



# CPSC Notes

COUNCIL FOR PASTORAL AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLORS

No 33 – August 2025

## What comes after harm?

Dear Affiliates,

**All ethical codes for counselling emphasize the “Do not harm” ethical code.**

Human relationships are complex, and it is not difficult to harm someone even without intending to do it. Ethical principles for counselling are designed to prevent causing disappointments, violation of trust and confidentiality, incompetent care or treating someone with disrespect, thus, to prevent doing harm.

**But doing harm expands further than counselling relationships.** It is a principle that applies to marriage relationships, friendships, work relationships, and other social relationships, for example those embedded in churches, businesses, non-profit organizations (NPOs), educational institutions, medical institutions, national and multinational businesses, state departments and national-cultural contexts.

**What happens after harm?** Errors and misunderstanding can happen in all relationships and harm is often experienced by one or all parties. How do we repair harm done in relationships? The Bible encourages a mindset of forgiveness and the continual practice of forgiveness. Matthew 18:21-22 narrates the conversation between Peter and Jesus about forgiveness.

Peter wanted to know how many times he should forgive his brother who sinned against him. Jesus replied: *“I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven”*. Jesus instructed us that our forgiveness should be limitless and unending. The seventy times seven is a symbolic presentation of the perfection of forgiveness. God’s grace, forgiveness and mercy are complete and perfect and sufficient to save and heal us.

Ethical leadership is essential for guiding and leading individuals and groups in a constructive and caring way that adheres to Biblical standards. **What is ethical leadership?** Christian ethical leaders and managers make decisions based on what the right thing is to do based on



Biblical truth and leading from the Holy Spirit. This type of leadership considers the common good in alignment with the Bible. **The golden rule in Christian ethics is to love your neighbour as yourself.** Leviticus 19:18 states: *“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself; I am the Lord”*.

Jesus highlighted this instruction as one of the two greatest commandments in Matthew 12:30-31 - *“Love the Lord your God*

*with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

**The principles relevant in ethical leadership are accountability, honesty, transparency, respect, service, justice, trust, competence, and consistency.** Paul encouraged Timothy in 1 Timothy 6: 18-19 to command the church in Ephesus *“to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”*

**Ethical principles for counselling are designed to prevent causing disappointments, violation of trust and confidentiality, incompetent care or treating someone with disrespect, thus, to prevent doing harm.**

Biblical instructions encourage leaders and all believers to do good and be rich in good deeds as this will lay up a treasure in heaven. Doing good includes appropriating forgiveness to those who harmed you. Extending for-

giveness to others reflects God’s forgiveness of us.

**What should come after harm?** Biblically based forgiveness that is complete, limitless and perfect. I pray that everyone who is struggling with emotional pain due to being harmed by someone, will be able to extend deep heart forgiveness that reflect God perfect forgiveness of our sins.

Many blessings,  
Prof Nicolene Joubert  
Chairperson ■

## Boundaries (Part 31)

By Dr Hanlie Meyer, Counselling Psychologist in private practice and CPSC affiliate

**R**aising children is a full-time job! Worse, is it not always filled with joy and never is plain sailing! Especially when it comes to the eighth law Cloud and Townsend (2002) introduce us to, namely **the law of envy**. Their statement: "I am happier when I am thankful" (2002, p 110) is not something any young child believes – they believe they will only be happy when they "have", which leaves the door wide open for envy because there will always be someone who has what I want or has more than I have!

The authors define envy as a perpetual "wanting more". Closely related to envy is entitlement. This refers to the feeling that people and life for that matter owe him things or special treatment just because he exists. In contrast to this, is gratitude.

### A matter of character

Cloud and Townsend (2002) are of the opinion that envy and gratitude have little to do with what a person receives but more to do with character. But children are born self-centred – which is necessary as they cannot provide in their own needs! However, they cannot go through life like this, and the uncomfortable task of parents is to help their children through these feelings of entitlement and envy so that they can move to a place and attitude of gratitude.

As always, we need to remind ourselves that our example is of the utmost importance. A parent who tends towards dissatisfaction and entitlement themselves, always complaining about what they do not have and have missed in life, cannot hope to guide their children to a position of gratitude.



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So, what are we to do? It seems that there needs to be a balance between the gratification and frustration of a child's needs. The goal is to temper the extremes of neediness and entitlement. In this way the child will also learn not to see himself as the victim when he is deprived of something or when someone else gets something he wanted. They will also learn not see other people as bad when they do not fulfil his needs and desires.



**The authors define envy as a perpetual "wanting more". Closely related to envy is entitlement. In contrast to this, is gratitude.**

How often do we not experience this challenge when one child has her birthday, and the other child is jealous of not getting a gift and complains that the other one is favoured! In order to develop a balanced view of herself and others, the child needs to experience a certain amount of frustration in all her desires not being fulfilled. The way in which the parents contextualise this, will contribute to proper development, but not necessarily gain the child's approval. To push back against the child's insistence to get something and her sulking, aggression or heartfelt crying, will tax the parent's resilience and convictions of what is right and good. When a parent goes through a tough time, it is very difficult to withstand the pressure.

It is important to distinguish between needs as opposed to wants and desires. **Needs** are those necessities which must be satisfied. Love, nurturing,

safety, food and proper clothing would be examples of these.

**Wants and desires** are those things which go over and above the necessities – the iPad, brand name T-shirts, expensive toys or

appliances and inappropriate amounts of freedom are examples of desires and wants. Some of these wants must be gratified and some need to be frustrated. **Cloud and Townsend (2002, p 110) suggest three skills that will help guide the parents' choices, namely giving, limiting, and containing.** We will discuss these in detail.

### Developing gratitude in children

As parents we need to be willing, prepared and able to withstand the hatred, anger and



criticism of the dissatisfied child without disconnecting or striking back. It is not easy, but we need to withhold ourselves from threats, rejection, and blaming the child for ungratefulness and trying to control the child by creating guilt-feelings. We need to remain the parent.

From this, it becomes clear that parents need to stand together and that close family, like grandparents, aunts and uncles, etc. need to honour the parents' decisions and limitations. Parents who do not practice self-care will

find it very difficult to outlive the child's negativity and sometimes even hostility.

Your child must experience that you do not allow yourself to be taken for granted. She must learn to express gratitude and thanks for what you give her and what other people give her. It is important to let the child experience that others do not appreciate being taken for granted. A child may present the façade that they do not care about other peoples' responses or about not being liked. To allow the child to experience the consequences of ungratefulness in a relational context, without engendering convictions that she needs to please everybody in order to be accepted, is part of this training and development process. The child needs to understand the difference between gratitude and pleasing others.

Helping the child to discern between heartfelt desires and mere envy, is also important. A good example would be a child who really wants a pair of roller skates or a bicycle vs. just being jealous that another child or a sibling has it. If the child is willing to work towards affording the item, she learns something, and it might also teach them the importance of taking care of the item once they have it.

The whole process of performing tasks to earn money, as well as the process of saving the money to contribute towards buying the bicycle, offers a valuable teaching opportunity to develop gratitude – not only for obtaining the desired object, but also gratitude for the ability and opportunity to perform the tasks, the ability to save the money and then to obtain and take care of the object. This emphasises the many opportunities parents must use to teach their children but also highlights the importance of intentional parenting. It might feel overwhelming to spend so much time and attention on parenting while there are so many other responsibilities and demands already placed on the parents.

On the other hand, envy is just a deep dissatisfaction burning inside and it can become all-consuming. The child may not be satisfied with anything the parents offer in exchange. This is a point where patient, loving exploration of and reflection on the child's feelings, are

so important. The child needs to learn what envy feels like and how it manifests in her life.

Not to give in to her envy and helping her find ways to deal with the discomfort of the feelings of lack, teaches the child that the envy and the ensuing feelings and discomfort, are her property and she must deal with these herself. She

must be taught ways in which to deal with these emotions apart from just sulking, shouting, being aggressive,

withdrawing, chewing her nails, or eating to fill the emotional void.

There is a definite link between envy and pride. Envy indicates that the person feels they deserve everything – yet they get less. It leads to passivity and in the end, they get nothing. Those who are grateful, on the other hand, are thankful for what they have and give more and thus also receive more. It engenders humility.

### Guidelines to parents



Would it be possible to create heart-felt desires in our children for things that are not visible? Things like living healthy lives, exercise regularly, eating healthy meals without always having to diet, develop the desire to serve God and other people instead of being passive, locked to screens, always standing back or having to receive or dissatisfied? According to Cloud and Townsend the skills previously mentioned, can serve as guidelines to parents who are taking their parenting roles serious, so let us turn to these.

### 1. Giving

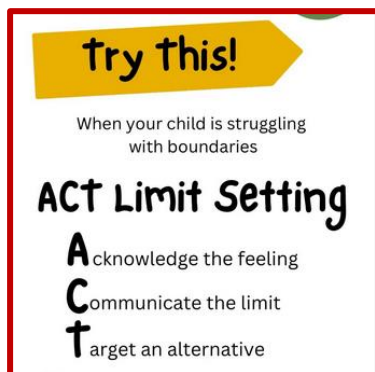


Giving refers to the gratification of needs and wants. The need for love, connection and care cannot be debated as being the most important needs from birth onwards. *Larry Crab wrote in one of his books that all of us have an emotional void inside and it just depends on what you stumble over first, that will turn into an addiction.* Today we understand more about the importance of dopamine as a motivator for behaviour. The richness of the neural dendrites at birth presents a wonderful op-



portunity for love – emotional and spiritual caring to become the preferred ways of satisfying this deep emotional void, instead of the child becoming vulnerable to addiction to all sorts of pleasures and substitutes for love – food, achievement, drugs or alcohol, etc.

**However, every developmental phase has its own unique challenges and specific needs:**



linked to the transition from total dependence and the permanent presence of a caregiver to more mobility and a certain amount of independence. The separation that must start taking place at this stage can cause fears of loss which come out in dreams of dangerous beasts attacking the child.

- During **infancy** the baby has basic needs for food, care, warmth, and safety.
- The **toddler** may experience fear that need to be addressed and assurance needs to be given. This is linked to the transition from total dependence and the permanent presence of a caregiver to more mobility and a certain amount of independence. The separation that must start taking place at this stage can cause fears of loss which come out in dreams of dangerous beasts attacking the child.
- During **later childhood** the needs for more freedom, space, and some control over choices come to the fore. This is a challenging time as the child now wants what he wants and can ask for it and insist on the wants being satisfied. It is a time when the child can start blaming the parent for not caring, being nasty or stingy, not granting him anything – the angle differs for every child. Sulking, aggression, blaming, withdrawal are all weapons used to get their way.
- **Teenage years**, when the child compares himself to others and wants to fit in and have the resources to take part in activities and be socially acceptable, are challenging to both the teenager and the parent. To know when and how to give, asks for wisdom and immense patience and love.

Is it possible that the less the child experiences safety and love despite the limitations set on them, that they will become more entitled and envious? That their focus will shift from giving from a sense of fulfillment and empowerment to entitlement and envy as a result of a deep emotional void?

## 2. Limiting

Cloud and Townsend (2002) describes **limiting as making sure children do not get too much or do not get inappropriate things and that their wish to be in control of everything is not gratified.**

It also refers to disciplining and managing a child's choices and consequences for their behaviour. **The developmental phase in which your child is, can help you define what limits are at play:**

- **Infancy:**  
The child needs to learn that she has received everything she needs to be safe, comfortable, well-fed and loved and can go to sleep.
- **Toddlerhood:**  
Now the word NO starts getting meaning! This is very difficult, but parents can learn to say it in such a way that their sincerity is communicated without causing fear or leaving room for negotiating. However, the child will always come up with arguments to the contrary! To stand your ground and remain the parent, is important. The child has to learn that he is not entitled to everything he wants, that he is not in control, and that he must use words to express his unhappiness instead of sulking, whining, withdrawal, manipulation, aggression, or even negotiating when he does not get what he wants.
- **Later childhood:**  
When the child cannot get the toys he wants, he learns that the world is not just going to give him what he wants. He learns that he has to earn what he wants and that he cannot have something simply because a sibling or a friend has it. If "fair" is defined as "equal",



# SETTING LIMITS

Sheltered at Home edition

POSITIVE PARENTING CONNECTION  
ARIADNE BRILL, M.S. PSYCHOLOGY / PARENT COACH





**SETTING CLEAR LIMITS HELPS CHILDREN FEEL SAFE AND SECURE.**



**IT'S OKAY IF YOUR CHILD DOESN'T LIKE IT WHEN YOU SET A LIMIT.**



**STOP BEHAVIORS ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS**



**SAY WHAT YOU MEAN AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY. (AVOID EMPTY THREATS!)**



**SAY WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO. (OFFER CHOICES IF APPROPRIATE)**



**DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR THE SITUATION YOU ARE IN.**



**IF A LIMIT IS NECESSARY SET IT AND FOLLOW THROUGH.**

life is not fair! This is a helpful way to help your child understand that he cannot have a certain thing or toy, even if a sibling or friend has it. They will never have as much as or the same as everybody else. There will always be someone who has something that they will desire. The desire in itself is not the problem, but the way in which they learn to deal with the want or desire, is important.

• **Teenage years:**

Teens need more and more freedom in choices and opportunities to take responsibility for themselves. Yet they also need clear and enforced limits to obey. If they have been guided from a young age and have not only been frustrated or granted everything, it will be easier to navigate the limits.

**Limits teach children that their feelings are not the ultimate reality – they can learn to deal with the discomfort these feelings cause in a healthy way.**

The limits are necessary specifically to bring out these feelings and protests as these become opportunities to empathize with the child and teach them how to contain their feelings, while the limit remains. It is also necessary for children to discover their own badness, so that they do not think they are victims of a cruel world.

Even though the child may not realise it, **wise limits give them confidence as they learn that they can be**

**deprived of the satisfaction of some of their wants and still flourish!**

### 5 Tips to Set Appropriate Limits

- 1** Be firm and use a neutral voice. Do not yell or threaten, but rather be confident in your decision and lead by example.
- 2** Be specific and direct. Children will get lost in translation if the limit is too vague. Make sure they understand.
- 3** Focus on your child's behavior, not the child. Focus on what they did wrong, and ensure the words you use speak to the behavior alone.
- 4** Give your child ample opportunity to comply. Make sure to give warnings and reminders to help them along the way. Use a timer if it helps.
- 5** Praise your child when they comply with limits, and provide immediate consequences when they do not.

Children who have learnt to live with wise limits, also learn that they can set limits and stick to the limits they set.

### 3. Containing

This refers to helping the child work through his feelings about the limit and to internalize the limit as character. This is a mouth-full! It asks a lot of the parent. It asks for adding to the limit love, understanding, acknowledging the feelings and even validating them, while structuring the limit. It is difficult to be the one who sets the limit and the one who also empathises with the protest and feeling

of deprivation stemming from the limit.

When you read this and feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the task and the challenges, know that you are not alone. You are not the only parent who battles with this. It will be wise to speak to other parents about their challenges, instead of hiding your own fear of failure. Sometimes other parents look at you and feel inferior to you as you seem to cope so well! As Christians, we need one another. Openness and transparency about our own struggles can encourage other parents!

#### REFERENCES

Cloud, H. & Townsend, J. S., *Boundaries with Kids*, 2002 ■



## Emotional Resilience in the Workplace

By Liza Borstlap, CPSC affiliate

**I**n today's fast-paced work environment, technical skills alone are not enough to sustain long-term success.

Emotional resilience – the ability to adapt, recover, and maintain composure in the face of setbacks – is a fundamental trait that influences workplace performance, leadership, relationships, and career longevity.

### Understanding Emotional Resilience

Emotional resilience isn't about avoiding difficulties; it's about developing the tools to navigate them without being overwhelmed. Those with strong resilience regulate their emotions, maintain perspective, and find solutions even in stressful situations. In the workplace, this translates into handling challenges with confidence, responding to setbacks constructively, and fostering positive interactions.

### Why Emotional Resilience Matters

#### 1. Enhancing Workplace Performance

Resilient individuals manage stress efficiently, ensuring that pressure doesn't diminish their productivity. They remain focused under tight deadlines, handle criticism with a growth mindset, and persevere despite obstacles.



#### 2. Strengthening Leadership and Decision-Making

Effective leaders remain composed in uncertain situations, guiding their teams with clarity and confidence. Resilience enables them to approach challenges as opportunities for strategic problem-solving rather than reactive decision-making.

#### 3. Building Positive Work Relationships

Workplace interactions can be complex. Emotional resilience helps individuals handle disagreements with grace, actively listen to others, and foster trust within teams. This emotional intelligence creates an environment where collaboration thrives.

#### 4. Supporting Career Growth and Longevity

Career progression often involves setbacks, changes, and unpredictable challenges. Resilient professionals view difficulties as learning experiences rather than barriers, allowing them to adapt, grow, and maintain motivation over time.

