Spiritual Healing of Trauma

What are the spiritual impacts of trauma?

What gets in the way of spiritual healing in such traumatic times? Join **Still Harbor** for a webinar about recognizing spiritual trauma and treating the wounds it causes.

JUNE 23, 2020 • 7:00 PM EST

stillharbor.org



Rev. Perry Dougherty Still Harbor Senior Partner

@stillharbor



Marchaé Grair Still Harbor Board Member

A NETWORK OF FIERCELY LOVING & COMPASSIONATE SPIRITUAL LEADERS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE.

Our collective quest for justice and peace cannot be accomplished by intellectual or professional training alone.

Still Harbor believes that spirituality cultivates the depth of imagination, courage, and resilience we need to create a more kind, equitable, and sustainable world.

Our programs and services seek to create a network of fiercely loving and compassionate spiritual leaders for social change.



- 1. SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERS & ACTIVISTS
- 2. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION PRACTICUM
- 3. GROUP FACILITATION IMMERSION
- 4. ALUMNI SUPERVISION & NETWORK



A POEM excerpt...

"The caged bird sings with a fearful trill of things unknown but longed for still and his tune is heard on the distant hill for the caged bird sings of freedom."

-Dr. Maya Angelou
"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND EACH OTHER

We trust you to take care of yourself during this webinar. For us, that means engage in the ways that feel nourishing and supportive.

A recording will be made available on our website if you need to pause and would like to revisit it later.

We will be talking about trauma, which can bring up difficult emotions, feelings, memories, and experiences. Please resource yourself with supports. This program and the ideas contained in it are not in any way a substitute for mental health care or ongoing community support.

Like our organization, this is an anti-oppressive space.



What is spirituality?



What is the spiritual impact of trauma?

All That Is

Self

Other(s)

How does trauma impact spirituality?

- Closing yourself off from loved ones because "they don't understand" or "shouldn't worry." (Self/Others)
- Ending spiritual practices and leaving communities that have been otherwise sustaining. (Self/Others/All That Is)
- Inability to be present with your thoughts or present in your relationships. (Self/Self, Self/Others)
- Mistrust/distrust of yourself, others, All That Is (Self/Others/All That Is)



How does trauma impact spirituality?

- Self-sabotaging actions. (Self/Self)
- Doubting the existence of justice or the value of pursuing it. (Self/Self, Self/Others)
- Questioning the meaning of life/the purpose of your existence. (Self/Self, Self/All That Is)
- Doubting the importance of core values and beliefs or acting in ways that contradict your core values and beliefs. (Self/Others/All That Is)



Example: The impact of police brutality on Marchaé's spirituality

All That Is

 Questioning the point of spirituality at all if such terror can exist for Black people

Self

 Abandoned personal spiritual care.
 (Internalized devaluing of my life.)

Other(s)

 Inability to deeply listen to and hold space for others Example: The impact of quarantine and the pandemic on Perry's spirituality (activating trauma).

All That Is

Trust only in my mind.
 Mystery, unknown,
 intangible = threat.

Self

Disembodied
 sense of self.
 "Floating head"
 my thoughts = my self

Other(s)

Self-protection,
 distancing from others.
 Vulnerability/intimacy
 = threat.

What is spiritual healing?



- (Re)creation of **connections** to Self, Others, All That Is.
- Not an outcome but rather an ongoing process of relationship building.
- Practices, rituals, traditions that invite us more safely enter into **experiences** that build connection.



Your spiritual journey is not a problem to be solved—spiritual questions will be lifelong and present opportunities to open up to yourself, others, and the sacred unknown so that you may more deeply understand yourself in the world.



What gets in the way of healing?

1. Anything that keeps us in disconnection.

(There is a difference between having healthy boundaries and being disconnected spiritually.)

