?pagename=help\\_family\\_center\\_support](https://secure2.convio.net/dabsa/site/SPageServer/PageServer?pagename=help_family_center_support)

**Family Caregiver Alliance** provides a map of network help in your area.

<https://www.caregiver.org/family-care-navigator>



## **How To Support A Loved One**

### **College Sexual Assault Prevention: A Parent's Guide**

<https://www.noodle.com/articles/college-sexual-assault-prevention-a-parents-guide>

Offers parents a comprehensive guide along with questions to ask of your child's campus leadership in order to advocate the safety of your child.

### **How to Support a Friend or Loved One Who Has Been Sexually Abused**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/27/smarter-living/sexual-abuse-assault-support-mental-health.html>

Offers guidance on how to care for survivors, including what to say, how to provide support, and understanding of the issue.

## **Things Not To Say And How Not To Approach A Sexual Assault Survivor**

UW Medicine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4zOZ5xSADk>

A survivor shares reactions she received, how it affected her, and what she needed instead. She offers those of us who seek to provide support to a survivor insight on how to care for those we love.

## **Why Are Shame And Trauma Connected?**

Kati Morton

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noYwPitBdRU>

Defining shame and trauma, how they affect us, and how to break the cycle. She discusses ways to move through the feeling of shame and heal. Note: Some ideas are more progressive than others. Each viewer needs to consider the path they do chose and get wisdom for their own journey and if these steps are right for them.

## **The Impact of Trauma**

TED

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk>

Offers Insight into the effects of trauma and how early adversity affects a life. Advocates for communities to rally for healing.



## **Resources For Ministry Leaders**

### **Becoming a Church that Cares Well for the Abused**

<https://churchcares.com>

A video-based curriculum series from

professionals who are equipped to train churches and the communities they represent on how to offer the right type of support and care for those who have faced a variety of forms of abuse.

### **How Your Church Can Support Sexual Abuse Survivors**

<https://www.rca.org/we-are-speaking/resources-pastors-and-congregations>

Keys for how to create an environment of support for women who are domestic violence victims.



## **We Too: How the Church Can Respond Redemptively to the Sexual Abuse Crisis**

By Mary DeMuth

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0736979182>

From Amazon's description, "We like to think the church is a haven for the hurting. But what happens when it's not?" Title is a firsthand account of one woman's journey to find support within the church—and a call for the church to be there as a place of safety for others like her.

## **Understanding Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Ministry Leaders and Survivors**

by [Tim Hein](#), [Debra Hirsch](#)

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0830841350>

Provides firsthand insight of someone experiences abuse, how it shapes their views of life and themselves, along with what needs they have. Combined with both theological and psychological insights.

## **Ministry Safe Prevention & Awareness Training**

<https://ministrysafe.com/the-safety-system/awareness-training/>

How to put a system of prevention in place in your community. Includes prevention plans for churches, camps and conference centers, schools, youth sports, foster and adoption, child services, daycares and preschools.

## **What To Do When A Young Person Talks About Abuse**

<https://fulleryouthinstitute.org/blog/when-a-young-person-discloses-abuse>

Provides insight and practical tools for leaders to support students who talk about abuse, along with how to guide them towards healing.

## **What Should You Do When You Suspect Child Abuse?**

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/what-should-you-do-when-you-suspect-child-abuse/>

Scholastic provides an in-depth analysis of what to do, as a teacher, when you suspect a child you know is being abused.

## **Supporting Brain Development in Traumatized Children and Youth**

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/braindevtrauma/>

Provides education on the impact of trauma and brain development, screening guidelines and treatment options for affected youth.

## **The Role of Educators in Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect**

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/educator/>

The Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Children's Bureau has provided tip sheets and resource sheets for educators and community leaders. Complete with resources, educational insight, and informed guidance.



## **Resources For Teachers**

### **What Should You Do When You Suspect Child Abuse?**

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/what-should-you-do-when-you-suspect-child-abuse/>

Scholastic provides an in-depth analysis of what to do, as a teacher, when you suspect a child you know is being abused.

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To read more, visit: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/innovations/wp/2017/09/25/teenage-suicide-is-extremely-difficult-to-predict-thats-why-some-experts-are-turning-to-machines-for-help/>

## **Tips For Talking About Your Mental Health**

<https://www.mhanational.org/time-talk-tips-talking-about-your-mental-health>

Includes several prompts which help students get started with beginning an important conversation, including a letter template. Can be utilized as a means for helping young people frame the discussion.

# Resources For Men

## **Understanding Male Sexual Abuse & Challenges For Healing**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbYPpxBqOYY>

APA Division 56 - Trauma Psychology

Provides concise factors which affect male survivors, along with what protective factors exist.

## **Men Need To Talk About Their Sexual Abuse**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4Cl0p1zIVM>

TEDxTalks

Survivor Seth Shelley discusses the value of speaking your story—and finding ways to challenge the narrative of abuse.

## **Reimagining Masculinity: My Journey**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWWPZlaq35U>

TEDxTalks

One man shares his story of assault as an adult male—and his journey of recovery.

## **What Is Emotional Abuse?**

<https://www.statepress.com/article/2017/02/spopinion-emotional-abuse-is-dangerous-trauma>

Educational insight on the effects of psychologically aggressive behaviors, complete with statistics.

## **5 Must Know Signs Of Emotional Abuse**

Kati Morton

[https://youtu.be/A5fw-IT\\_phU](https://youtu.be/A5fw-IT_phU)

Kati discusses ways to identify emotional abuse and what to do next.

## **The Three Secrets Of Resilient People**

TEDxTalks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWH8N-BvhAw>

Lucy Hone discusses three ways to administer self-care in the midst of painful circumstances.

## **Expressive Writing: Words That Heal**

By James W. Pennebaker

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1611580463>

Offers insight into the benefits of processing trauma by writing—along with specific exercises and prompts on how to find resolution.

## **Resources For Teenagers Who Struggle**

### **The Sexual Trauma Workbook for Teen Girls: A Guide to Recovery from Sexual Assault and Abuse**

by Raychelle Cassada Lohmann PhD LPC, & Sheela Raja PhD

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1626253994>

Provides guidance from survivors, along with short, actionable prompts to build a circle of support, tools, and healing resources.

### **The PTSD Workbook for Teens: Simple, Effective Skills for Healing Trauma**

by Libbi Palmer PsyD

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1608823210>

Provides insight combined with short, actionable prompts to build a circle of support, tools, and healing resources.

### **Beyond PTSD: Helping and Healing Teens Exposed to Trauma**

by Ruth Gerson, Patrick Heppell

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1615371109>

Collaborative voices join together to address multiple sources of trauma, how it affects teens, and how to offer informed guidance and support—all with student perspectives in mind.

## **Time To Talk: Talking To Your Parents**

<https://www.mhanational.org/time-talk-talking-your-parents>

Includes reactions to thoughts and feelings you might be having about talking with your parents and how you can build courage in order to find support.

## **Tips For Talking About Your Mental Health**

<https://www.mhanational.org/time-talk-tips-talking-about-your-mental-health>

Includes a letter template to help you get started with beginning an important conversation.

## **Expressive Writing: Words That Heal**

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# change your narrative

## The Place Where The Discussion Continues...

THE SAFE PLACE TO TALK ABOUT THE **ISSUES THAT MATTER** TO YOU



[ImChangingIt.com](http://ImChangingIt.com)





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