### My Personal Experience with Emotional Resilience

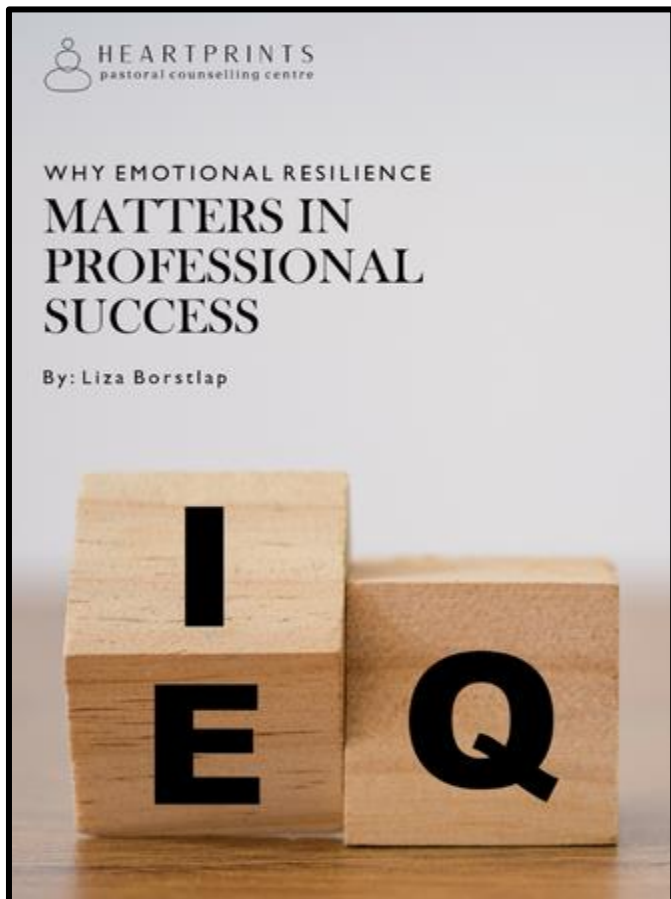
In my counselling work, I support individuals facing workplace stress, despair, and bullying. Having personally experienced challenges in a formal work setting, I deeply understand the toll these situations can take on emotional well-being. While my past experiences help me empathize with clients, I also remain mindful that I must protect my own emotional health.

To maintain resilience, I consciously establish boundaries between my personal life and professional role. Discipline is key – if I leave my self-care to chance, I risk burnout. That's why I schedule rest periods in my working calendar, ensuring that I make time to reset and recharge. By integrating structured moments of renewal, I sustain my ability to provide meaningful support while maintaining my own well-being.

### Workplace Policies That Support Emotional Resilience

Organizations play a vital role in fostering resilience through supportive workplace policies, including:

- **Mental Health & Well-Being Programs:** Offering counselling, wellness initiatives, and stress-management workshops.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Allowing remote work, flexible hours, and mental health days to promote balance.



- **Anti-Bullying & Psychological Safety Policies:** Creating safe spaces that protect employees from workplace toxicity.
- **Encouraging Work-Life Balance:** Setting realistic workload expectations and discouraging excessive overtime.
- **Supportive Leadership & Management:** Training leaders to foster empathy and recognize signs of stress.
- **Professional Development & Growth Opportunities:** Helping employees build confidence and adaptability through mentorship and training.
- **Recognition & Appreciation Initiatives:** Acknowledging employees' contributions to foster motivation and engagement.

### How Can You Strengthen Your Emotional Resilience?

If resilience isn't yet a strength in your professional life, consider these questions:

- How do you currently manage stress at work? Are your coping strategies effective?
- Do workplace challenges drain you emotionally? What boundaries could help protect your well-being?
- Are you prioritizing self-care, or does work always come first?
- How do setbacks impact your motivation? Can you shift your mindset to see challenges as growth opportunities?

**Emotional resilience is a fundamental trait that influences workplace performance, leadership, relationships, and career longevity.**

**Emotional resilience isn't about avoiding difficulties; it's about developing the tools to navigate them without being overwhelmed.**

**Emotional resilience isn't just about surviving difficulties – it's about thriving despite them.**

- Do you have a support system, or do you try to handle everything alone?

### Final Thoughts

**Emotional resilience isn't just about surviving difficulties – it's about thriving despite them.**

It shapes career progression, leadership effectiveness, workplace relationships, and overall well-being. In a dynamic professional landscape, resilience is not just a skill

but a way of living that transforms obstacles into opportunities for growth.

For me, structured self-care and firm boundaries help me uphold my professional responsibilities while preserving my emotional health. What about you? How do you see emotional resilience shaping your career and well-being? The journey starts with reflection – let's explore it together.

### Contact Details

Contact me via WhatsApp (079 043 1646) or email (help@heartprints.co.za). For those unsure if counselling is the right step, I am always happy to have a phone conversation to offer clarity. If I am in session and unable to answer, please know that I will get back to you as soon as possible.

You are not alone—help is just a message away. ■

## The Fawn Response: When Survival Looks Like Self-Abandonment

By Liza Borstlap, CPSC affiliate

In the vast landscape of trauma responses, "fawning" is often overlooked. Unlike the more familiar fight, flight, or freeze reactions, **fawn** is a subtle, adaptive strategy – one that whispers rather than screams. It's the instinct to appease, to merge, to silence yourself so others feel comfortable. But behind its polite facade often lies a history of invisible wounds.

### What Is Fawning?

**Fawning is a trauma response in which an individual prioritizes others' needs, feelings, or expectations to avoid conflict, rejection, or emotional harm.**

It's not just being "nice" or agreeable – it's a survival mechanism that can feel deeply ingrained.

It often begins in unsafe relational environments, where a person learns that keeping others happy is the only path to safety. For many, it becomes automatic:

- The quick "yes" before thinking
- The softening of tone and opinion
- The default self-blame
- The absence of boundary

### Where Does It Come From?

Fawning typically emerges in:

- **Childhood dynamics** where emotional neglect, criticism, or conditional love shaped behaviour
- **Abusive relationships**, where pleasing the other was a way to minimize harm
- **High-stakes environments** (family, workplace, culture) that reward compliance and punish autonomy

In these spaces, the self becomes secondary. Saying “no” feels dangerous. Disagreement feels like betrayal.

### How It Shows Up

This response can look like:

- Over-apologizing or shrinking yourself
- Avoiding difficult conversations
- Deferring decisions to others
- Feeling guilt or anxiety when asserting boundaries
- Becoming what others want to keep connection alive

### Reclaiming Your Voice

Healing from fawning isn’t about swinging to defiance – it’s about rediscovering **your centre**.

It starts with awareness:

- Noticing when you are people-pleasing
- Tracking when you feel emotionally unsafe
- Asking: *Is this yes costing me too much?*

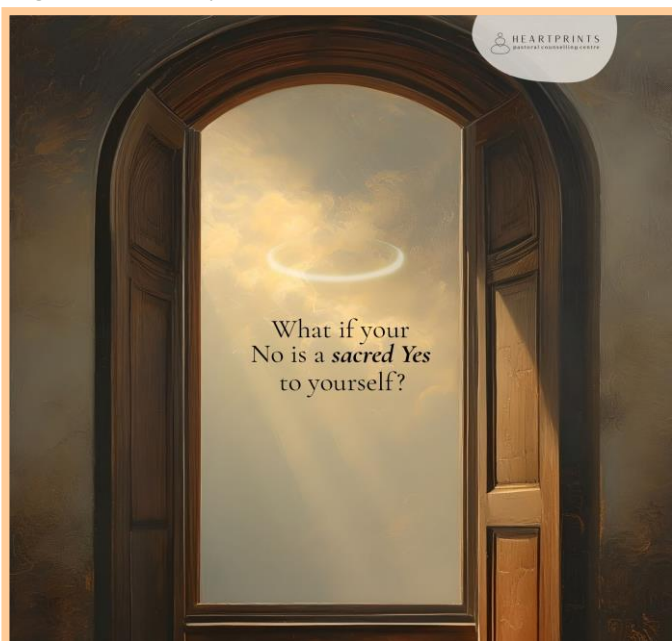
And builds with compassion:

- Validating your right to take up space
- Practicing small, sacred “no’s”
- Surrounding yourself with safe, affirming relationships

### The Sacred Yes Within the No

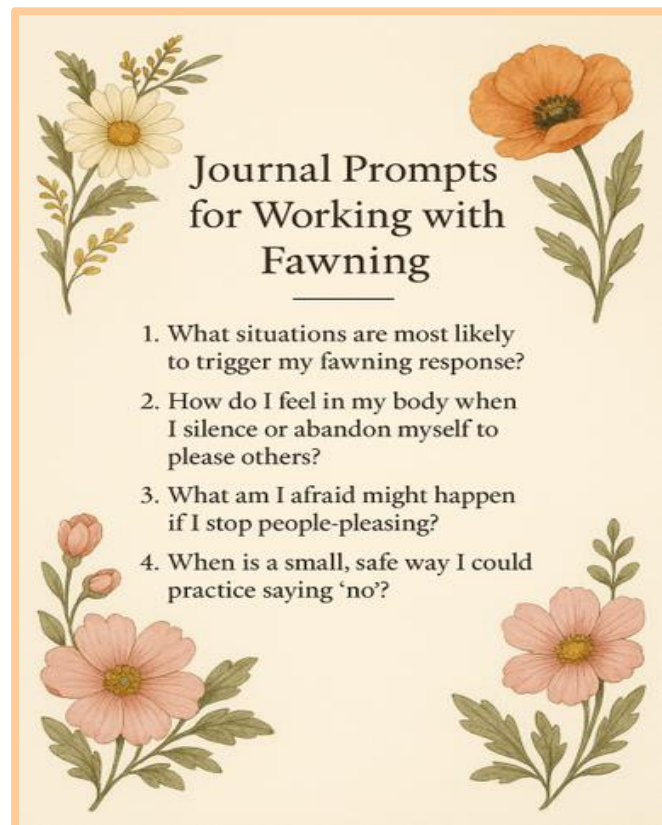
Saying “no” isn’t just a boundary – it’s an affirmation. Every time you honour your needs, you rewire the belief that you must shrink to be loved.

Your voice matters. Your truth is worthy. And your healing doesn’t need permission.



### Dear You, Who Has Always Tried to Keep the Peace

I see how much you’ve carried – The quiet acquiescence. The over-apologizing. The disappearing act you perform just to make others feel more comfortable.



**But what if healing isn’t about being liked? What if it’s about being seen – by you first?**

That’s why I created these journal prompts – Not as homework or another task to be completed, but as gentle touchpoints to reconnect with your own voice.

Let each question be a soft unfurling, like a flower trusting the sun again. No pressure. No perfection. Just presence.

**They are here to help you:**

- Notice where your “yes” has felt heavy
- Remember the times your body whispered “no”
- Begin to explore the roots of your self-sacrifice
- Practice the sacred pause before people-pleasing

You don’t owe anyone your constant smile. You deserve spaciousness. You deserve softness. And you deserve to hear yourself again.

If you’re ready, the prompts are waiting – like quiet companions. Whenever you are. Wherever you are. ■

### Liza Borstlap

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HEARTPRINTS  
pastoral counselling centre

## When religion leads to injury rather than healing

By Prof Wentzel Coetzer

Since the 1970's a lot of literature have been published based on the theme of religious abuse. Terms often used in these works are, e.g., 'spiritual abuse', 'spiritual assault', 'spiritual rape', 'spiritual molestation', and 'spiritual bullying'.

Early and influential contributions include Wayne Oates' book *When religion gets sick* (1970), in which the dual meaning of the term 'religion' is emphasized. On the one hand it refers to a positive system that can enhance spiritual growth; on the other hand, it can be a disorder affecting an individual's functioning as a whole.

Scott Peck's book, *The road less travelled* (1978), highlights the widespread nature of spiritual abuse across different religious denominations.

In his book, *When God becomes a drug* (1991), Father Leo Booth describes from personal experience how religion became an escape mechanism for him and eventually lead to addiction. This first-hand knowledge provided him with a lot of insight.

### Defining spiritual abuse

The following are some important definitions:

Dupont (2004) describes it as spiritual structures that use unethical, manipulative techniques and coercive measures to promote leaders' objectives, which harm group members, their families, or the community.

Gibson (2009) states that spiritual abuse has a negative effect on a person's spirit, usually because of a spiritual leader or system attempting to dominate, control, and manipulate the person, often through fear.

Johnson and VanVonderen (1991) imply that it involves the detrimental handling of a person in need of help or support – eventually it weakens or debilitates their spiritual status. Spirituality can also be used to influence others to conform to a certain 'spiritual standard,' promoting external 'spiritual performance' without considering the individual's well-being.

Blue (1993) defines it as leaders using their spiritual authority to force, control, or exploit followers, leading to spiritual wounds.

Pretorius (2007) describes spiritual abuse as leaders using their office or authority to control or dominate others who are often unaware of the leader's hidden agenda.



### CPSC CPD event

Prof Wentzel Coetzer: Online course

*"Wanneer godsdiens lei tot verwonding eerder as heling – Pastorale perspektiewe"*

5 CPSC CPD points

Contact: wentzelc@gmail.com

### Factors forming the basis for a spiritually abusive system

Factors like the following usually play a crucial role:

- Absolute and unconditional acceptance of doctrines, which enables abuse in the name of God.
- A literal, absolute, and dogmatic interpretation of Scripture, leading to dysfunctional religious messages and behaviour.
- People's lack of ability to discern and judge truths from the Word, and their tendency to rigidly follow rules as spiritual leaders lay them down, viewing these leaders as the final authority regarding the Word.
- An insecure relationship with parents in the family of origin appears to be an important contributing factor, as early childhood experiences colour people's view of the world and themselves.

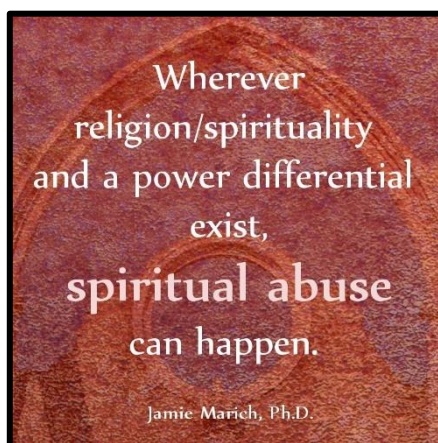
Oates (1970) points out the following factors that contribute to being vulnerable to a 'sick' religion:

- Unprocessed grief processes.
- Unwillingness to give or accept forgiveness.
- Hope and hopelessness, and the absence of love.

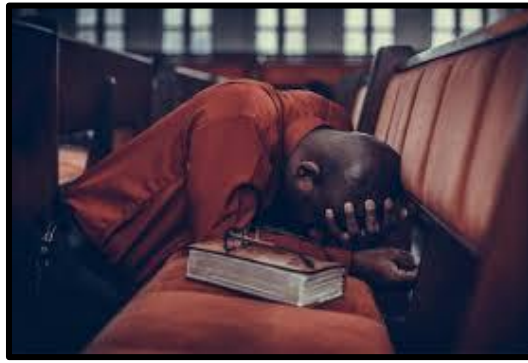
Vulnerable persons are also predominantly those who have never learned to articulate or control their feelings, leading to denial or avoidance of emotions. They often become over-achievers, perfectionists and people-pleasers.

Pretorius (2007) lists the following eight reasons why people fall into the trap of spiritual abuse:

- A lack of acceptance at home and in the church, leading to behaviour-seeking recognition.
- Shame-based motivation, related to sin or weakness for which the person tries to compensate at all costs.



- The need for a deeper spirituality, making people vulnerable to sacrifice anything.
- Disillusionment with the existing world order, such as corruption and spiritual decay.
- A need for security.
- Inner doubts about their abilities and self-worth.
- The conviction that spiritual success depends entirely on their own efforts.
- The need to control the reality of inner pain, where an inflexible religious belief system can give an impression of control.



#### ■ Denial

Pain is avoided, but it has negative effects. In toxic religious systems, people are taught to deny the reality of their emotional pain and anger and to instead show love and kindness.

#### ■ Through rules, real pain is bypassed

Individuals with an inner emotional void and low self-esteem follow strict rules to gain recognition, but this does not address their real pain of shame and loneliness. Excessive spiritual rules and demands destroy these seeking people.

#### ■ The role of isolation

Victims are usually in isolation, afraid to ask questions for fear of being seen as critical. This deprives them of the opportunity to put their situation into a wider perspective.

#### ■ Out of touch with people's inner emotions

Religious shaming occurs when theology has lost touch with people's feelings. Emotions are seen as evil, and legalism and condemnation as virtues. The value and meaning of members depend on performance, and conformity to the leader's style is demanded.

#### ■ Accountable to no one

Spiritual abuse can occur in any church or group if the leaders are accountable to no one.

## Typical characteristics, strategies, and techniques of a spiritually debilitating system

### ■ Emotional and spiritual incest

In dysfunctional systems (family or church), roles are reversed, and those in positions of authority abuse subordinates/followers to meet their own selfish needs, rather than to serve or equip them.

### ■ The misuse of exclusivity

The viewpoint that your belief system is the only correct and valid one, and that others' doctrines are dangerous and must be destroyed.

