

**Know Hope**  
**AACC World Conference**

Practical Support for Trauma Recovery: 7 Spiritual and Lifestyle Keys That Set the Stage for Healing

**Presenters:**  
Kevin Ellers, D. Min.  
Jennifer Ellers, M.A.

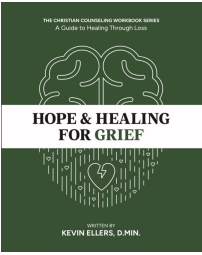
1

**Disclosure Statement**

Dr. Kevin Ellers and Jennifer Ellers have no relevant disclosures to make other than royalties received for the following book referenced in the session:

*Hope & Healing for Grief: A Guide to Healing Through Loss*

Book signing:  
Friday 4-5 p.m.



2

**Learning Objectives**

1. Analyze the limitations of traditional “talk therapy” and review data for the most effective treatment modalities
2. Explain evidence-based lifestyle and spiritual interventions that research shows are effective for trauma recovery for Christian clients
3. Discuss ways to implement the most effective interventions into a comprehensive recovery plan for clients with different needs

3

**Cutting Edge Trauma Treatments**

- Vast number of new treatment modalities
- Most are models of talk therapy
- Some are medical and drug interventions that are significantly different than all past and current recommended treatments

4

**Cutting Edge Trauma Treatments**

- Ketamine infusions
- MDMA treatment
- SGB – Stellate Ganglion Block

Not covered by insurance  
Very expensive  
Concerns about adverse reactions and side effects

5

**Challenges in Treating Trauma**

- In August 2022, Psychology Today posted an article on their website titled “The Limitations of Evidence-based Treatments for PTSD”
- Current recommended treatments for PTSD have severe limitations – they don’t work for all and some studies don’t show trauma informed approaches to be significantly more effective than other therapeutic approaches

6

**Challenges in Treating Trauma**

High dropout rates in treatment and non-response rates in follow up.

- 24-39% dropout rates in treatment
- Some studies show as high as 50% nonresponse rate
- That means half of patients report no benefit to treatment

7

- Show up & shut up
- Ask great questions
- Soak time
- Strategic activities
- Check in about “The Space Between”

8

**The Space Between**

**Intentional Engagement**

9

**Proven and Biblical Lifestyle and Spiritual Practices**

1. Most have numerous studies showing efficacy.
2. They are simple life changes/practices with very limited risk of adverse reactions or harm
3. They are known to support overall mental health and wellness
4. They can be encouraged by therapists, coaches, pastors or any supportive person
5. They are free

10

**Trauma and the Body**

Research on the neurobiology of trauma has continued to reinforce the strong relationship between psychological trauma and the body.

We understand that trauma is carried in the body as well as the mind and the function of the central nervous system is impacted – definitely in the short term and often in the long-term.

11

**Disclaimer**

The keys reviewed in this session are never to be interpreted as a substitute for clinical treatment by a trained mental health professional utilizing an evidence-based treatment recommended for the treatment of PTSD and complex trauma

12

**AACC** **Disclaimer**

- Don't practice outside of the scope of your expertise
- Important for clients to have a primary care physician
- May need to refer to other professionals for support including other medical professionals, pastors/spiritual directors, nutritionists, fitness experts/trainers,

13

**AACC** **7 Keys For Trauma Healing**

1. Gratitude
2. Authentic Conversations with God
3. Movement
4. Sleep and Rest
5. Nature and Grounding
6. Healthy Support/Community
7. Joy

14

**AACC** **Therapeutic Alliance**

- Much research supports the truth that the relationships between therapist and client, doctor and patient, is key to successful treatment.
- This is even more true than when helping a trauma survivor

15

**AACC** **Quote by Carl Rogers**

*"In my early professional years, I was asking the question, How can I treat, or cure, or change this person? Now I would phrase the question in this way: How can I provide a relationship which this person may use for his own personal growth?"*  
 -Carl R. Rogers

16

**AACC** **Collaborative Approach**

- A collaborative rather than prescriptive approach is being shown to be more effective and build stronger therapeutic alliance
- Work with the client to find what works best for them and what they are willing to try
- The client should retain the power to choose what they are comfortable with and what feels safe

17

**AACC** **Challenges**

**Trauma can cause:**

- Negative thoughts and mood
- Negative self-talk
- Overall negative mindset

18

**Key Scriptures**

**Philippians 4:8**  
 ¶ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

**1 Thessalonians 5:18**  
 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

19

**1. Gratitude**

Much research on the gratitude and the effects of a gratitude practice on physical and mental health in last decade.

Research is clear that it works.

The question is how to help clients incorporate gratitude in a way that feels authentic and changes the way they think.

20

**Gratitude**

**What is gratitude?**

- The positive feeling of being thankful for someone or something.
- An emotional training tool to help your brain to focus on the positive
- The opposite of our negative inner voice
- Disrupts negative thinking patterns

21

**Gratitude Practices**

- Gratitude journal
- Gratitude jar
- Gratitude walk
- Gratitude photo album on your phone
- Gratitude letter (to someone you are grateful for)
- Gratitude objects
- Pre-sleep gratitude exercise

22

**Gratitude**

23

**Spiritual Challenges**

**Trauma can create:**

- **Feelings of distance from God**
- **A crisis of faith**
- **Anger with God**

24

**Key Scripture: He Gets It!**

**Jesus the Great High Priest: Hebrews 4:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,<sup>15</sup> Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

25

**Authentic Conversations With God**

**Philippians 4:6-7**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

26

**Authentic Conversations with God**

- Lots of research on prayer
- Trauma can bring disruption in relationship with God
- Important that survivors feel they can share authentically and honestly
- Movement toward "Authentic Prayer"