2. Spiritual Bypass or "Bulldozing" in relationships to Self, Others, All That Is



Trauma Happens in Culture That Hurts

(White Supremacy Culture)

- 1. Perfectionism
- 2. Sense of Urgency
- 3. Defensiveness
- 4. Quantity over Quality
- Worship of the Written Word
- 6. Paternalism
- 7. Either/Or Thinking

8. Power Hoarding

9. Fear of Open Conflict

10. Individualism

11. Progress is Bigger,

More

12. Objectivity

13. Right to Comfort

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From Tema Okun's "White Supremacy Culture" on www.dismantlingracism.org



Healing Requires Creating Culture That Heals

- 1. Imperfection & Ongoing Learning
- 2. Patience and Realistic Goals
- Constructive Criticism
- Intentional Interactions > Productivity
- Diverse Ways of Communicating/Being
- 6. Agency and Autonomy
- 7. Both/And Logic, Deeper Analysis

- 8. Share Power & Resources
- 9. Resolution > Politeness
- 10. Collective Care
- 11. Honoring Values as a Measure of Success
- 12. Acknowledge POV & Bias

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13. Learning in Discomfort

Adapted from Tema Okun's "White Supremacy Culture" on www.dismantlingracism.org



PERRY'S EXPERIENCE: Silence, Shame, Self-Protection

From Others:

- Fear of Open Conflict
- Individualism
- Right to Comfort
- -"Don't talk about that."
- -"You'll figure it out."
- -"Let's just enjoy the holiday."

Within Self:

- Either/Or Thinking
- Perfectionism
- -Discomfort = Threat
- -Don't get too close.
- -Fix "it" quick.
- -Perfect to please.



PERRY'S PATH OF HEALING PRACTICES

- "Do you pray?" Presence over perfection (Self/Others/All That Is)
- "Who am I if there's not a problem to solve?" (Self/Self)
- Embrace paradox and non-duality (Self/Others/All That Is):
 - I am my mind, body, awareness, and more all at once
 - I seek to transform Good/Bad, Right/Wrong, Me/Them thinking.
 - Sacred within me, within others, and all around us
- When in doubt, trust in compassion (Self/Self, Self/Others)
- Moving through discomfort grows connection (Self/Self, Self/Others)
- Forgiveness is remembering connection to the sacred within me, not forgetting the actions of others (Self/Self, Self/Others)



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MARCHAÉ'S EXPERIENCE: Am I worthy of spiritual care?

From Others:

- Paternalism
 (Belonging required obedience or falling in line, especially requiring erasing of queerness.)
- Right to Comfort
 (Belonging required silence or constant reassurance that white people aren't racist or practicing another "ism.")

Within Self:

- Fear of Open Conflict (Fear of disagreement resulting in abandonment.)
- Perfectionism
 (Hoping if I was perfect professionally, I would be accepted.)
- Either/Or Thinking
 (If I'm not accepted in religious communities, I can't be spiritual.)



MARCHAÉ'S PATH TO SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS

- Grieving the loss of communities I once had. (Grief isn't just for death...it's for many types of loss and endings.) (Self/Self)
- Naming my truth to those who have harmed me, taking responsibility for harm I've caused, and making peace with the apologies I won't get. (Self/Self, Self/Others)
- Ending manipulative/abusive relationships, including those that required my silence about harm. (Self/Others)
- Choosing a spiritual path that empowers me, not a path that others demand I take. (Self/All That Is)



PATHWAY FOR YOUR HEALING

- Find or create a healing community: a spiritual group, peer group, friend group, a
 place in which you can safely build an experience of connection.
- Find a healing or trauma-informed spiritual companion: a spiritual director or spiritual leader who is able to companion you in your seeking.
- Take time to engage the beliefs and values that aren't serving your healing. Read,
 reflect, trust in your own wisdom, and seek resources in community & companions.
- Recognize, allow, and nurture experiences of connection that support spiritual healing.



PATHWAY FOR SUPPORTING OTHERS' HEALING

- Tend to and continue on your own pathway to healing.
- Recognize where spiritual bypass or bulldozing show up in your own spiritual beliefs, practices, and connections. Be mindful of not transferring or projecting these onto those who are seeking healing in connection to you.
- Reflect on the spiritual beliefs, practices, and connections that support you in being an antidote to the characteristics of white supremacy culture. Ground and trust in these ways of being with others.
- Recognize, allow, nurture experiences of connection that support spiritual healing.



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Q&Antent by Still Harbor

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- Visit stillharbor.org
- Virtual learning option being made available for the first time!
 - Content by Still Harbor
- Deadline for Applications:
 - August 15, 2020



SEEK SPIRITUAL RESOURCES & ACCOMPANIMENT

- Visit stillharbor.org
- Read our BLM Call to Action:
 Decolonize Your Spirituality
- Covid-specific spiritual supports also available from our alumni network.



HOW TO CONTACT

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