### ■ Control and domination rather than grace

Leadership strongly focused on control and domination is a main characteristic. Fear, guilt, and intimidation are used to keep members in line. Individual lives are placed under a magnifying glass, excommunication occurs, and the path back to normality is difficult for those who leave. Members often remain out of fear of rejection, even if they are unhappy. Misuse of spiritual authority is common.

### ■ An inflexible black/white approach

For individuals with an inner lack of security, religious systems offering simplistic black/white answers provide a refuge of security. It is reassuring when others can decide for you how to live and what to believe.

### ■ Burdens are placed on people

Leaders place their own burdens (from guilt or unprocessed pain) on members, using them to meet personal and professional needs. Tired people receive 'formulas' about God instead of His unconditional love.

### ■ People are used rather than served

Like Jesus and Ezekiel condemned the Pharisees and certain shepherds, contemporary systems sometimes focus on religious rules that are spiritual poison, depriving followers of true life.

## The consequences of spiritual wounding

**Spiritual wounding is an extremely destructive form of abuse that leads to diverse emotions**, and typical consequences thereof include the following:

### ■ Distorted conceptions of God

God is experienced as a despotic and unstable perfectionist. Trust in people or organizations becomes difficult, and God is indirectly blamed for the injustice if representatives of God are abusers. False feelings of guilt can also arise by involving God in doctrines to make people feel guilty.

### ■ Distorted conceptions of Christianity

A twisted self-identity (negative or shame-based) and an obsession with spiritual achievements can develop, leading to self-righteousness or serious striving for performance. Overwhelming fear of losing salvation can cause people, who left, to return to the group again - there is often little understanding of grace.

### ■ Emotional and psychological disability

Victims can develop exaggerated perfectionism and a desire to exert control. Dissociation can also occur due to the message to deny your true self. Total disillusionment can also arise from unfulfilled promises and accusations

of sin, and this can lead to serious despondency, hopelessness, and even suicidal thoughts. Anger towards leaders is common while alternating phases of opposing emotions (anger, joy, depression) can last a long time.

#### ■ *Personal incompetence*

Problems with personal boundaries can arise due to denial of their humanity and right to their own opinion. This can also result in a crisis regarding personal responsibility, leading to giving up too easily, or taking on too much responsibility.

#### ■ *Nightmares*

Repeated nightmares can occur.

#### ■ *Torn families*

Families can be torn apart because of unprocessed pain

## Guidelines toward healing

### A. The start of the process

- *The value of counselling:* Professional counselling from someone with experience in spiritual abuse is valuable.
- *Denial:* Abandoning denial is the first big step towards freedom and healing, which involves a willingness to be vulnerable.
- *Healing is a process:* Healing does not happen overnight and implies a long process with professional help to avoid relapsing into old, inflexible ways of thinking.

### B. Focus on support groups

- *The therapeutic value of a support group:* Healing cannot take place in isolation. A caring group can offer support, accountability, and a space to share feelings of religious shaming.
- *Seek someone who can serve as a sounding board:* Someone who can regularly serve as a sounding board without judging can expedite the process.

### C. Spiritual recovery

- *Distorted conceptions of Christianity and God:* Misconceptions must be pointed out and replaced with balanced views.
- *General attitudes and beliefs:* Negative beliefs (lies) and hindering attitudes (such as control and domination rather than grace, as well as a rigid black/white approach) must be replaced with Scriptural truths.
- *Learn not to overreact to spiritual wounding in the future:* The experience should

Spiritual abuse can be hard to identify, but is no less difficult to endure than any other kind of abuse.

not become an excuse to withdraw from the church and God. Abuse was often inflicted by persons who had not learned to act differently.

- *Initially connect anonymously with a church:* Trust takes a long time and initial attending of church services without personal involvement can

help.

- *The importance of forgiveness:* Forgiveness is a process that takes time and can only begin after the grieving process has been completed. Grieving over opportunities for healthy growth that were denied is necessary.
- *Learn to trust Christians again:* Time can be spent with previous Christian friends, focusing on friendship without a 'ministry agenda'.
- *Healthy spiritual growth:* The articulation of unprocessed emotional pain and the expression of suppressed anger can pave the way for healthy spiritual growth.

### D. Recovery in thought patterns

- *Guard against a victim mentality:* Healing is possible, but requires grieving, prayer, forgiveness, and confession over several seasons.
- *Guard against overwhelming dark memories:* Bad memories should not nullify the good in the past. Most systems are not just good or bad, and abusers were probably victims themselves.
- *Reprogram toxic thinking:* Counsellors must point out negative thought patterns (such as black/white thinking) and indicate the opposite.
- *Rectify invalid conclusions:* Intellectual lies must be pointed out and replaced with the truth; this involves cognitive restructuring based on sound and healthy Biblical views.
- *Get a realistic view of reality:* When one focuses on the irrelevant and negative, one only sees one part of reality, while the whole picture is distorted. In this regard, victims must be helped to return to reality. Replacing

the lies and distorted beliefs that stem from emotional and spiritual wounding will go a long way towards regaining a realistic view of reality.

- *Empower the positive:* The positive is not so much disempowered when information is ignored, but when the facts are slightly distorted, usually in the direction of the negative. As part of the



coaching process, such distorted facts will also have to be dealt with.

- *Determine reasons for disregarding the negative:* The counsellor must help determine reasons for ignoring negative behaviour that maintains a toxic self-image.
- *Guard against predominantly emotional thinking:* The person must be helped to distinguish between emotions and facts and maintain a healthy balance.
- *Guard against an obsession with 'I should have' thoughts:* Realize that often too high standards were set for themselves.
- *Guard against maintaining a hyper-sense of responsibility:* This toxic thought process must be pointed out, and the person must be helped to set healthy and balanced personal boundaries.
- *Concentrate on new information:* The victim must be taught basic spiritual and Biblical truths, and in this regard a support group can help assess information.

#### E. Social recovery

- *Concentrate on the family:* Healing must also be facilitated with regards to the wounded family, including handling of anger and facilitating reconciliation through family therapy.
- *Concentrate on new friends:* A large inner void usually arises when dysfunctional relationships are abandoned, and these must be filled with new sources of social support.
- *Learn to find joy in ordinary things again:* Guidance is needed to experience gratitude and joy in daily situations.

#### F. Physical recovery

Concentrate on the body and identify possible poor eating habits, weight problems, lack of exercise and sleep. The recovery program must include guidance regarding these physical aspects to prevent future relapse into unhealthy behaviour.

### Conclusion

Spiritual abuse can emotionally and spiritually destroy individuals. No religious group or structure is automatically immune to this phenomenon. However, the consistent application of the proposed pastoral guidelines can make a dramatic difference in the recovery process of the spiritually wounded person.

**A spiritually abusive group or person might claim that they are God's sole channel of communication or that they alone can rightly interpret God's Word.**

**They often pre-emptively insulate members and decry questioning sin or lack of faith.**

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## BIO

Prof Wentzel Coetzer holds a DTh degree in New Testament, a MA in Greek and a PhD in Practical Theology. He was a lecturer at UNISA in New Testament from 1977 to 1984. He was the full-time minister at the Dutch Reformed Church Garsfontein in Pretoria from 1985 to 2002. Since 2003 he has been extraordinary Professor in Practical Theology at the North-West University. Prof Coetzer has published 22 articles in academic journals, 35 books and 6 e-books. He has also compiled 63 manuals on Pastoral Counselling. ■

## Book Review

### The Dynamics of Mentoring

#### Dr Juliet Rambau

*Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.*  
Prov. 9:9

**The objective of this book by the author, Dr Juliet Rambau, is to empower both mentee and mentor in the supervision relationship and dynamic.**

Dr Rambau writes about this relation from within her own experience and framework as counsellor, mentor, supervisor and "cheerleader".

Dr Rambau believes that the way the two parties (supervisee/mentee and Supervisor/mentor) relate to each other, is of the utmost importance for future success.

In this book Dr Rambau addresses the various factors that may result in a dysfunctional relationship between mentors/supervisors and mentees/supervisees.



She focuses on some of the major factors that would frustrate the relationship between mentor and mentee that would eventually make it

impossible for them to enjoy a fruitful relationship and to focus on the task at hand.



relationship.

Dr Rambau discusses the healthy boundaries needed in this type of relationship. She also lists the qualities both mentor and mentee need for a constructive connection. For example, Dr Rambau is of the opinion that it is especially important that the mentee will wholeheartedly trust, honour and respect their mentor.

Effective communication between the 2 parties will assist in the development of trust between a mentor and a mentee, while disrespect or arrogance shown towards the mentor will result in the mentor becoming more unwilling to guide the mentee to personal and career success.

Dr Rambau hopes that this book will be therapeutic to the casualties of unhealthy mentor-mentee relationships and will assist everyone involved in this type of professional re-



To order the book at R200 (or R300 with courier fees), contact Dr Juliet Rambau at:

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Compiled by Ilse Grünewald ■

## Wonderful peer pressure

By Heinrich Lottering

**T**he term “peer pressure” conjures up many negative images in the post-modern mind.

One starts to think of drug use, criminal conduct and negative influence from the wrong friends or social group. Yet I have always considered the right type of friends, family members, colleagues or peers a wonderful blessing in a person's life. The right people with the right attitude and dynamics can be such an incredible influence and driving force in someone's life to improve themselves or make better choices.

**It is important to first reflect on the human need of belonging.** One way to define it is the experience of personal involvement in an environment of which one feels an integral and complete part of. The field of psychology and psychotherapy overwhelmingly acknowledge this need to be the one of the most fundamental needs of humanity. Two renown psychologists, Mark Leary and Roy Baumeister, published a study in 1995 where they described the need to belong being equal to the needs of food, shelter and safety.

**Hence it is easy to understand how this need to belong or fit in can be such a strong guide in an individual's behaviour.** I am fond of the Triple B statement when it comes to fitting in and peer pressure. That **Behaviour** most often stems from **Believes** and the latter is strongly dictated to by the need to **Belong**.

In my own ministry as a pastor, I have always encouraged congregates wherever I preach to actively and consciously draw individuals into their lives, or to pursue the company of devout Christians. I know from personal experience that faithful and God-fearing individuals encourage and motivate one to more actively live your faith and devotion.

**This principle can also be very effective in pastoral therapy, especially when individuals relapse back into the same struggles and battles.** They should start investigating their social group and acquaintances, not only to eliminate bad apples leading them to repeatedly fall, but also to promote the notion of spending more time with individuals who by their character and worldview would be an edifying and empowering influence.

Let us take a step back and begin at childhood. The peers a child grows up with play an important role in emotional



and social development. They can help developing new skills, stimulate interest in new things and broaden a child's horizons. Many of us can recall from our own childhood our parents being very welcoming to certain school or neighbourhood friends, while also warning us against playing with other friends.

Undoubtedly our parents instinctively knew that attitudes and behaviour will rub off. This continues in adulthood with the right friends and colleagues being an incredible source of stimulation and growth.

At school and university, spending time with fellow students who have a passion for academic accomplishment will motivate students to be more responsible and hard-working in class. Similarly, fading grades and poor academic results will flow from hanging out with friends only having fun and neglecting their studies.

Peers can play an incredibly important role in relationships. I recall a therapy session I had with a female client who was pursuing divorce. Her main reason was that “all her friends are divorced”. The continuous negative input on marriage and spouses within her circle of friends were the main driving force behind the client's discontent. She could not provide any other factors why she wanted to end her marriage.

I always advise couples to seek long and stable relationships and to surround themselves with individuals and couples that believe in marriage, endurance and relationship growth.

Finally, I want to touch on people's emotional joy and peace. We need family and friends who believe, speak and act in edifying ways, with a focus on what is positive and hopeful. This is the only way to face the daily challenges

and obstacles we all experience, reinforced by negativity and dismay from friends.

One of the greatest gift one can give oneself is to pursue the company and friendship of individuals who can encourage, support and refocus your eyes in hope on a better tomorrow and on God's enduring grace.

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 Contact Heinrich on cell & WhatsApp at 0837302887.■



## The effect of trauma on emotional health

By Dr Marianne Viljoen

**C**ounselling clients with depression requires that we be sensitive to the clients' telling of their life story. Such clients are often depressed and typically present with sad expression, poor eye and weariness. They might express hopelessness and will be tearful. They will express low self-worth, see themselves as a burden to family and might even suggest that life is not worthwhile.



Although it is the counsellor's responsibility to refer a client with symptoms of depression to a psychiatrist, it is also his/her responsibility to guide the client to speak freely about life events and experiences which have been traumatic, hurtful or disturbing, even if these events had happened a long time ago.



types:

Literature links depression to childhood and recent trauma. In his book, *Trauma: The Invisible Epidemic*, Paul Conti (2022) defines **trauma as any event or experience that overwhelms the individual's ability to cope.**

He identifies three categories of trauma:

- **Acute trauma** such as childhood abuse and neglect, and sexual assault
- **Chronic trauma** such as poverty and racism as well as severe illness
- **Vicarious trauma** such as the trauma of parents as absorbed by the children, a phenomenon seen in the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors.

**An important fact that Conti emphasises, is that clients with adverse childhoods carry shame and guilt because of what they have experienced, and that trauma adversely affects thoughts, emotions and memory. This is also true of recent traumas.**

**Childhood adversity is especially linked to depression and even more so when current life stressors are prominent.**

A very valid and reliable study by Seok et al. (2020) indicates that childhood adversity is especially linked to depression and even more so when current life stressors are prominent. In such cases, anger in the studied individuals were present (Seok et al., 2020 and Mall et al. 2018).

Studies by Cassiers et.al. (2018) as well as Chaney et al. (2014) using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the

brains of samples of people, indicate that depressive patients have more structural changes to their brains than the healthy control patients.

In both studies, childhood maltreatment was related significantly to hippocampus under-development independent of age, sex and diagnoses. **These structural changes may lead to impaired learning and memory, as well as to the following:**

- Constant anxiety and fear
- Emotional instability or numbness
- Emotional flashbacks
- Depression
- Poor tolerance for stress
- Feelings of helplessness, low self-worth, and despair.

**The role of the pastoral counsellor is important in the process of healing the mind and the heart from the effects of the past.**



The counsellor should guide the client through his/her life story. The objective should be to lead the client to self-awareness, insight and understanding. Conti (2022) emphasises that the counsellor should help the client develop compassion for themselves.

Compassion will help erase the inevitable guilt and shame that is part of the trauma. The client should be encouraged to develop new perspectives on past incidents and develop a new and honest life narrative.

**Developing supportive relationships should be encouraged and the client should be guided to learn new emotional responses to stressful interactions and situations.** All is possible as the Bible teaches us in Psalm 34:18 -- the Lord is near to those who are discoured; He saves those who have lost all hope.

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#### BIO

I matriculated at Sentraal High School. I studied psychology at the University of South Africa, and University of the Free

State. I completed my PhD in Psychology at the University of Port Elizabeth. I researched the effect of Type 1 Allergies on the emotional wellbeing of children. During this time, I had three children and helped raise three of my husband's children. In 2002, I began working at the School of Nursing (UFS), accompanying forensic nurses who worked at the Tsepong Rape Crises Centre. In 2007, I was appointed Senior Lecturer Researcher at the Faculty of Education where I was supervisor and promotor of Master's and PhD studies, did research on various topics relating to the influence of psychological problems on academic achievement. After retirement I began a practice as emotional counsellor. I am currently working at the Hope Again Rehabilitation Centre as Pastoral Counsellor – a very fulfilling position. ■

## ***Caring for perpetrators of sexual violence: Proclaiming freedom for the captives, and release from darkness: A pastoral theological imperative***

By Nkosiyezwe Muzothule Makhanya (MTh)

Identification of Key Terms: Sexual Violence, Sexual Violence Victims, Sexual Violence Perpetrators, Pastoral Care.

### **1.0 Introduction**

The previous article described what sexual violence and perpetrators of sexual violence are in society. It further discusses the causes of sexual violence perpetration behaviour in an individual. Its purpose is to give an understanding of this pandemic to the church so that it can fully understand the enemy that is facing its society.

**This article aims to help Christians connect their Christian beliefs to human reality.** That is to contribute to combating the existing human problems, in this case, sexual violence perpetration, through the will of God by the engagement of the scriptures (Sunday, 2020 & Kalmanofsky, 2017).

### **2.0 Why care for the perpetrator?**

I noticed that most of the work has been invested in caring for victims of sexual violence, which is also very needful (Ewing, 2013; Tompkins, 2021; O'Doherty et al, 2023). Hence, **this study aims to fill the identified gap by empowering the church to offer pastoral care to perpetrators of sexual violence as one of the means to curb sexual violence.** The study tries to promote the notion that society must understand that



perpetrators are responsible for social violence, not victims (Kotanen and Kronstedt, 2019; Rothberg, 2019; Rutgers, 2022).

In addition, I am of the view that if the church can also concentrate on the perpetrators of sexual violence by providing pastoral care tailored to them, the initiative will limit the escalating sexual violence perpetration behaviours.

### **3.0 Notion of praxis**

This paper engages Osmer's third task of his theological analysis model that he established to address concepts taking place in societies. He addresses the question, "What ought to be going on" in the research contexts (Osmer, 2008). He describes this exercise as a normative task to express God's mind concerning the issue under study (Osmer, 2008).