27

**Challenge**

- Trauma creates dissociation from our body
- It can create stress that is held in the body in a toxic manner
- It can cause figurative and literal contraction in the body

28

**Key Scripture**

**I Corinthians 6: 19-20**


Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

29

**3. Movement**


- Recent research shows how trauma is held in the body and alters the central nervous system
- Work of Bessel Vander Kolk and Peter Levine stress how trauma is held in the body and must be released

30

 **Movement**


- Exercise  
(walking, HIIT, weights, cardio and weights)
- Sports – individual or team
- Yoga – some people of faith will not feel comfortable with yoga.
- Trauma Release Exercises

31

 **Movement**


- Exercise  
Numerous studies have shown the positive impact of exercise on mental health
- Moderate physical exercise (walking) 20-40 minutes 3X per week – more effective than medication or social support or control
- Meta-analysis of studies showed exercise to be more beneficial for depression and anxiety than CBT OR medication

32

 **TRE**

- Tension and Trauma Releasing Exercises
  - Created by David Berceli, Ph.D.
  - For stress, mild – moderate or severe trauma
  - Exercises on YouTube –but recommended that you learn with a certified practitioner for severe trauma that can teach you and give you instruction for self-practice


33

 **Rebounding Benefits**

1980s NASA discovered that rebounding:


- Can work the entire body without applying excess pressure to the legs and feet.
- Increases oxygen uptake about 68% more than running does due to the increase g-force.
- Benefits the body on a cellular level at a greater rate than other methods of exercising.

34

 **Other Rebounding Benefits**

- Works entire body – over 400 muscles
- Low joint impact
- Inexpensive
- Brings joy!

35

 **Challenge**

- Trauma creates sleep disturbance  
Nearly always in the short term  
Often long term
- REM stage sleep is critical for trauma recovery
- If trauma survivors don't get adequate sleep – they are more likely to develop PTSD

36

**Scripture**

**Psalm 127:1-2**

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.

37

**Sleep and Rest**

Numerous studies link quality sleep to mental health

- Relationship between Trauma/PTSD and sleep is complicated
- Trauma disrupts sleep
- The brain needs REM sleep in order to recover from trauma
- Key research studies done at UC-Berkley by Dr. Matthew Walker

38

**Sleep**

- Critical to help trauma survivors get restorative sleep
- Do a sleep audit
- Start with good sleep hygiene
- If not effective - refer to physician/sleep clinic

39

**Challenge**

Trauma can create

- Dissociation with the natural world
- Disconnection from God
- Disconnection from self

40

**Scripture**

**Job 12:7-10**

**7** "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;  
**8** or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you.  
**9** Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?  
**10** In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

41

**Earthing/Grounding**

**We were designed for connection with the earth**

42

**Grounding/Earthing Science**  
**Dr Laura Koniver, M.D.**

43

**For the Beauty of the Earth**  
 Hymn by Foliott S. Pierpoint

*When I feel the warm sun on my face, I better understand "God is light, in Him is no darkness at all."*

*When I gaze at the enchanting glow of the moon, I better understand our God of Wonder, that he longs for us to stand in awe of Him.*

*When I bathe in the lake or sea, I better comprehend the cleansing blood of Jesus that washes away my sins.*

*When I feel the wind whip my hair in every direction, I better understand the Holy Spirit's power.*

*When I take in lush greenery and rows of food to be harvested, I think of God's provision for His people.*

*When I delight in the colorful flowers in my garden, I think God's delight in me, that He cares enough to make pretty things to simply make life happy.*

*When I gaze at a majestic mountain scene, I better understand "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge."*

44

**Challenge**

Trauma can cause

- Withdrawal and isolation
- Negative self-talk
- Lack of self-compassion

45

**Scripture**

**Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12**

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

46

**Healthy Support/Community**

- The studies linking social support to resilience and trauma recovery are too numerous to mention.
- Studies on just nearly every type of trauma from disasters to assault exist and all find strong connections between perceived social support and recovery.
- Because trauma can cause withdrawal from connections and intimacy with others – restoring healthy connection is critical to recovery.

47

**Assess Client's Social Support Network**

- Ask about social support as part of intake and social history
- Early in treatment, ask client to create a social support network – start with 3 people
- Many will not be able to come up with 3
- Some will not be able to come up with one

48



**Criteria for Social Support Network**

- Safety/Trust
- Confidence that they will be there for them if needed
- Should be people who know them well - preferably not new friends
- Supportive
- Honest

49

**Social Support**

May Include:

- Family
- Spouse
- Friends
- Church family
- Co-workers
- Pets



**They may need you to help them objectively assess their support system!**

50

**Social Support**

**Be cautious when including**

- Boyfriend/girlfriend
- Ex spouse
- Boss/supervisor

**Should not include those who are:**

- Excessively critical - judgmental
- In a personal crisis themselves

51

**Challenge**

- Trauma can cause Anhedonia  
an inability to feel pleasure

Common symptom of depression, but often present in PTSD as well as other mental illnesses.

Those with severe anhedonia may need medication, but others just need to be intentional about bringing joy into their life.

52

**Scripture**

**Proverbs 17:22**


A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones

53

**Joy**

- What brings you joy?
- Varies widely from person to person
- Key to help clients re-discover joy

54

 **Joy Discovery Exercises**

- When you were a child, what did you love to do?
- What always makes you smile?
- What always makes you life?
- What are your most treasured memories, possessions, experiences?
- Music, art, nature, children, animals
- Sensory stimulation

55

 [www.resetlifecoaching.net](http://www.resetlifecoaching.net)

Handout available under the “Resource” tab at end of the list



56