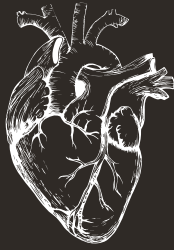


7 SESSION
VIDEO AND
DISCUSSION
GUIDE



TRAUMA-FRIENDLY CHURCH

Welcoming
those Suffering
& Being Aware
of Your Own.

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INTRODUCTION



Our cities, towns, neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces & churches are filled with people who have experienced large and small traumas. Are you equipped to welcome, love, serve & disciple them?

We are so pleased to offer you this series on becoming a trauma-friendly church with **Brenton Diaz**, to help equip more of us in Canada towards deeper empathy and compassion as we live out the reconciling good news of Jesus Christ.

In Christ's care,

Joel Zantingh

PRN Canadian Coordinator



About Our Presenter, Brenton Diaz

Brenton Diaz is a Trauma Therapist based in the Greater Toronto Area. He serves as the Coordinator of the Newcomers' Health and Well-being Program at Cedar Centre. He teaches on Trauma at Tyndale Seminary, and at Christian universities and seminaries in countries like Lithuania, Ukraine, Kenya and Malawi, and Ethiopia. He also teaches in the Social Work departments at two Toronto-area universities. He is currently working with the Rwandan and Tigrayan (Ethiopian) diaspora communities in North America to equip these communities to recover from the genocides they have experienced. He is blessed with an amazing wife, Christy, and four incredible children, all of whom provide him with endless inspiration and deep love.

ABOUT US

Within the Peace and Reconciliation Network, **we have a vision to see the world living in peace, reconciled in Jesus Christ** by inspiring and equipping the church and people of peace to enable communities to live life in all its fulness.

This work is expressed through the 140+ national evangelical alliances around the world like the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

There is no cost to this course. but PRN does our work through the generosity of donors like you.

Thank you!

As followers of Jesus in Canada, we see the needs of rising division in our communities, and the remedies from peace building that confronts ethnic hostility, racism, violence, and injustice. Becoming trauma-friendly is one way we can grow to meet these as well as other needs.

Let's strengthen and support the church in living out the good news of Jesus by embracing differences across generations, genders, and cultures, by confronting injustices, and pursuing peace and reconciliation for First Nations, Diaspora groups, and all of Canadian society, to the glory of God.

HOPE FOR A FRAGILE
CHURCH AND A
FRACTURED WORLD



OUR GOAL

EVERY CHURCH
A CENTRE OF
RECONCILIATION

Grow with others.

Gather a group to watch the episodes, discuss the provided questions or others that will arise, pray together, and plan for action in your community. You can do the whole course in a 3-hour block (with plenty of time for conversation) or space it out over a few weeks. Or, have everyone watch the episodes on their own and then gather in person or even online to discuss, pray, and plan.

Include empathetic leaders.

To shape a trauma-friendly culture of your church, think about those who have empathy to help others learn and apply these simple principles.

Consider a Q&A with our presenter.

If your group has a lot of interest, PRN is able to facilitate an online Q&A with Brenton Diaz. Together, you will be able to process what this might look like in your context. Send requests to joel.zantingh@reconciled.world.



SESSION 1

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TRAUMA, TRAUMA, ALL AROUND

Highlights:

- Trauma occurs when someone has “experienced or witnessed event(s) so extreme, severe, powerful, harmful or threatening, it/they require extraordinary coping efforts.” (Meichenbaum)
- Trauma can be seen as “a state of physical and/or emotional shock, which may be a result of real, anticipated, imagined or forgotten experiences, or encounters. Trauma may occur at an individual level, a group level, and a cultural level.” (Laungani).
- The “trick of trauma”: Trauma makes us feel like we’re still in danger when we’re not in danger any longer.

For Discussion:

- How do we believe God relates to suffering? How does this impact how we as Christian congregations respond to suffering?
- How would you describe the difference between suffering and trauma?
- How do we relate and minister to people who are injured, whose recovery from their psychological injuries seem to be taking a long time?