This article, however, finds its departure in the words of Isaiah 61:1 (NIV): *"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."*

Based on Prophet Isaiah's scripture mentioned above, this paper navigates in response to Osmer's third task: 'What ought to be going on?', in establishing that the care for the imprisoned, the captured, and the marginalised is a demand and non-negotiable. If the church wants to reduce the number of sexual violations, we should remind ourselves that we are called to equally care for those who are not easy to love and those

walking on the wrong path – those moving in the dark. Our calling, first and foremost, is to lead to freedom through bringing the light of the gospel to those who can see only darkness.

#### 4.0 A theology of sexual ethics and sexual violence

Some African men are of the idea that they are superior to women and women must oblige to their life demands, including and mostly sexual demands (Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger, and Hamlall, 2013; Everitt-Penhale and Ratele, 2015).

Mati (2013) refers to Kunhiyop (2008), which goes further to the extent that women are their husbands' sex objects in a way that some homes experience the same, whereby the husband has sexual demands on the wife in an unfavourable manner. He does that based on the scripture that he is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23). While the Bible does not mean to be the head is to treat the wife anyhow; instead, it is to love his wife (Kunhiyop, 2008). As followers of Christ, we can agree that the church is responsible for highlighting God's stand on social ills like sexual violence perpetration.

However, when preparing this report, the **interviews with the local pastors in Bloemfontein showed limited participation of the church** in this subject, when asked about their church involvement in addressing perpetrators of sexual violence, as shown below (*NB: pseudonyms were used for the sake of the research reporting*):

Rev Madela (20 March 2023: Bloemfontein: South Africa) stated that:

*"You know when it comes to issues of sexuality, it is a topic that is very sensitive, that is very private, which people keep to themselves. So much that you might not be aware if people have issues in that regard.*

*We have a, I think as human beings we want to put our right foot forward. It is not easy to open-up and say I have this kind of a challenge. So, I think because this topic is a taboo amongst the Africans, it is a difficult one, eeh, normally we are going to have someone ona le bothatha bo (with such a problem) a discloser when they are almost caught or caught.*

*When we have such a situation, it is only when you have a question of an adultery is happening, or a young lady who is not yet married is getting pregnant, then we need to address that according to the ethical code of the church and so forth."*

Rev Madela from one of the local mainline churches said they have not dealt with issues of improper sexual behaviours directly, not only when a lady gets pregnant premaritally. They address the matter based on their church's ethical codes.

Rev Pleasure from one of the local Pentecostal churches said they have elderly ladies who are placed to deal with such matters if they arise and have not experienced such in the past.

Rev Thipa from one of the local mainline churches said they have never experienced such behaviour. Anyhow, they use church uniforms as a preventive measure.

Ladies and Gentlemen dress to cover their bodies to prevent improper sexual advances. Such a dress code teaches the worshippers to dress in a way that covers their bodies even if they are not on the church premises but has not followed up on whether the dress pattern is followed in their private lives.

The exception is with Rev Batho from one of the local Pentecostal churches, who narrated that they have had one case of sexual violence, whereby the man in question exposed himself to him. He took the action of coming forth because his wife left him as a result of his abusive behaviour, which erupted from substance abuse.

On limiting the sexual abuse behaviour, Rev Batho has encouraged him to book himself into a drug abuse rehabilitation centre, which the gentleman had initiated.

The above interviewees' responses show that both Pentecostal and Mainline church streams do not possess enough skills in limiting sexual violence acts, except for Rev Batho, who has acted through his limited personal innovative means.

#### The outcomes of the interviews:

The outcomes of the interviews received to prepare this report are in line with previous studies, as Goossen (2016) mentions, Lisa Schirch (the activist) raising concerns that **the patriarchal structures of Mennonite churches and communities did not protect women** during the discussions of curbing sexual violence, which was taking place in the community.

The other study by Ndlovu, Mavhandu-Mudzusi, and Baloyi (2024) indicates that statements against members of the Catholic hierarchy have, in the past, often been masked by the church. In such a way that cases of sexual violence allegations by a Catholic priest, he would be transferred to another parish and continue with the sexual violence behaviour there.

They further report that previous studies showed that, in most instances, the church failed to take operational action against priests who were known to have allegations of child sexual abuse. Some disregarded the allegations

and did not acknowledge them at all. Some treated alleged perpetrators mercifully and failed to address the obvious risks they

posed to victims.

The above two studies also agree with other research works of Tombs (2014) and Roberts (2021) that **the church does not apply full attention to addressing this societal ill.**

### The observation from this study can be summarized as follows:

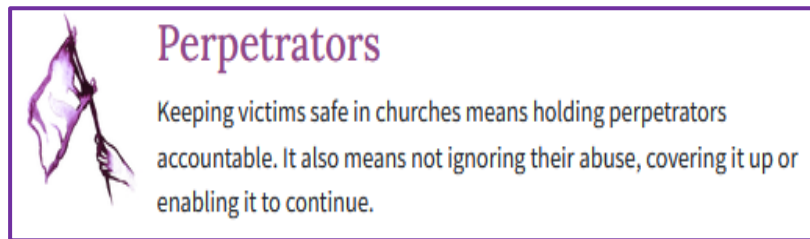
- The church puts little or no effort into curbing sexual violence, as expressed by the participants consulted in this research.
- The limited church participation on the subject shows that the Christian community must vigorously work on conveying a strong message that sexual violence is a crime and must be treated as such (Mati, 2013).
- The message should share that women are created in God's image, are not inferior to men, and must be treated with dignity (Genesis 1:26; Kunhiyop, 2008).
- Men need to know that Jesus is their role model. They should treat women and children with respect as He did when He walked the Earth (John 4:7-27; Luke 10:38-42; Kunhiyop, 2008).
- If the church can encourage men to respect women through the workshops, prophetic messages, and in all their faith-building platforms, there shall be visible efforts to combat the sexual violence pandemic. Such messages will get into the ears of the perpetrators, which will contribute to their different faith development stages.

### Pastoral care

**Pastoral care of such nature can commence by first educating young and grown men on sexual violence**, as it is observed that some men grow up with no knowledge of this subject (Kåven, Maack, Flåm, and Nivison, 2019; Fix, Newman, Assini-Meytin, and Letourneau, 2023).

I also observed during my pastoral care sessions in church and at the public clinic, where I provide pastoral care services on an ad hoc basis, that some men commit sexual violence because they cannot distinguish

between approaching a lady to have a healthy intimate relationship and perpetrating sexual violence.



Educating men on the sexual violence topic through pulpit prophetic messages will limit them from acquiring behaviours that lead them to be perpetrators of sexual

violence.

Since the messages that address sexual violence perpetration will be part of the church's agenda, there shall be policies in place that address it. The church shall also have trained and qualified personnel who offer pastoral care to alleged perpetrators and individuals who voluntarily come forth for help as a result of the prophetic messages they would have received.

**Such care will prepare for character restoration and the safe welcoming of such an individual back into the community.**

### 5.0 Conclusion

This article puts effort into encouraging how the church needs to be involved in fighting the sexual violence pandemic through pastoral care to perpetrators.

Since the church is a tool of God to perfect his will on Earth, this article further explains how the church could

use scripture to correct the situation since the scripture is a mouthpiece of God to his creation. Therefore, the church and society can learn how God expects his creation to be and spread this good news from this passage.

The next article, named "*The compassionate but accountable care of perpetrators: a pastoral theological response*," will further explain strategies that

can be applied to influence societies to produce favourable living conditions to fight sexual violence by specifically addressing perpetration.

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#### NOTE

This article is an extract from Mr Makhanya's main article titled *Caring for perpetrators of sexual violence: A pastoral theological perspective, defining sexual violence, possible causes, its impact, and risk factors*, which in the process of being published. A further extract will follow in the next issue of CPSC Notes. ■

**The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."**

## Reflection Theory

By Mrs Roxanne Bailey, Career Guidance Counsellor, Independent Psychometrist and Pastoral Counsellor

### 1 Corinthians 13:12

*"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known". (KJV)*

### Romans 12:2

*"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (KJV)*

#### Keywords:

fountain, transformed, acceptable, equilibrium



### Introduction

Reflection... a word so diverse. To reflect, one needs context, history, feeling, emotion and understanding from an individual's perspective. For the philosopher René Descartes there is a difference between the mind and body. Should one attend to Descartes' analogy of the fountains controlled by a fountaineer; where the soul was set in the machine called the mind. Is it as simple as described in this analogy?

Nonetheless, the two aspects are said to be closely related: mental and the physical state. Amongst this is to self-reflect, or to find a state of reflective equilibrium. To reflect might then not be as simplified as the analogy by Descartes. One might find one's 'fountain' operating in a state of imbalance

or in need of repair if under some form of mental distress or anything else.

Any individual present on this earthly realm is caught in their own state of reflection. The counsellor in practice needs to be mindful of the uniqueness of the state of the individual's 'fountain'.

Psalm 23:5 says, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over".

A 'fountain' here on earth will need constant assistance so that 'my cup runneth over' with the needed guidance by a gracious God.

**Recent philosophy is rife with concepts that involve reflection. Consider some examples.**

- "Reflective knowledge", unlike animal knowledge, was said to involve understanding of not just a perceived, remembered, or inferred fact but its relationship to the broader network of beliefs and knowledge (Sosa, 1991, p. 240).
- "Reflective equilibrium" has been invoked explicitly in discussions of how to determine what is just (Rawls, 1971) and invoked implicitly in discussions of how to justify the rules of logic (Daniels, 2013; Goodman, 1983).
- "Reflective agency" was considered important to understanding human action (Kennett & Fine, 2009; Velleman, 1989, 2000; Wallace, 2006).
- "Reflective scrutiny" has been said to allow us to evaluate our ethical view from within the confines of that view (Hursthouse, 1999, Chapter 8).
- "Reflective persons" have been described as unlikely to accept certain claims (e.g., Sidgwick, 1874).
- "Reflective self-knowledge" has referred to the unique awareness we enjoy over our own—as opposed to others'—beliefs, desires, intentions, and other mental states (Peacocke, 2014) (IFAD Guide to Project M&E, Section 8 (Reflecting Critically to Improve Action)).

As counsellors we tend to use a combination of these reflection concepts. Let's consider the reflection theory in practice since most of the time a child of God needs some form of guidance and may be in need of assistance to prepare the 'fountain' to overflow with the greatest of truths- to be true to who we are, to be honest of who we are.

The lyrics of Matthew West in "Truth be Told" mentions that we are inclined to say that we are "Never better", yet we seem to reflect in an unconscious state of pride, and we are all isolated beings and thus aloof :

*'Lie number one you're supposed to have it all together*

*And when they ask how you're doing*

*Just smile and tell them, "Never better" '*

## Content

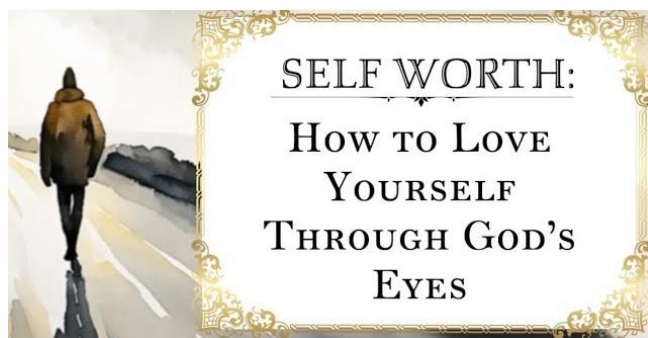
"Never better"-- these words leave one sometimes with such indignation. A balance between the negativity and annoyance and then the positive of resolve. Almost like *Sense and Sensibility*, a novel by Jane Austen, where the author refers to the two connected words: "Sense" refers to good judgment, wisdom, and prudence, while "sensibility" signifies sensitivity, emotionality, and responsiveness to feelings.

I want to refer to two quotes within "*Sense and Sensibility*": "*It isn't what we say or think that defines us, but what we do*" and "*I wish, as well as everybody else, to be perfectly happy; but, like everybody else, it must be in my own way*".



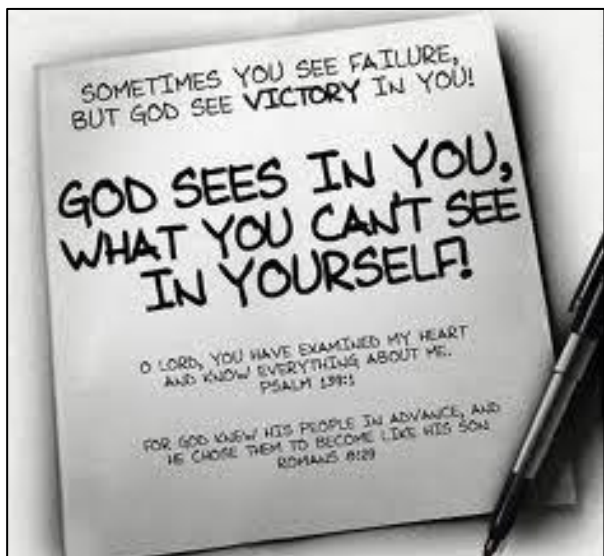
Aesop's "The dog and his reflection" is not just about the moral lesson of greed, but also to reflect in an honest way and to be content, as well as to realise that which is important. At the end the dog found himself swimming for dear life to reach the shore. One needs to learn to embrace the self in its holistic state. There will always be the state of what is good and that which might be experienced as bad.

Aesop fable on the "Raven and a Swan" wants to inform all about acceptance and contentment, as well as not to be envious of the swan's elegant white feathers, or to assume to be like others. Learn to be yourself and do it on purpose as quoted by famous singer Dolly Parton. Own up to the reflected upon words: "Never better"; when one uses these words to really say it with the knowledge of reflecting from a true self. So no matter the scars one can become flawless through knowing that God loves all of us and we should learn to be truthful to ourselves.



When we look in the water and see our reflection to realise that God sees all of us through His clarity called grace; we do not see through glass darkly but start to

see God's likeness for each of His children. You do not need to be wealthy. For what is wealth if we do not have faith or love for God and sees His grace for us, as well as find self-acceptance in a complicated earthly realm.



Robert, H. Thouless (1953) in "Straight and crooked thinking" writes "The attitude of detachment of mind is one which can be cultivated and must be cultivated if we are to arrive at true conclusions on matters which touch us personally".

George Gerbner (1976) refers to the cultivation analysis which will also have an influence on the reflection of the self, which is becoming more prominent today which concentrates on the enduring and common consequences of growing up and living with television.

Reflection is part of everyday life, as well as during the counselling practice process. It is almost like Descartes's "fountain analogy" yet should be considered through a multifaceted "rainbow analogy". One cannot only consider the cultivation aspect of the negative or positive impact of social media on the self, but also the emotional, thinking, personality, temperamental, cultural, religious, cognitive, and behavioural self.

Dale Carnegie was an American writer and teacher of courses in self-improvement, salesmanship, corporate training, public speaking, and interpersonal skills exclaimed the following:

"Two men looked out from prison bars. One saw the mud, the other saw the stars". When reflecting one should not just see the bitter, but also the 'stars', thus the vastness of all the greatness of our individual greatness God wants for our "cup to overflow".



One theory used during reflective therapy is Gibbs' Reflective Cycle which consists of six stages: **Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion, and**



### Action Plan.

Reflection is part life of our "cup"; thus to provide guidance as a counsellor; reflection is viewed as a state of harmony which can be understood as the interconnectedness of different elements to create a unified and pleasing sound: the interplay of melody and harmony, the balance of different self-reflected aspects. A violin's structure, materials, and player's technique all contribute to its sound, thus a state of harmony through the careful consideration and integration of various musical components; so is aspects within life and when one reflects.

To be transformed we should not just be in the process of osmosis but reflect to become truthful through diffusion. To be like a teabag: where the dominant mechanism is the movement of tea molecules from the tea bag (higher concentration) to the water (lower concentration), and the water moving into the tea bag to equalize concentration.

In Galatians 6:9 reads "*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*". God provided each counsellor with unique skills to guide the tea bag through all the necessary reflection of the self, through all the strengths and weaknesses. Yet, most of all we need the equalizer in the concentration - God - thus to be the integration of melody and harmony. Although small little things in life might create a feeling of inequality. God says in 1 John 1:7: "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*".

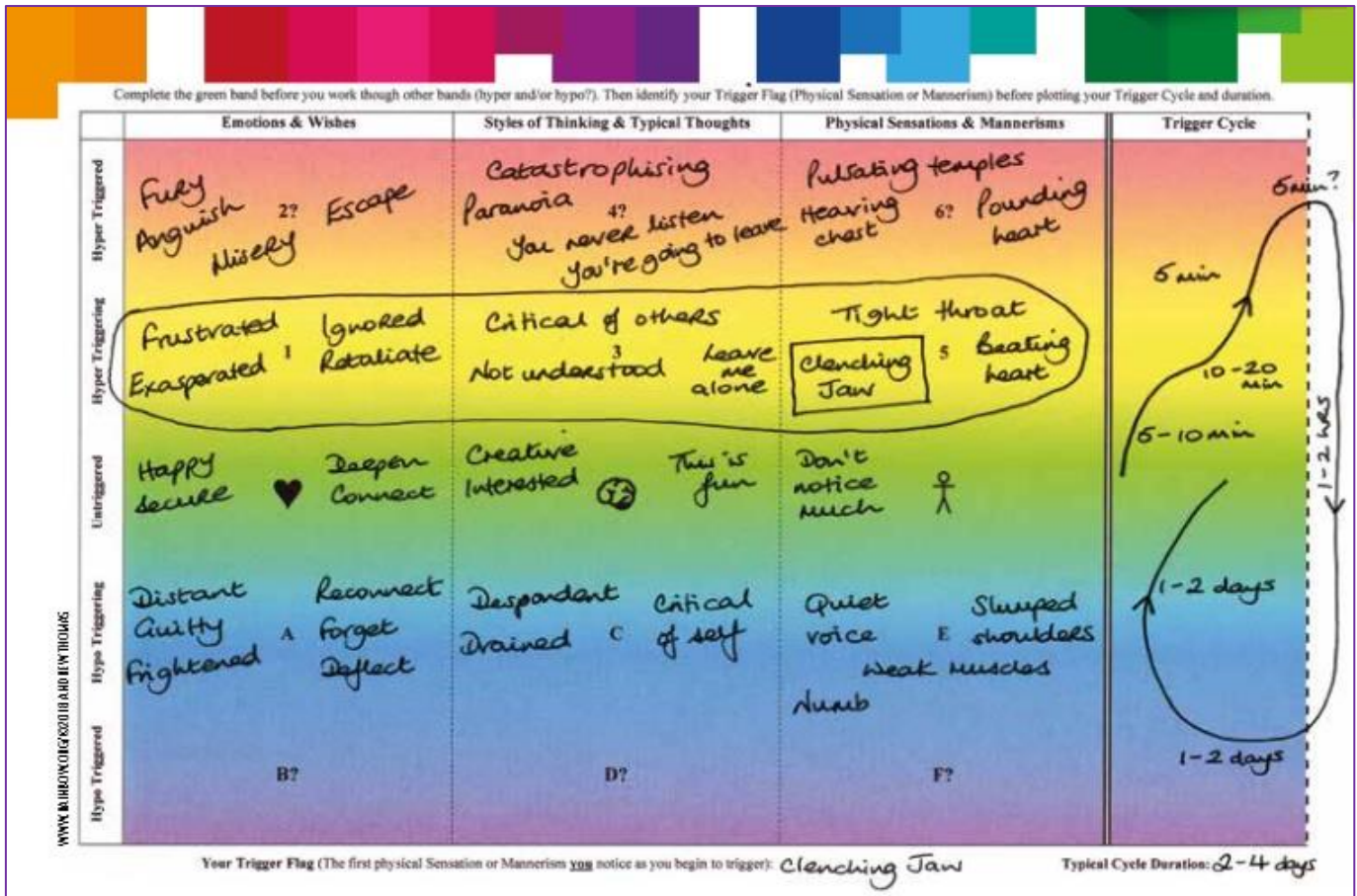
God wants to reflect upon us with His everlasting grace, kindness and love.

### CONCLUSION

"*He predestined us to be adopted*" (Ephesians 1:5). God sees all of us, He sees the truthful reflection. God will guide each practitioner in practice to be able to guide and reflect on all aspects of the client, without judgement. God sees the harmony, the full rainbow. Andrew Thomas' the "The Rainbow Map" introduces

a tool developed to help clients manage emotional conflict through self-awareness of the whole self: "a tool used in

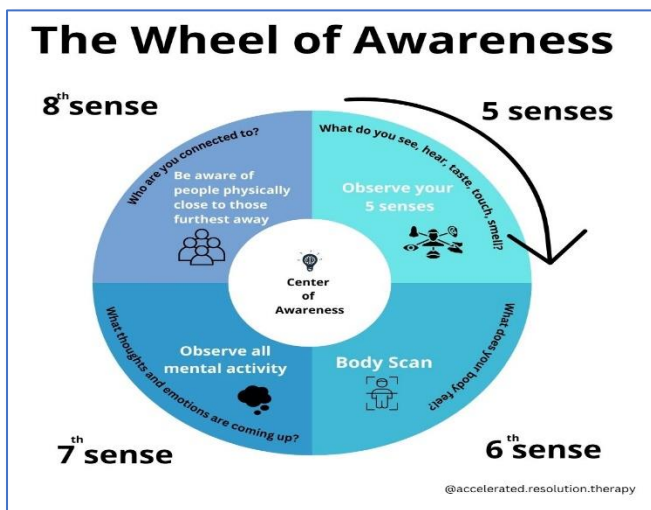
To reflect is something which does not always come easy, and one would need to adjust your own lenses



trauma-informed therapy to help individuals understand and manage their reactions to triggers. It uses a color-coded system, with different colours representing various levels of reactivity, from high-trigger states (red) to relative well-being (green).

The map also includes columns for emotions, thinking styles, sensations, and mannerisms associated with each level, allowing clients to identify patterns in their experiences and develop self-awareness".

Dr. Dan Siegel uses the wheel of self-awareness in therapy. This is something a reflective practitioner can also integrate into the counselling process.



of the self, to see not a failure, yet to see the "stars"; thus the greatness God sees in each of His children.

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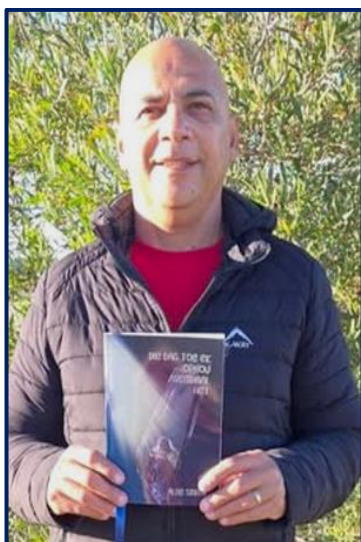
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## The Day I Stopped Breathing

**J**AG (Albe) Smith is a spiritual counsellor, author and ministry leader with a heart for healing and restoration.

He founded Faithful Ministries International in 2017 and later established *Hope is Unbreakable Pastoral Care*, offering support to those facing trauma, crisis and emotional struggles.

Albe studied Leadership and Ministry at Nehemia Bible Institute and received further training in spiritual counselling at Alpha Pastoral Practice. He is a registered Religious Professional in Christian Pastoral Counselling ACRP affiliate and the author of "*Die dag toe ek ophou asemhaal het*" (*The Day I Stopped Breathing*) – a powerful story of hope, survival and purpose.



Albe Smith's life as a pastor and counsellor revolves around providing hope to the hopeless, encouragement to the downhearted and support to the disheartened.

Albe's faith in, and love for, his Heavenly Father stands like a signpost throughout this book. He writes about a sensitive subject he has personal knowledge about – a topic people avoid – until someone close commits suicide.

Albe's personal account will bring hope to many, and I am convinced that it will make a difference in people's lives.

**Mariette van Dyk**

### Reviews:

#### Blouvlam:

Last night we proudly attended the book launch of alumnus Albe Smith, a man whose journey and vocation continues to leave deep imprints.

Albe is a spiritual counsellor, pastor and founder of *Hope is Unbreakable Pastoral Care*.

His involvement with our school is invaluable - he often provides pastoral guidance and encouragement to our students and educators and is a familiar and beloved face at school gatherings.

His book, titled "*The Day I Stopped Breathing*," was launched last night - a raw, honest story of his own journey through dark times to light. But this is more than just his story. This is a message of hope for anyone who has gotten tired of keeping breathing. Because, as he himself says, "Something greater said, 'Hold on.'"

Young people, this book is for you. This is not just a story of pain and recovery, but a voice that says honestly and bluntly: you are not alone. If you've ever felt like you're struggling to breathe – figuratively or emotionally – this book will hit you in the right place. It is honest, soft and strong. Read this - because it just might be the words you needed to hear.

We thank you for your inspiration, Pastor Albe. May this book touch many lives and remind all that hope is truly unbreakable!

*Freely translated:*

#### Suicide: One too many

Every suicide is one too many.  
One individual too many who believed they had no other way out.  
One voice too many that became quiet.  
One heart too many that broke without a last chance to heal.

It cuts deep when you hear those words:  
"*They took their own lives.*"

Behind those words is the tale of pain, of silence, of someone who maybe smiled during the day, but cried at night.

Someone who did not want to die – but did not want to get hurt anymore.

We cannot stay silent any longer.  
We cannot say "*this is but life*".  
We cannot wait for yet another name on a list



The book can be bought @ R200 from the author himself.

Please contact Albe on 073 358 5915 or

[Albe-smith47@gmail.com](mailto:Albe-smith47@gmail.com)

Compiled by Ilse Grünewald

## Stories from my practice: 47 cents

By Handa Blake

**T**he “*Secret Special Jesus Black Boys*” at work is the name they chose themselves after long deliberation and without any interference from my side.

Towards the end of the 1990’s, while doing a theology master’s through UNISA, I volunteered as a student “counsellor” at a local primary school. It was a non-profit Christian school that started in the early 1990’s alongside the excitement of the new South Africa, Madiba “magic”, and Desmond Tutu’s vision of a “rainbow nation”. The school’s mission was to provide good education to disadvantaged children within a Christian context.

As I started interacting with the children sent my way, it initially felt as if much of my studies up to that point left me unprepared for the kind of challenges these children were facing on a daily basis. As we started to unpack their stories, unique outcomes were discovered, and we could start co-constructing hope-filled alternative stories which started to relieve my initial sense of despair at their everyday hardships.

**Soon after my arrival, five 10-year-old Grade 5 boys were referred to me.** Their teacher found them extremely disruptive and difficult to handle in class. After a couple of individual sessions with each of the five, their teacher reported that they were less disruptive and that they were coping much better in her classroom. At that stage, it was clearly time to end the weekly individual sessions with the boys in order to accommodate the increasing list of new referrals. I also knew that I would have to find a time-efficient way to “keep an eye” on these energetic boys, but I had no idea how I could make that happen.

On my way to school one day, I realized that I was in the unique position that all the children I was seeing, were readily available “under one roof”, which offered unique and convenient possibilities for follow-up work and check-ins. **This realization led me to the idea of undercover “gangs” or clubs**, that I could consult from time to time and who could assist me with other children facing trouble. During our work together, I would act as go-between to ensure that the identities of those who help and those who are being helped, would be fully protected and would remain anonymous at all times.

Their work would consist of me sharing problems cryptically to not compromise confidentiality and then to ask them what they suggest should be done. I thought that in this way, I could simultaneously check in with them from time to time as well as cultivate a sense of empathy and compassion.



When I got the 5 boys together, my idea of a secret gang that assists me with my work was an easy sell. We all agreed that **their gang will be special in that they will only do good things** and that the secrets will only be known to us (we discussed the difference between good secrets and bad secrets in much detail, accompanied with numerous examples).

At our next meeting, they enthusiastically chose their name and slogan and “designed” a badge which proudly displayed the name that

they came up with: *The Secret Special Jesus Black Boys*. At that stage, they were fully confident and fired up that the SSJBB’s were up and ready to face their important challenge. They loved to be chosen for their special role and took special care to make sure that every “letter” they wrote and decorated to another child was “just right”. Their overwhelming enthusiasm moved me deeply and I had an inkling that my “secret gang” idea could become much more than I initially thought.

Sooner than I thought, I had the privilege to witness how these young boys grew in true empathy and compassion. At that stage we had developed a kind of rhythm: I would tell them about the specific need of a child in trouble; they would then agree what needs to be said in their letter and then they would meticulously decorate the letter and envelope (I helped with the tricky writing parts). I was then entrusted with the safe delivery of their precious letter. I would always ask the recipient if he/she wanted to thank them for the letter, and these answers were a particular highlight and proudly pasted in their SSJBB Workbook.

One day the principal called me in unexpectedly and requested that I come to school urgently to help with a severely traumatized 11-year-old who saw her 16-year-old cousin being shot and killed right next to her the previous day. She and her cousin were on their way to buy cheap mincemeat at a spaza shop in the informal settlement where the cousin and his granny lived.

She was understandably inconsolable, and the staff felt helpless and deeply concerned about the possible effects of this additional trauma on her already deeply traumatized psyche. She’d already endured years of terrible sexual abuse, and the abuse seemed to be continuing in the children’s home where she had been living for the past 6 years.

The principal and her class teacher tried to move her to a safer place but was unsuccessful up to that point (at that stage the Aids pandemic turned into a death tsunami which led to tens of thousands of orphans that could not all be accommodated in children’s homes. She was also struggling academically and had no friends in her class as she was much older than everyone else).

After my conversation with the principal, I decided to fetch the SSJBB's and consult them. The room that the school allocated to me, was a small storeroom right across the school tuck shop. I knew we had to work fast, as it was not long before breaktime and I wanted the SSJBB'S outside during break so that they could use any pent-up energy.

I told them what happened to "Stacy" and about the sadness in her heart in a way that they could be able to relate to. The boys were deeply moved by what I've shared with them. When I asked them how they think they could help "Stacy", they said they want to write her a letter. At that stage I gave them permission to speak in their own language to decide what they wanted to say (they were only allowed English at school) to "Stacy". This time the boys took longer than usual, but I could not understand what was said. I asked them to try to work a bit faster, that we can be finished before breaktime.

While I was speaking, I saw them starting to feel around in their pockets... and out came a total of 47 cents... the grand total of their precious break tuckshop money. They carefully put their 47 cents at the centre of the round table where we've always worked. When I inquired about the money, they informed me that their money must accompany their letter to their "Stacy".



Sitting there, it was as if I was witnessing the poor widow giving the only money that she had. This time, my tears felt so different from my early morning tears in the principal's office. The tears of anger, helplessness and sadness at "Stacy's" plight and the plight of so many children, changed to tears of joy at witnessing this miracle first-hand.

This time I was the scribe, and the letter they dictated was concise:

*Dear Stacy*  
*Buy yourself some sweets with this money.*  
*It will make you feel better.*  
*Lots and lots and lots of love,*  
*From:*  
*The Secret Special Jesus Black Boys*

While they were decorating the letter and the envelope, my heart thanked God for the miracle that I've had the privilege to witness right before my eyes; I thanked Him that He showed me that good can come from bad in so many unexpected ways, despite all the bad that seems to dominate the world.

One of the SSJBB's decorated the envelope with a cartoon character and then their precious 47 cents were

carefully placed in the envelope before they sealed the decorated envelope with much care.

Their heartfelt and unselfish act of compassion with the very little that they had, reminded me of the story of the poor widow who gave her last penny to the church and how Jesus commended her for that (Luke 21:1-4).

**Somehow it felt as if I was standing on holy ground.**

When Stacy read her letter, she burst into tears. But these were happy tears. This is what she wrote.

*Thank you for the letter.*  
*I am not going to buy sweets.*  
*I am going to carry this money with me.*  
*It will always tell me that there are people in this world that loves me....*

I had the privilege of returning "Stacy's" letter to the 10-year-old boys. At that stage they did not have the emotional vocabulary to express what they felt, but they were so excited that they could help. The SSJBB's never tired of their under-cover work, which continued until they left for High School two years later.

The theoretical maps that guided my work with the SSJBB's:

- Narrative Therapy by Jill Freedman and Gene Combs – pages 237 to 287: Michael White's work on Compassionate Witnessing and Communities of Concern.
- David Epston's practice of letter writing and What is Narrative Therapy by Alice Morgan, pages 101 to 109.

BIO

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- Qualifications
- BMus (Ed)(Instr) (US)
- BPsycHons (University of Johannesburg)
- MTh (Practical Theology) (UNISA)

#### Personal Statement

I have been running a private practice for over 20 years, working with individuals aged 10 years and older, couples, and groups. I provide group and individual counselling training and supervision for pastors, teachers, lay Christian counsellors, community workers, and others.

I have a special interest in documentation, memorial-making and communities of concern work as part of the therapeutic journey. ■

**"If you see what needs to be repaired and how to repair it, you have found a piece of the world that God has left for you to complete.**

**But if you see only what is wrong and ugly in the world, it is yourself that needs repair."**

**– Menachem Mendel Schneerson**

## *The art and dance of the healing relationship in Counselling. An experiential reflection.*

By Dr. Karen Hayward

**R**elationship forms the key part of the therapeutic dynamics and forms key to whole approaches, such as that of Carl Rogers. It has been found that it is more important than the modality of intervention. It's not only key to success, but also a complex matter in which it can become instrumental to further wounding.

Therefore, it's important that counsellors be aware and mindful of how their own attachment styles and relationship dynamics may colour their perceptions of clients as well as their approach and interactions. The focus of this article is to share from experiences of private practice over 12 years and a longer journey of being on the receiving end of various forms of therapy, counselling and ministry. I've also been a friend of others on various healing journeys with various professionals.

While relationship is a key, it is not the main modality for a counsellor using short term interventions. At the same time, a counsellor's relationship style or attachment style may influence empathy and intervention in key ways – see Romano, Janzen & Fitzpatrick (2009). It will affect a counsellor's depth of session, setting of boundaries, ability to empathize accurately, and transference, for example (Kietaihl, 2012, Ruiz-Aranda, Cardoso-Alvarez, & Fennolar-Cortes, 2012).