SESSION 2

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Highlights:

- The physiological responses to trauma are consistent across different people, but the ways these responses are interpreted, understood, and treated can vary from culture to culture.
- To reconcile people who have been torn about by trauma and violence, we can begin by acknowledging the communal aspects of trauma: the healing, we have learned, can often flow through meeting together and engaging with one another.

For Discussion:

- How does culture impact the way you experience trauma?
- What are some things you have learned from other cultures that might help you to understand or respond to trauma and suffering?



SESSION 3

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RECOGNIZING TRAUMA'S IMPACT

Highlights:

- We have different reactions to protect ourselves when we are experiencing an overwhelming event. These reactions – physical, emotional, or cognitive – can stay with us long after the overwhelming event is over. They stay with us because our bodies are conditioned through the overwhelming event to protect ourselves from it happening again. When we experience these symptoms, our body is trying to protect us.
- We can BE safe, and yet not FEEL safe.
- Trauma is also felt on a community level.

For Discussion:

- How can our churches be helping communities of people defined by trauma and repair the bonds that have been damaged (on individual and group levels)?
- How can we connect with people to learn how trauma impacts them, so that we can go about the work of reconciliation and trauma healing?



SESSION 4

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CAN WE LAMENT?

Highlights:

- The physiological responses to trauma are consistent across different people, but the ways these responses are interpreted, understood, and treated can vary from culture to culture.
- To reconcile people who have been torn about by trauma and violence, we can begin by acknowledging the communal aspects of trauma: the healing, we have learned, can often flow through meeting together and engaging with one another.

For Discussion:

- How does culture impact the way you experience trauma?
- What are some things you have learned from other cultures that might help you to understand or respond to trauma and suffering?



SESSION 5

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THE NEEDED POWER OF LISTENING

Highlight:

- Listening non-judgmentally validates the experience of others, breaks up isolation, gives people an opportunity to organize their thoughts, and helps to release thoughts of self-blame.

For Discussion:

- How did Jesus listen? What can we learn from His example of listening?
- What gets in the way of our listening?
- How do we foster a greater sense of compassionate listening within our congregation?



SESSION 6

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PUT ON SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

Highlights:

- Empathy involves seeing people as people; just like we are.
- We can often let our stereotypes prevent us from putting ourselves in other's shoes.
- But, if we build a relationship with them, we can see who they really are and share Christ's love with them.
- Empathy isn't necessarily feeling what other people feel but communicating to them that they are heard and understood.
- "Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish... Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human" (Henri J.M. Nouwen).

For Discussion:

- Can you think of instances when Jesus shows empathy? What can we learn? o How can we show the suffering that we understand them on some level?
- What are some challenges to empathy?
- How can we translate empathy into action?



SESSION 7

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BECOMING A HEALING CHURCH

Highlights:

- Trauma is often felt on a community level. When bonds between people are broken the culture itself can be fractured.
- Communities can be ripped apart by trauma making reconciliation very important.
- Local congregations can humbly work together in a posture of humility, concern, and love.
- Let's be bold in following God into this work: His passion is to heal and reconcile...and He is calling us to this work.

For Discussion:

- How can we foster the development of our local Christian community to come around those suffering in our midst?
- What is needed to heal communities ripped apart by mass trauma?
 - o What is a next step for you to be a healing trauma-friendly church?



SPIRITUAL REFLECTION & ACTION

LIVING IT
OUT

What you have just experienced might have prompted you to ask what God is guiding you towards.

Prepare yourself by slowing your breathing, and think about God's presence with you, wherever you are.

Reflect back over the insights and challenges from this course. Is there any particular moment God is drawing you to remember? What is your emotional response of reaction, whether positive or filled with tension?

Notice any person or group who came to mind in the course of this study. What might God be asking you to do? How could this inform your praying, your volunteerism, your charity?

What would you like to ask God for, in order to put any of these things into practice?

In the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.





LET'S WORK TOGETHER

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The Peace and Reconciliation Network is a commission of the **World Evangelical Alliance**. Our work spans the globe, but are thankful to work in Canada in partnership with the **Evangelical Fellowship of Canada**, an active WEA member.