Clients love to joke that you are their “shrink” – and if you're aware of the pitfall of misrepresentation, you'll again reiterate that you're not a psychologist or psychiatrist, etc. While the phrase can be used sarcastically, in anger derisively, or in a way of “I'm doing good seeking help from you”, it can also be used affectionately to describe the relationship. We could really do with a term for pastoral counsellors/caregivers/ministers ... right? Another facet of it speaks to the position of authority and implied authority of the role from which the client or counselee looks up to you.

While the style of counsellors varies in terms of being directive and non-directive (even when striving for non-directiveness) and approaches vary, a counselling relationship is not a reciprocal friendship. It's for the benefit of the counselees who make themselves vulnerable and chooses (or forces themselves) to trust you. The undressing of self in terms of one's deepest points of pain and/or shame (especially in the case of trauma counselling) before your

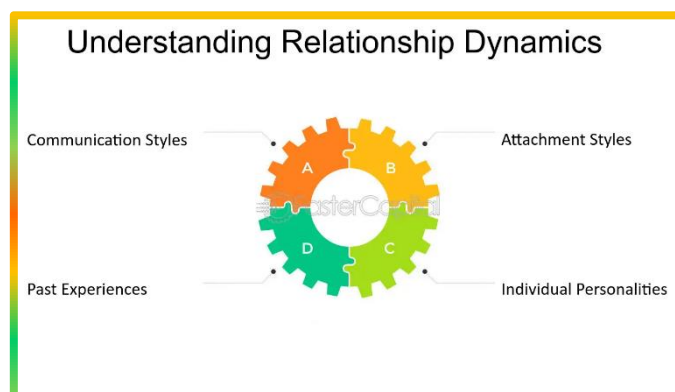


eyes of empathy and understanding, places them in a vulnerable position and you in one of power.

To be fully known and yet accepted and loved – is that not our basic human longing for intimacy? Be careful to lead the client to God and not to be reliant on you who are only a transient human vehicle for empathy, care and acceptance. There's a reason for a deep longing among the most deeply wounded for a “reparenting” some-

times sought for in counselling rooms and within the church. It's often within relationships that the deepest and earliest wounds were struck, and it's true that healthy relationships heal. It might also not be possible for clients to trust God for a while and the process cannot be forced.

While there are some like John and Paula Sanford who speak of a calling and process to spiritually and emotionally reparent others (in context of the wider church), I believe there are way fewer people able or called to it, than what there are wounded and in need of. It's a dangerous road full of pitfalls with doubtful success. Which leads us back to doing what we can in various situations within the framework of the office (of counselling) we stand in.



Rather than circling back and delving into academic research, I'll now sketch a few scenarios towards raising awareness. I will use “CTPM” for “counsellor/therapist/psychologist/pastor or minister doing counselling.” I will use numbers to indicate scenarios so that different

CTPM's may refer to the same individual.

- CTPM1 is very established in practice and will draw some clients into bible study groups and friendships, but not all. Another client looks at that and realizes that they did not “make the cut” stirring up feelings of not being enough with various responses to “please” in order to win affection or to stand strong or withdraw. (Other clients may revel in their “difficultness” and act out more.) Not only are there now dual relationships in some of the relationships, but there are others where trust has been affected. It's human to be drawn to some cli-

ents and like them more than others – we don't befriend every person we meet. Be careful of dual relationships. Play it out going forward – if this happen, then these are the possible outcomes, and if this ... then ...

- CTPM2 likes to learn and is a voracious reader. CTPM2 is quick to borrow books from clients and is slow to return. It causes clients stress to have to ask for items back months later and may misdirect internal focus in a session. CTPM2 is furthermore reluctant to lend out her own books and will demand them back with various urgent excuses within 3 days, leading to an awareness that there are different rules and a power differential in this relationship. The stronger the client feels about "injustice" ... the more negative the inner emotional response. The client may feel used, disrespected, devalued, not trusted, frustrated, etc. at a minimum. Focus is drawn to the "healing" relationship instead of what the reason for the counselling is.
- CTPM3 frequently proclaims themselves as an expert and/or with "the expert answer" – these answers may differ from week to week. It can lead to frustration, confusion or derision between clients who share their experiences among themselves.
- CTPM4 believes that clients who suffered childhood incest must confront the abusers in order to "prove" or "validate" the "truth" of their experience. If they don't wish to, it's "false." In the case of complex trauma, "truth" may be dissociated and only come to light over time. In this case, the quick finding of "the root cause" for a "prescribed solution" was actually only the tip of the iceberg and the CTPM not "the expert" as claimed. As events unfolded in the client's life as a result of familial confrontation, the client destabilized for a time, presenting as more dependent than in their overall pattern of doing life. The client was then punished by decreasing at the session frequency. The client thus opened very painful traumatic events and incurred the loss of the helping relationship in the process.
- CTPM5 struggles to find a balance between the more rigid rules and boundaries of counselling in a psychology setting and the communal, relational church environment. When drawing closer to one of the partners in a marriage than the other in the sense of friendship – pain and jealousy results for the other, even though it doesn't make sense to CTPM5 in terms of the danger of crossing certain other gendered lines.
- CTPM6 has a history of complex trauma and a personal healing journey. As a result, CTPM6 is comfortable with deep trauma and clients who may not share with other CTPM's often end up sharing here. There is an overlap between the resulting attachment wounding and patterns



among clients who experienced deep trauma and those with borderline disorders – and it's not always easy to identify these clients who need a referral early on, causing other dilemmas later, especially as CTPM6 wants to avoid abandoning anyone. But the borderline client needs more than the emotional regulation found and craved for with CTPM6, aside from the legal pitfalls.

- CTPM7 doesn't manage time very well. Often running over, clients have to wait while their stress increases in the waiting room. Depending on how late CTPM7 is or which time of the day, sessions become shorter and shorter. One client was told that because of sensitivity (of the client), the session can't be "too long" and would routinely have sessions of 30-45 minutes while paying for an hour. When awareness dawned, it was of being abused. Such patterns lead to increasing the power differential and powerlessness of the client.
- CTPM8 encouraged a client to engage also in context of the homegroup but then had a pastor and family member scolding the client for adding pressure to CTPM8. Sessions would often be cancelled within as little as 30 minutes before or a few hours, which was very destabilizing to the client. It later emerged that the client's trauma was triggering the CTPM's unresolved personal trauma. CTPM8 should have referred the client sooner rather than being inconsistent and blaming the client.
- CTPM9 was very proud of their skills in hypnotherapy and boasted 100% success. When CTPM9 later did not have the success anticipated and promised, the client was blamed as being "unwilling" and labelled with a false diagnosis that caused a lot of emotional distress and worry over time. Inflated egos can do great damage.

Some examples are the result of unexpected consequences while others make clear that we should always seek to heal and grow more ourselves and be self-aware. **Even counsellors with healthy and secure attachment styles may have bad days or seasons of high stress, during which the application of guidelines and skills and use of supervision become even more important for all.**



How we set boundaries – the "thickness" or "thinness" of our boundaries (Lavering, 2014) and how we relate, are tied to our own attachment styles. Certain clients may trigger a therapist's more anxious attachment and others' more

avoidant style may provoke other responses. How invested are you in being the “expert” with the answers? Or how do you feel in terms of your value, when you are unable to help? How do you respond when you don’t have the answer?

Clients may also be drawn to certain helpers with a specific style of attachment, in order to subconsciously try to resolve issues with their original (for example, unavailable) parents.

We love to classify so that we can understand and control our environments – to try and make it less unpredictable and unsafe. In times of personal stress, we as CTPM’s may over-use “diagnosis” or labels and use stereotypes as well as drawing conclusions too quickly. We can communicate these inadvertently, instead of patiently being present and listening. And may use it to blame when it’s not appropriate.

Let’s consider the contracting and conclusion of the counselling process again. **It’s important to always set clear goals and to reassess them with the clients – and to be ready to release them to get help elsewhere.** Most of the time, the process is relatively simple. With clients with a long history of trauma and loss, it becomes more difficult. It’s important to realize and contract at the start that we work within limitations or boundaries in terms of scope and time. Sometimes an apparently “simple” or recent trauma may open up Pandora’s box and other issues may emerge for the first time. If the goals aren’t clear, it may be very difficult to move forward and to redirect.

Consider the following termination discussions and their implications:



- “I don’t understand why you still feel that after the work that we’ve done. Perhaps work with a therapist doing X may be of use to understand.” (Good – there are other possible routes with alternative approaches.)
- “You equalize relationships and because you refused to follow this suggestion of mine, you must have lied about Y.” (In order words, it’s not me – it’s all your fault and you’re so messed up that... Also – if the client was equalizing the relationship, it could and should have been a point to be addressed early on. Lastly, there is a false accusation of lying.)
- “You’ve gone and lost your healing – just remember what God said when we prayed.” (Actually, God is quite aware of our current situational embeddedness and growth journey and may reveal complex answers in discrete puzzle pieces over time.)
- “It’s because you can’t give me X information (clearly communicated as part of the problem in the intake contracting) and you don’t respond like client Y did when I did the

same intervention successfully. You are not doing what you should.” (Client X may not fit the same pattern as client Y, or even as a group of different clients.)

- “Yes, I did promise X / Y – but God’s calling me to other important things.” By implication God doesn’t care that you’re leaving the client in the lurch and said client is not as important to God as whatever other task is drawing you. This caused great anxiety and anger at God within the client. It goes back to the initial contract, and I’ve heard from others whom God called to something else after having committed to someone, who asked God to be released from the commitment or given time to complete the commitment. God then changed the situation, and the other party found a preferred alternative (no discussion with the CTPM), or the person decided against the agreed-upon journey (independently). Alternatively, God has also chosen to grow the CTPM during the time that they walked out their commitment before fully releasing them to do the new thing.
- “I no longer have the time and capacity to see you. You aren’t coping well enough with the interventions as I am able to give them. These are referral options.” Although the initial contracting was done well, not promising to walk with the client to the end, it still resulted in deep feelings of loss and abandonment, because of the difficulty of opening up for said process and because none of the alternatives for referral could actually deal with the presenting problem. It’s like saying – yes, you need oncology and currently there isn’t another provider but seeing as you respond badly to it and find it so hard, you now have to be ok with receiving aspirin for your condition, while I focus on more important / other matters. Sometimes wounding may be unavoidable, unintentional and require a journey of healing with the Lord by itself. As an amusing aside, frustration at the client pushing too hard to do this fast, as if time might run out, might be based in the reality of a good initial contract and the truth of there not being enough time to conclude the process.
- While you may verbalize a willingness to keep seeking the Lord in prayer with someone and have open communication and the correct contracting boundaries, while also encouraging all alternative options that present themselves with others along the way – the person may at some point decide it’s your fault that answers were not found (yet). Do not share that you think God’s said that it’s not your fault though He’s not shared the reason of the problem with you. Explore again the expectations and the loss of a dream together with the resulting feelings – often initial expectations and

ideas of what healing may look like or what you may be able to achieve in a prayer journey, are not fully within a person's awareness – no matter how well the initial contract is set. Exploring the feelings in an attitude of openness would be more beneficial.

Let's circle back to a key point within very different scenarios. There is a power differential that is automatic to the counselling relationship, even when we strive to treat others as fully equal in a dialogical and real relationship (whatever our style of intervention).

Also, transference is real. If we are not aware of our own woundedness or patterns of relating, we may assume "our answers" and "solutions" are the only valid ones and the "full truth." We may be uncomfortable when we're not in the position of power resulting from being a successful helper. We may respond with the "not me" – it's your fault.

Even if that is true, you may cause further, unintentional harm. Be mindful of the context and boundaries of all aspects of your counselling relationship, communication (incl. policies on messages and updates in between sessions), as well as the context of broader relationships and your plans for the long term. How open will you be with your own life story? If you are working in a church family context – this can be quite problematic. Unless you can take a wounded healer stance comfortably or have the openness of a "society-anonymous" setting, you may lose a sense of your own safe place for you to "confess and be vulnerable."

**When we're working with others in spiritual counselling especially, we are standing on holy ground. It's important to listen closely to God and to be respectful and mindful of our impact.**

Every client and their situation are unique, and they are deeply loved by God – no matter how they may challenge or frustrate us. What can we do aside from staying humble as a partner of God as the true Healer, being aware of ourselves, our patterns and grow in our own journeys?

Sometimes a client may have to grieve a loss of a helping relationship with another helper before moving on. Depending on what early wounding it taps into, the cycle grief work may need to be repeated.

One of the CTPMs has a very simple prayer that mediated the wounding of a bumbling (blaming) close to her counselling with one client. After every session, the prayer was something along these lines. "Father, at the close of this session, I ask that you restore us in our positions as

equal sisters/brothers in Christ before you." Essentially it says, "I'm not in authority over you as one up or one down."

We form spiritual and soul ties over the course of every relationship. When a relationship has run its course, it can also be very helpful to ask God to cut all ties that are no longer needed and establish only the ties that He deems needed for the future of this relationship.

In some cases, we also may need to cut trauma bonds. Trauma gets stuck in terms of time (when something occurred), land (where it occurred), other people (including others linked to the same person), as well as birth right (what God has called each person to) and offices called to or occupied (in the ministry or other occupations, as well as roles such as parent, sibling, etc.), according to Arthur Burk. It affects our hearts, kidneys and adrenals.

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## Suicide: A personal account

By Henriette Brown, Basic Religious Professional in Christian Pastoral Counselling

**Suicide is nothing new – it has always been a part of the fabric of society.** Even Cleopatra died by choice – letting a venomous snake bite her! Unfortunately, suicide is on the increase under all age groups: the youngest person dying by suicide that I know of, was a child of 10. The eldest, 76. Suicide does not discriminate against age or race. Fortunately, people are starting to wake up and beginning to take notice of this endemic.

### Stigma

For aeons suicide was a subject just not spoken about. There was a huge stigma attached to suicide. **Suicide is a complex topic, and even though the stigma has recently started to lift somewhat, it remains a difficult subject.** Very often, members of society still do not understand why individuals commit suicide, and/or have little sympathy.

For example, in the past, when a child committed suicide, it was easier for parents to state that he/she had died in a (car) accident, because confessing to suicide would reflect badly on the parents. Often the families of those who had purposefully overdosed on drugs would also cover this up by telling people they had died by accident and not by choice. In certain cultures, e.g. in India, those who had tried to commit suicide and survived, receive a jail sentence.

### Categories

Those who decide to end their lives, can usually – but not always -- fit into one of these categories:

There are those who have planned every detail over an extended period. They get their affairs in order, may write letters to all those who matter in their lives and even apologize for taking their own lives. The thought that suicide is the best solution for themselves and everyone around them had already settled in their minds a long time ago.

You will also find individuals who will keep on trying repeatedly after many failed attempts. Some will eventually succeed. (There are also those who will ensure that they are found/rescued in time – this repeated process can be a cry for help, or unfortunately, sometimes used as a manipulation tool.)



Then there is the man, woman, or even a child, who has endured a lot and who cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel. These suicides are usually impulsively done. Very often there will also not be any letters left for the loved ones that stay behind.

### Suicide and the elderly

Suicide under the elderly is on the increase -- one of the main reasons is the fact that so many of their children emigrate. Often the elderly lose a spouse and contact with their children and grandchildren. They feel alone and think they have nothing to live for anymore.

This is heartbreaking, as every elderly person is also still a part of our society. They have a fountain of knowledge to share and wisdom that only comes with age. Getting involved in various charities, teaching youngsters how to do knitting or needle work, or helping with teaching subjects that children battle with at school, can alleviate the loneliness and feelings of uselessness. It is so important that the elderly is taught how to apply new technology – as an

example: being able to use WhatsApp video calls, Skype, Zoom, etc. will assist in keeping them up to date with and involved in the lives of their families.

### Depression

Depression often plays a role in suicides. Depression can

have many causes, of which a chemical imbalance is but one. I like to describe depression as a deep, dark pit. When you are in it, things very seldom make sense. Usually, those who suffer from depression will lose interest in the outside world, will stop going out and mingling with other people, and will become a recluse.

They do not have the strength or will to get up in the morning, and in extreme cases even personal hygiene will go for a loop. Admonishments from others like “Pull yourself together!” and “Stop feeling sorry for yourself!” really do not help. When you are in that dark and deep pit, you cannot do any of those things! You are overwhelmed by your emotions and circumstances.

People in this boat are very often unable to reach out for help. That is when suicide seems like the only way out, a way of finding “peace.”

### A personal account

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2019 I lost someone who was very precious to me. Being an extreme introvert, this individual never talked to anyone about any of his problems. He had a mischievous sense of humour and loved playing pranks

September is **National Suicide Prevention Month** in South Africa. It's a time to raise awareness about suicide prevention, reduce stigma surrounding mental health, and provide resources for those struggling with suicidal thoughts.

**World Suicide Prevention Day** is also commemorated on September 10th as part of this effort.

on people. But on that morning, he made the choice to end his life...

My cousin also committed suicide. Again, nobody had expected it! He was a bright and intelligent lad, studying at varsity, preparing for a future. A handsome young man he was too – always smartly dressed -- and the girls adored him. Blessed with a wonderful sense of humour, very few realised he was wearing a mask. Internally though, he just could not cope with losing his mum, who was his anchor. So many people had love him dearly – yet he was unable to reach out to anyone.

In 2005, I was in a dark deep dungeon too, unable to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I remember walking to the safe, taking out my gun and looking at it. I had snapped and felt that dying would give me peace. I kept hearing a quiet voice like a tape, playing over and over again: "Just do it – and no more pain." But then God intervened - I heard an audible voice, saying "What do you think you are doing?" I was in shock and quickly put the gun away. I gave the keys of the safe to my husband.

I did not know that I was suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and severe depression. It had snuck up on me without me realising it. I was emotionally tired and burned out. I had experienced rejection just like David in Psalm 27:10 *"For my father and mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in"*. Verbal and emotional abuse had taken their toll on me. I had been a people-pleaser and had paid a heavy price for being that. The nightmares and the re-living of the past were slowly killing me.

Trust had always been a huge issue for me. Talking to a stranger was the biggest step in my healing journey. I had to make the choice to trust. It was not easy. I found a stunning Christian counsellor who helped me to make sense of all the 1001 things running like wild horses through my brain. I had to stop and give it all to God, and my burden became lighter.

My counsellor taught me to look at all my issues from another perspective -- and that is why it is so important to have a safe place to talk! And so, my healing journey started. Matt 11:28: *"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

### **My deliverance was not the gun, but GOD.**

I learned that we must worship God -- especially in challenging times! I started with small steps. If I felt negativity building up, I played praise and worship music. And things started to change for me just like it is described in Psalm 30:11 *"you have turned my mourning into dancing"*. I was mourning so many things -- the lost little girl in me, the survivor of trauma, etc., but I had to let go and surrender it all to God.

I had to learn to find my own identity and not to look for validation from people. I had to find myself in Christ, because He gave His only Son for our suffering and sins --

1 John 4:9-10: *"God send His only Son into the world, as atonement, that we might live through Him."* That taught me that in God I have worth, more precious than gold. People's labels no longer mattered. I am so much stronger both in myself and in my faith. I am certain of my identity: I am an overcomer. And I am a daughter of the Heavenly King!

During my healing journey God taught me that choices like forgiveness and hope are never for naught. It is not the bad and ugly, but what we do with them that shape and define us. I realised that even in that dark pit, God never left me. Humans may fail us, but God never lets us go, especially in the darkest times of human despair. Matt 28:20 taught me that God is always with us "to the end of the age". My lifeline was, is, and always will be God.

I am sharing my story publicly for the first time – I have learned that there is no shame in admitting one is human. **That very dark and negative phase in my life has evolved into something positive – it has taught me to help other people by recognising the symptoms of depression and despair and to get them the right help at the right time.** Helping others have become my calling, because I can honestly say "I have been in your shoes".

I can state that with my head held high, not in shame. The stigma of finding help, or being diagnosed with a mental health disorder, no longer bothers me. I have PTSD – but it does not define me!

May my disclosure reach those out there who feel lost and abandoned to realise that they are not alone and that there is help!

Contact Henriette at 0728065728 ■



### **BIOGRAPHY**

Henriette was born in 1965 in Vanderbijlpark. Mother of two awesome children, a son in Cape town, and a daughter in Basel, Switzerland, and grandmother to a precious granddaughter. She has been a volunteer counsellor since 1993. She feels privileged to see broken people restored to wholeness. She is also a Trauma Incident Reduction (TIR) facilitator and has SAP occult training.

She loves writing articles for magazines to spread awareness of trauma, suicide and also cancer. She ran support groups for cancer and suicide, restarting soon as venues become available. Henriette is available as speaker for functions regarding these topics. ■

## A counsellor's story

**As I walk into my mother's room, carrying the urn with her ashes in, in my hands, I break down.**

A while ago I sat in the critical/high care room of a hospital holding my mom's hand. At almost 60 years of age, I finally got the chance to hold her hand. Machines were breathing for her, loud and consistent, while medications were being dispensed with precision through the drips.

I had looked down at her hand and had suddenly realized – I had inherited her nail shape! What a shock that had been! I had never really looked at her hands before, never had the chance. I had only ever received pain and anguish from those hands. Never love and care, never nurturing in any shape or form. I sat in that hospital room and remembered the many times those hands balled into fists that struck my face; the many open slaps I had to endure till red marks criss-crossed like railway tracks all over my body.

A huge part of my life, though, is still a black hole – that was the only way I knew how to cope with all the



trauma I was exposed to. Mom was used to always getting her way. She was a narcissist. Her "love" was conditional: If you did "this", you were allowed to have/do "that". Emotional blackmail was her other weapon of choice - used as a tool to control me. Even as I became an adult she would still try, but by then I learned how to cope and deal with her personality.

In my matric year I met my husband and had fallen pregnant before my final exams. Mom was livid. I wanted to keep my son – a gift from God. She tried to force me to get an abortion. For many, many years I was punished for disobeying her wishes. I was verbally and emotionally insulted and abused. (Had I listened to her, she never would have had a grandson - all her other grandchildren are girls.)

From her I never received motherly love, that was kept for and only shown to the select few she deemed worthy of her attention -- especially those she needed to impress with her image of perfection. Appearances were all important and she had to protect her status in society at all costs. The truth about what was happening in our house could never be known, e.g. my stepfather's nightly

visits to my room; the verbal, emotional and physical abuse...

Two years before her death I had asked her point blank: "Did you never realize that your husband was not in the bed next to you?" She just answered that he was a bad sleeper. It was then that I had realised: she had known all along but had turned a blind eye...

As I sat there next to Mom, I wondered, like I had so often done before: Why did she have me? Why did she keep me? My biological father, the man she had loved more than life itself, died in a horrible accident before I was born. Somehow the baby, who had survived the accident that tore her life apart, had become her enemy.

How did I feel about her – seeing her lying hopeless in this hospital bed, knowing she is not going to wake up and that I will never again hear her voice? Part of me was sad - part of me was angry. My head and heart were at war – my brain asked why I even cared? She never cared about me! There were so many reasons for me to be hurt, and my anger was justified. Then why did I feel so sad?

My heart and faith argued that I should have compassion and try to understand her life. What did I really know about her and who she had been before I was born? What traumas had she experienced in her life that I never knew of? I know she was my grandmother's 11<sup>th</sup> child, that she often received beatings with a sambok and that she was often just overlooked and neglected. Was my mom just repeating the generational cycle of abuse?

### **It took a long time for the war in me to cease.**

As a believer, I had to actively choose to absolve my mother. Jesus had died on the cross for both of our sins. I chose forgiveness, to move forward. Unforgiveness is like a ball and chain. It ties you down and holds you in a state of unhappiness and discontent.

I realised that the cycle of the "sins of the fathers" needed to be broken. I could not carry on with the hate and anger. I am sad about all the lost time, though. There is no rewind, no replay for Mom, but I am still here and can deal with things in a constructive way. The best gift I can give my children and grandchildren is my unconditional love.

**I look down at the urn in my hand: this is all that is left of my mom. I do miss her voice; I do miss her. I am no longer in a battle with my emotions and thoughts; I can now mourn her in peace.**

**I love you, Mom, rest in peace.**

—Childhood trauma survivor ■

# Healing trauma through community support: “It takes a Village”

**H**ealing trauma through community support is a powerful approach that builds resilience and promotes recovery. Connecting with others who share similar experiences creates a sense of belonging, validates struggles, and provides essential support that eases isolation. When survivors come together, they create spaces where healing becomes a shared journey rather than a solitary struggle. This approach enables individuals to rebuild their self-worth and discover new pathways to emotional healing.

## Understanding trauma and its impact

Scientific research reveals that trauma doesn't just affect emotional health; it can also rewire neural pathways in the brain, leading to lasting changes in thought patterns and responses. These changes explain why trauma's effects can persist long after the event itself, making recovery challenging without targeted support. By understanding trauma as both a psychological and physiological condition, communities can approach healing with empathy and evidence-based strategies.

## The role of community in trauma recovery

Community-based healing respects people's journey toward self-actualization — finding personal meaning and fulfilment by growing and applying their unique strengths to help others. Community-based healing combines the support that comes from personal relationships with the support provided by professional resources. Healing trauma through community support relies on building strong connections that promote empathy, open communication, and shared experiences. Those connections empower survivors, helping them recover and help others do the same:

### The Options:

#### 1. Support groups

Regular gatherings provide trauma survivors with a supportive environment where they can openly share their experiences and coping strategies. By engaging with peers facing similar challenges, participants gain strength and resilience, knowing they're not alone in their journey. Support groups can offer practical advice, emotional encouragement, and a safe space to share personal experiences.

Here are a few examples of different kinds of support groups:

- Peer-led support circles
- Activity-based groups
- Faith-based support groups

- Creative expression groups
- Online support communities

#### 2. Community events and experiences

Community events such as workshops, gatherings, and retreats create meaningful opportunities for trauma survivors to connect. These events foster dignity and inclusivity, reminding each participant of their inherent value and building trust through genuine interaction.



#### 3. Restorative justice programs

Restorative justice offers an approach to trauma recovery focused on accountability, dialogue, and rebuilding trust within communities. Through this approach, communities honour each person's dignity, allowing survivors and offenders to seek reconciliation while promoting shared resilience.

#### 4. Mental health support

Community involvement is crucial in expanding access to mental health resources, empowering individuals by offering support networks, and reducing stigma around seeking help. By fostering environments where people can access mental health care within their communities, more individuals are encouraged to prioritize their well-being.

#### 5. Empowering survivors as advocates

Helping individuals develop the skills and knowledge to advocate for trauma awareness allows them to turn personal pain into purpose. As advocates, survivors inspire others, creating a ripple effect of resilience and understanding. This journey of self-empowerment not only fosters openness and self-actualization but also transforms survivors into catalysts for change in their communities.

## Implementing community support in trauma recovery

Community support is vital for trauma recovery. It provides spaces of belonging and connection, reminding survivors that their experiences, challenges, and contributions are valued. Whether through support groups or restorative justice, collective healing proves that recovery is possible and sustainable when people come together.

Source: <https://standtogether.org/stories/strong-safe-communities/healing-from-trauma-how-survivors-find-resilience-through-community-support>. ■

# The Role of Counselling in Recovery from Abuse and Violence

**A**buse and violence can leave deep emotional and psychological scars on survivors. The journey towards healing is often challenging and complex. One crucial element in this process is counselling. Counselling plays a vital role in helping survivors recover from abuse and violence.

## Understanding the Trauma

Abuse and violence can have a profound impact on an individual's mental and emotional well-being. Survivors may experience a wide range of emotions, including fear, anger, guilt, shame, and anxiety. Counselling provides a safe space for survivors to explore and understand their trauma. A trained counsellor can help survivors make sense of their experiences and emotions.

## Empowering Survivors

Counsellors empower survivors by providing them with tools to cope with the aftermath of abuse and violence. These professionals teach survivors how to manage their emotions, set boundaries, and regain a sense of control over their lives. Through therapy, survivors can rebuild their self-esteem and self-worth, which may have been severely damaged by their experiences.

## Processing and Expressing Emotions

Recovery from abuse and violence often involves processing intense and painful emotions. Counselling provides survivors with a supportive environment where they can express their feelings without judgment. This process of emotional expression is a critical step in healing. It allows survivors to release pent-up emotions, making space for healthier ones.

## Breaking the Cycle

For some survivors, the trauma they endured may lead to a cycle of abuse or unhealthy relationships.

Counselling can help survivors recognize these patterns and work towards breaking them. By understanding the root causes of their experiences, survivors can make informed choices to avoid repeating destructive behaviours or relationships.

## Building Resilience

Survivors of abuse and violence are incredibly resilient. Counselling helps survivors harness this resilience and develop coping strategies. With the support of a trained counsellor, survivors can develop the strength to overcome their past and move towards a brighter future.

## Creating a Supportive Network

Counsellors often help survivors build a network of support. This network may include friends, family, support groups, or other survivors. Having a support system is crucial for healing, as it provides survivors with the

reassurance that they are not alone and that others care about their well-being.

## Conclusion

By acknowledging the importance of counselling, we can help survivors reclaim their sense of self and find hope for a brighter future. Recovery from abuse and violence is a challenging and ongoing journey. Counselling is an indispensable tool in this process.

Professional help and support allow the survivors to begin the path toward healing and recovery by providing them with the guidance, support and the skills needed to heal, rebuild their lives, and move forward.

Source: <https://www.silentrights.co.za/blog/the-role-of-therapy-and-counseling-in-recovery-from-abuse-and-violence/> ■

**Recovery from abuse and violence is a challenging and ongoing journey. Counselling is an indispensable tool in this process.**



# 2025 ACRP CPSC Spring Online Conference

**A Journey of Healing for those Broken by Abuse: Restoring Lives & Strengthening Communities**

Thursday, 4 September 2025

08:15

Online Zoom event

## 2025 CPSC Conference Registration: Google Form Link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5k7T8OEi3zFuXaQInKS63OXR0r8Z1wVGhsa-KRRvZLMNx6A/viewform?usp=sharing>

## Presenters

PRESENTERS (alphabetical)	TOPICS
Dr Sipho Mahlangu	<i>Beyond Survival: Practical Theological Response Informed by Contextual Epistemologies of Trauma and Community Healing</i>
Mr Mthunzi Pani	<i>Impact of abuse on faith and perception of God: a theology of trauma</i>
Mrs Karen Tewson	<i>Ethics and Court Cases: Supporting the integrity of witness testimony in court proceedings</i>
Dr Michiel van der Merwe	<i>Play the harp: The understanding of the journey towards healing for the victim of domestic violence</i>

## Program

TIME	ACTIVITY
08:15	Zoom link opens
08:45	Welcome & opening
	<b>Presentations 1 to 4</b>
±13:00	Lunch break
±13:30	<b>Roundtable discussion:</b> A Journey of Healing for those Broken by Abuse: Restoring Lives and Strengthening Communities
±15:30	Closure

**Final day for attendee registrations: 22 August 2025**

### 2025 CPSC Conference Fees

ACRP (CPSC, CGMP & CMTP) affiliates: R 270

Non-affiliates: R 540

### ACRP CPD Points

8 CPD (3 Ethics) points are available to all affiliates of the 3 councils of ACRP (CPSC, CGMP & CMTP).

## Important information

► **Late registrations:** Individuals who registered after the 22nd of August 2025, and those who could not attend the full conference, will receive the links to the recordings and presenters' notes via the WhatsApp group.

► **The 2025 CPSC Conference login link:** This link will be distributed on the 3rd of September 2025 via the WhatsApp group to individuals who had submitted the Google/Word Registration Form and whose payments already reflect in the bank account.

► **The link to the Presenters' documents:** The link will be distributed to registered attendees on the morning of the 4th of September 2025 via the WhatsApp group.

► **Joining the 2025 CPSC Spring Online Conference:** Conference attendees must join the conference early (from 08:15) to allow for enough time for the process of logging in and connecting, and for the opportunity to join the compulsory breakout rooms.

► **Compulsory Breakout Rooms:** Attendees need to join their allocated breakout rooms to receive CPD points.

The Zoom system will keep track of attendance times as well as of participation in the breakout rooms.

Insufficient time spent in the breakaway rooms means CPD points cannot be awarded, and the questionnaire will have to be completed.

► **Conference Questionnaire:** Non-attendees, or those who did not/could not attend the conference for a long enough time, can watch & listen to the recordings and complete a questionnaire.

8 ACRP/CPSC CPD points will be awarded for the correct completion of the questionnaire.

► **2025 CPSC Spring Conference Certificate:** Attendees meeting the requirements will receive a 2025 CPSC Spring Conference Certificate displaying the number of ACRP/CPSC CPD points awarded.

► **CPSC Offices:** No admin re the conference will be addressed after the 1st of September 2025. CPSC Office personnel will also not be available on the 4th of September 2025 to assist with login/other conference administration issues.

► Please log in with your name and surname!

Kind regards

- **Ilse (enquiries, WhatsApp group):**  
ilse.grunewald@acrp.org.za
- **Anita (payments):** anita.snyders@acrp.org.za
- **Maria (registrations, recordings):**  
maria.jansen@acrp.org.za

# NOTES FROM THE ACRP (CPSC & CGMP) CONFERENCE OFFICE

Dear CPSC affiliates

Please allow me to share a few reminders from the CPSC Conference Team.

## 2023 CPSC Spring Conference recordings

The **2023 CPSC Conference recordings** are now available on YouTube! You can still earn 8 CPSC CPD points (of which 3 are for ethics). All you need to do, is to listen to the recordings, make the payment of **R250** and complete the questionnaire that will be sent as soon as your payment reflects in the bank. Clearly state in your beneficiary reference your **surname and initials with CONF23**, e.g. JansenMMCONF23. POP to [anita.snyders@acrp.org.za](mailto:anita.snyders@acrp.org.za)

### CPSC BANKING DETAILS:

Bank: NEDBANK  
Account name: CPSC  
Account Number: 1020501553  
Branch Code: 136305



All ACRP Affiliates (in good standing): **R260**  
Non-Affiliates: **R520**

*Please ensure that you use the correct banking details and beneficiary reference!*

### ACRP BANKING DETAILS:

Bank: ABSA  
Account name: ACRP  
Account number: 4085403421  
Branch code: 632005  
Account type: Cheque



Reference: Please use your **SurnameInitialsConf25** as reference for us to be able to allocate your payment!

The Proof of Payment (POP) must be sent to Andrea at [acrp@acrpAfrica.co.za](mailto:acrp@acrpAfrica.co.za).

Please use the following link to register for the conference recordings: <https://forms.gle/oKP4sNesP8xxsijx8>.

Remember to "submit" once you have completed the online form!

If you struggle to use Google forms to submit your registration, please contact Andrea at the ACRP Office ([acrp@acrpAfrica.co.za](mailto:acrp@acrpAfrica.co.za)) so that you can be provided with the registration form in Word format.

Once we have received your registration and POP and your payment reflects in the bank, you will be sent a link to the recordings, notes and summary form.

## 2025 CGMP Autumn Conference recordings

For those of you who missed the **2025 CGMP Autumn Conference on the 10th of April 2025 (Faith in Action: The Church's Role in Addressing and Preventing Gender-Based Violence)**, we have good news! You can still register to obtain the recordings of the presentations and roundtable discussions, as well as the documents and notes of the presenters. The fees are:



## 2025 CPSC Spring Online Conference: 4 September 2025

We are already busy with the arrangements and registrations for the annual CPSC Spring Conference that takes place on **Thursday, the 4th of September 2025!** CPSC (Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors) is one of the 3 councils within ACRP.

**This year's theme joins in with CGMP's Autumn Conference that took part in April: A Journey of Healing for those Broken by Abuse: Restoring Lives & Strengthening Communities**

We are again making use of Google forms for registrations. Please note that you will have to pay for the conference first before you will be able to complete your registration. Banking details are on the form.

**Conference Registration Google Form Link:**  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5k7T8OEi3zFuXAQInKS63OXR0r8Z1wVGhsa-KRRvZLMNx6A/viewform?usp=sharing>

\* If you struggle to use Google forms to submit your registration, please contact Maria at the CPSC Office ([maria.jansen@acrp.org.za](mailto:maria.jansen@acrp.org.za) or [conference@cpsc.org.za](mailto:conference@cpsc.org.za)) so

that you can be provided with the registration form in Word format.

*Please remember to make use of the correct banking details for the CPSC Spring Conference:*

### CPSC BANKING DETAILS:

Bank: NEDBANK  
Account name: CPSC  
Account Number: 1020501553  
Branch Code: 136305



*Please use the correct reference: Your Surname and initials with CONF25 Example: jansenmmConf25*

Please send your Proof of Payment to: [finance@cpsc.org.za](mailto:finance@cpsc.org.za) or [anita.snyders@acrp.org.za](mailto:anita.snyders@acrp.org.za).

### Fees for the 2025 CPSC Conference:

**R270** for affiliates of all 3 ACRP councils

**R540** for non-affiliates

You will not receive the link to the CPSC conference and presenters' documents if your payment does not reflect in the CPSC Nedbank account by 25 August 2025. The final date for registration to attend the CPSC Spring Conference: Friday 22 August 2025

Hope to see you all on the 4th of September 2025!

Blessings

Maria Jansen ■

# Notes from the Finance Office

## 2026 Annual renewal notices: October 2025

Dear CPSC Affiliate



New life is appearing everywhere around us and the awakening seen in nature during the spring season feels symbolic of the renewal season of your affiliation and annual CPSC subscription.

I always dedicate the August edition "Notes from the Finance Office" to the annual renewal process as you will receive your renewal notices before the next edition of the CPSC Notes.

The 2026 Annual renewal notices for affiliation until 31 December 2026, are to be issued during October 2025 to give you ample time for payment of the annual fee before 31 December 2025 when your 2025 CPSC certificate expires.

Your subscription needs to be renewed well before 31 December 2025 to obtain your active valid 2026 CPSC certificate in time.

**Please take note: All the ACRP/CPSC/CGMP offices are closed between Christmas and New Year.**

The exact date that the 2026 renewal notices will be dispatched from the ACRP Central System Pastors4Africa will be shared with you via mass email from the CPSC Finance Office to enable you to keep a watchful eye on your inbox and spam folders.

Very important: You will receive an email from [admin@pastors4africa.com](mailto:admin@pastors4africa.com) with your 2026 renewal notice attached and not from the CPSC Finance Office.

**The affiliation of any affiliates with outstanding 2025 fees who have not made any arrangement with me, will sadly be terminated before the 2026 renewal notices are dispatched.**

If you are a new 2025 CPSC affiliate who registered with CPSC during May, June, July and August, you might feel that you have just recently made payment for an annual fee.

Please note that the fee you paid with registration was a reduced annual fee for 2025 as stated on the application forms and was for registration for the last two 4-month terms of 2025.

The certificate you received is also only valid until 31 December 2025.



The annual renewal date of all CPSC affiliates is 31 December, hence the reduced fee applied to our midterm applicants, which aligns all registered affiliates for renewal in December.

Third term registrations (September, October, November and December) are already treated as registrations for the coming year and will receive a certificate until 31 December 2026.

### The annual renewal of affiliation

There are a few important realities to bear in mind regarding the annual renewal of affiliation:

- **SAQA and ACRP as our Professional Body** requires a status of **being always in good standing** of all CPSC affiliates

**Your 2026 subscription needs to be renewed before 31 December 2025 to obtain your active valid 2026 CPSC certificate in time.**

- To be in good standing, the **2026 affiliation fee** must be paid in full **before 31 March 2026 (latest possible date)**, the compulsory **20 CPSC CPD points** must be amassed or in the process of being amassed and the affiliate's **personal details on the ACRP CPSC system must always be kept updated**
- Any changes in personal details should immediately be shared by the affiliate with **Ilse at the admin office** on the **"Update personal details"** form

- Please take note of the important information Ilse regularly shares on the **CPSC conferences and the CPSC CPD points awarded to it.** This applies to attending the online conference or obtaining the recordings to listen to at a later stage. You can earn the same number of CPSC CPD points awarded for attending the conference by submitting the required questionnaire after listening to the recordings

- All outstanding fees need to be settled by 31 March 2026 to remain in good standing

- **Fees longer than 3 months overdue seriously impact on the good standing status of an affiliate as the ACRP Rules state that affiliates with overdue fees of more than three months are no longer in good standing**
- Affiliates with outstanding fees on **30 June 2026 take the serious risk of being suspended** as the **ACRP Rules state that affiliation fees may not be overdue**

**Welcome  
to the  
FINANCE OFFICE  
where  
everybody  
counts!**

**for more than six months and affiliates need to be suspended**

- Affiliates who may advertise on the website (Cat 5, 6 and 7) **will unfortunately have to be removed from the website** if the annual fees are not up to date by **31 March 2026 as they are then not in good standing, and can no longer be listed on the CPSC website unless the good standing status has been restored**

## **The procedure**

The prescribed routine I follow when I receive the annual fee payments:

- An **EFT is the recommended method** to do the payment, and we request all affiliates to use this route if possible. We do understand that it is not always possible, but please do try
- NB Please always send a **proof of payment (POP)** to only [anita.snyders.org.za](mailto:anita.snyders.org.za) and **not to Ilse**, as I am **the only person working with the finances**
- **All financial queries should be directed to me and not to the admin office**
- I can only allocate payments once they reflect in the **Nedbank account**
- Please take great care with the **reference to beneficiary**. Please make sure that your name, surname and reference number are in the **correct Reference to Beneficiary field**
- Please provide **enough information for identification** and correct allocation of the payment
- Only the **information supplied on the reference to beneficiary field, appears on the banking statement**
- **Many people put CPSC annual fee in that field and then I can't identify the payment**
- A **Proof of payment is compulsory as it is extremely helpful in the allocation of payments** with an incomplete or incorrect reference used
- I can usually find additional information on the POP or see who the sender of the POP is
- A **proof of payment also helps if a finger error was made with the registration number** used as reference and then **serves as cross reference for me who allocates the payments**
- I endeavour to allocate payments as soon as possible after receipt
- You will receive an **allocation of payment notification email** from [admin@pastors4africa.com](mailto:admin@pastors4africa.com) with a cover letter from me
- The Pastors4Africa central system **automatically issues your 2026 certificate when the account has a**



**zero balance**, but even a small debit prohibits this automated process so **please pay the correct 2026 amount**

- To be sure from my side that the affiliate will indeed receive a certificate I also manually **activate the new year's CPSC certificate** on the Pastors4Africa system after allocation of the full payment
  - You will therefore receive two emails from [admin@pastors4africa.com](mailto:admin@pastors4africa.com) with the attached 2026 certificate, with the subject **"re ACRP certificate"**
  - The **certificate should follow shortly** after the allocation of payment notification email as I do the two actions simultaneously
  - **Affiliates sometimes miss the certificate** as they expect an email from my email address with the attached certificate after allocation of the payment
  - All three emails received will have cover letters from me but please **do not send new emails to the admin@pastors4africa.com email address as this is a no-reply email address**
- If you should **reply to the email received, the reply is automatically forwarded to me**
- Please remember to **always check your spam folder after you have received your allocation of payment notification email**. The antivirus protection and firewalls on people's computers unfortunately often **block emails with attachments and they then end up in spam**
- Please add [admin@pastors4africa.com](mailto:admin@pastors4africa.com) to your dedicated email sender list
- Please let **me (Anita)** know if you didn't receive or don't see the CPSC certificate anywhere but **please remember to check your spam folder first as that is usually where it will be found**
- **Ilse can't help you with certificates, renewal notices and any finance related matters, so please remember to direct any renewal queries only to me**

Thank you in advance for adherence to all my requests as this is truly instrumental to keep the **financial office running smoothly and efficiently**.

It is however even more important that adherence to these requests and ACRP requirements is instrumental to keep you as CPSC and ACRP affiliate in good standing with ACRP and SAQA and in compliance with the ACRP Rules and regulations.

As always warmest regards and blessings

Anita ■

## Notes from the Admin Office

By Ilse Grünewald

Dear CPSC affiliate, I trust that you are all well!

**We are more than halfway through 2025 with Spring, and the 2025 CPSC Spring Conference, around the corner!**

**There are many changes happening at ACRP and CPSC:**

**Professor Nicolene Joubert**

**So long, but fortunately, not farewell!**



Our esteemed Chairperson, Prof. Nicolene Joubert, has resigned as Chairperson and member of the CPSC Executive.

Her 3-year term ends in September 2025 and due to all the demands of her professional life, Prof Joubert has decided to not extend her tenure for a second term.

We are incredibly sad to see her leave the CPSC Executive, but we are glad that she will be staying on as a CPSC affiliate.

As CPSC Chairperson, Prof Joubert made various invaluable contributions. Under her leadership CPSC has grown steadily. We are so thankful for her commitment, diligence and hard work for the benefit of the professional body, ACRP, and its specialist council for counsellors, CPSC.

Prof Joubert also acted as Convener of the *CPSC Ethics & Disciplinary Committee* and the *CPSC CPD Evaluations Committee*. She was instrumental in the workings of the *CPSC Supervision* and the *CPSC Conference Committees*. In all these committees she had a very constructive impact: many improvements were accomplished and several milestones reached.

As her administrator, I am particularly grateful for her support, patience and leadership over the past 3 years.

Prof, we will miss you! We wish you every success in your future endeavours.

**ACRP as professional body is beginning to “get with it” by becoming more digitalized. We have a lovely young team who are sprucing up our webpages, social media and systems and I am excited to introduce them to you:**

• **Hugo Willers**

**Hugo is a member of a family that has been part of CPSC for many years!**

Marieke, his mom, filled the Administrator’s seat before Anita, and our “older” affiliates still remember her fondly. His dad, Cilliers, is the very capable, clever, and skilled editor of this newsletter.

Hugo is their son, and ACRP’s and CPSC’s main IT guy. He designed and still maintains our webpages, and he is the one we call on at all hours of the day and night to assist with any and all of our computer issues. He often must deal with a stressed (*read hysterical*) office lady (and there are 5 of us...!). Hugo is one of the kindest, most humble and patient individuals I have ever met.



**Hugo with his mom, Marieke Willers**

His passions include all things IT related, especially the new developments. He (still) is a big gamer, loves historical documentaries, playing pool, listening to music, watching films & TV shows and hanging out with friends. He is always willing to provide technical support on site to anyone with cell phone or computer problems.

• **Theto Maunatlala**

**From the delightful & dynamic dame in her own words:**

“I work as the Social Media Manager Intern at ACRP. My primary responsibilities include content creation and scheduling, participating in online conversations to boost ACRP’s visibility and engagement and proposing fresh strategies to improve engagement and reach.

I spend most of my time browsing the internet for content ideas and learning more about how to create meaningful connections through social media. I have devoted my life to my Lord Jesus, and getting baptised was the best day of my life!

Outside of work and school, I’m passionate about Data Science and developing machine learning solutions to



real-world problems. I'm particularly interested in furthering my career in MedTech, where technology and healthcare intersect to improve lives. In my free time, I enjoy hiking, weightlifting, cooking, and watching travel videos on YouTube.

I have a degree in Biomedical Science, and I always have cartoons playing in the background when I am working or studying, yes, at the ripe age of 24 :), it definitely makes me more productive.

I was raised by my grandmother, who has been my parent, teacher, and greatest supporter all my life. I also have four younger sisters, so our household is just us ladies and full of laughter (and hair products!). I am half Congolese on my father's side and proudly South African on my mother's, I cannot really speak French, but I can pronounce 'croissant' perfectly.

Likes: COFFEE, being of service to others, anything pink, watching Border Patrol.

Dislikes: Data cleaning, tomatoes in burgers, using a device to write down notes (I still believe in pen and paper)."

#### • Dave Monama

The eloquent, enthusiastic and energetic Dave reveals:

"I'm Dave Monama, an Intermediate Software Engineer with over 4 years of industry experience. I've been passionate about coding since 2015, which means I've been writing code for more than 10 years now.



At ACRP, I'm responsible for managing and maintaining our AMS (Affiliate Management System), ensuring everything runs smoothly for our affiliate operations. I love the technical challenges that come with keeping our systems efficient and user-friendly.

I'm a Christian and find great joy in serving the Lord through my professional work. I believe technology can be a powerful tool for making a positive impact, and I'm grateful to use my skills in a meaningful way. "

My training and education: Self-Directed Learning: I have studied frameworks and concepts from Computer Science, Engineering, Mathematics, and Quantum Physics through online courses, textbooks, and hands-on projects. Workshops & Meetups: I am a regular participant in both local and virtual tech meetups and hackathons.

I developed CAPS-aligned coding lessons (Grades 9–12) for Curro Schools nationwide as a content developer. I have worked as a Software Engineer across multiple sectors, including Mining, Education, Software Development Firms, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Ministry.

Outside of work, I enjoy hiking, traveling, and running whenever I can. I value my personal time for reflection and creativity. I'm currently single and don't have a family of my own, yet."

#### Social media

Please like and follow our social pages!



[https://www.instagram.com/accounts/login/?next=%252Facrp\\_africa](https://www.instagram.com/accounts/login/?next=%252Facrp_africa)



<https://za.linkedin.com/in/association-of-christian-religious-practitioners-acrp-b96529369>



<https://www.facebook.com/people/ACRP-Africa-Association-of-Christian-Religious-Practitioners/61551732487967/>

I hope to see all our lovely affiliates at our 2025 Spring Conference on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September!

Warmest regards, Ilse

#### ■ ADMINISTRATION OFFICE:

**Ilse Grünwald** | Cell: 072 705 1183 (am)  
Email: [ilse.grunewald@acrp.org.za](mailto:ilse.grunewald@acrp.org.za)  
Mon to Wed 09:00–17:00 | Thu 09:00–15:00

#### ■ FINANCES OFFICE:

**Anita Snyders** | Cell: 066 345 6842 (am)  
Email: [anita.snyders@acrp.org.za](mailto:anita.snyders@acrp.org.za)  
Working hours: Mon to Fri: 09:00–13:00

#### ■ ACRP CONFERENCES & CPD OFFICE:

**Maria Jansen**  
Email for ACRP (CPSC & CGMP) conference registrations, questionnaires, certificates, and CPD points:  
[maria.jansen@acrp.org.za](mailto:maria.jansen@acrp.org.za)  
Working hours: Mon to Fri: 08:00–13:00

#### Banking Details

CPSC (The Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors)  
Nedbank  
Branch: Woodlands  
Branch code: 136-305  
Account no: 1020501553  
*E-mail proof of payment to the Finance Office at [anita.snyders@acrp.org.za](mailto:anita.snyders@acrp.org.za). Please state your initials and last name as reference for any deposit made.*

#### Disclaimer

While CPSC supports initiatives for equipping pastoral and spiritual counsellors, statements and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views and/or opinions of CPSC. CPSC does not make any warranty regarding the information supplied. CPSC shall in no event be liable for any decision or action taken in reliance on this information.