



Levels of Relationships

Note About BoH:

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As survivors of trauma, one of the challenges for some is reaching out to develop a support system. Issues of trust, feelings of fear of being hurt again, or not being believed may be fears that impact the ability to even consider getting to know other people.

Looking at the levels of relationships, we can find a few different levels. Acquaintance, Friend, Best Friend, Significant Other, Family, and Professional relationships.

Let's begin with acquaintances. This level of relationship is not aware of what is going on with us inside related to struggles or difficulties or our trauma. This is a superficial level of friendship. They have potential to become friends, but at this level they may be a relationship where we spend time doing social things with them. Small talk, hobbies, interests, and similarities that we might have with them, are phone conversations or going out for coffee or lunch would be the level of this relationship if we decided to pursue it.

Friendships can be developed from acquaintance relationships. This level of relationship

tends to spend more time in communication either by phone, online, text, or in person. Activities or contact is likely to be more frequent. We may or may not share a tiny bit of information with this level of relationships, but it will most likely be selective and minimal to establish that there is trust to be able to share other things in the future.

With this level of friendship, we may have friends who are closer, but not our best friend. They may be those we can share more of our experience or struggles with, as we've come to the conclusion that they are trustworthy and supportive friends to share with. They may not understand everything, but they will at least listen even if they can't offer anything else.

A best friend is someone we feel like we can trust with most things if not all. They are there for us and us for them. This is a relationship that has proven to be trustworthy and accepts us for who we are—during good and bad times. They may set some boundaries for their self-care if we are needing more than they can give at this moment, but will still be there for us.

Our significant other would be our spouse or intended spouse.

Levels of Relationships Continued

We may have mixed issues in this relationship based on what type of trauma we experienced and the symptoms we are having during this relationship. Some significant others are very supportive while others struggle to be supportive about our trauma as they don't understand the symptoms or don't know how to help. Not knowing how to help can be difficult on them, as they may feel helpless and hurt to see us hurting.

With a significant other relationship, we find that there is both an emotional and physical intimacy. Emotionally tends to be easier for a survivor of trauma, while physical intimacy may be more difficult for those who have experienced a form of sexual assault.

In this relationship, touch may be very triggering. For many, hugging or snuggling that is not sexual in nature can be comforting and comfortable. For others even this level of touch can be challenging. When a marriage gets to the point of having sexual intimacy, it can be difficult if touch is an issue. So while this level of relationship may be one of the closest we have, it may be the most challenging.

Professional relationships can vary. These relationships are one way. We share what is going on, and they provide a professional response without reciprocal sharing. Depending upon which professional we are seeing, we may share more or less of what is going on deep inside due to fear, feeling it is none of their business, shame, etc. While these professional relationships may be challenging, they can be supportive and helpful. They also can't help in some areas if we don't share openly with them at least the basics of the issue going on that we are seeing them for, and any related issues to that issue.

Family can be challenging for some of us. Some trauma survivors have found their families to be extremely supportive. Other trauma survivors don't want anything to do with family because the family is the ones who caused the hurt. If we've been hurt by family, we may experienced mixed emotions—from wanting to be loved by them appropriately, to wanting to avoid them totally and "divorce" them. Depending on which experience we have had, we may need to consider whether being around family is a good idea or not.

The relationship of our spouse or spouse to be finds there to be both emotional and physical intimacy.

Family

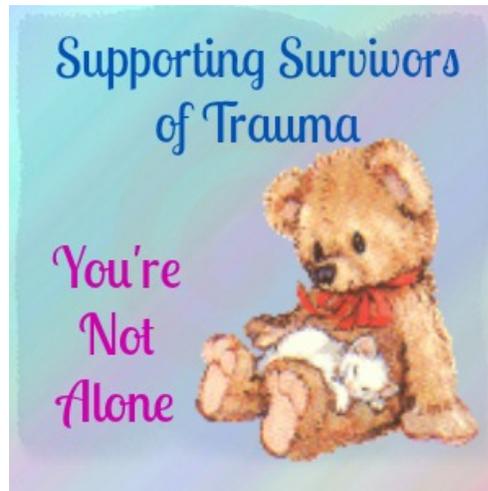
Your family offered me life
An opportunity to grow and learn
From hopelessness to joy
Fulfilling of an impossible dream

Longing to be more like Christ
Learning from your example
Thankful for another chance
Life gives with a cost

The first family messed up
Yet Christ gave them a second chance
You did the same for me
When you opened up your hearts.

Submitted by:
TMR

Sharing Inspiration



Hopeful

I looked away for a moment
I thought I saw darkness pitch black
Then I turned around
There I saw a small light

As I looked closer
There was an opening above me
Light was shining down
Then I could see a small ladder

Instead of being stuck
In the pit of darkness I was in
I found hope of escape

Climbing out was so difficult
Yet each step I found
Increasing closeness to getting out
Hope was getting stronger

Soon I would be out of this pit
The darkness would turn to light
I continue to climb
Then I saw solid ground

Green all around
I was free from darkness
Now the sun shines on me

Submitted by: Tina

Sharing

*Inspiration is a
gift. Consider
sharing your
poetry, artwork,
and other
inspirational
content.*

Your Artwork Here!



Loneliness

Feeling lonely can be very painful. Some of us after being traumatized pull away for a variety of reasons. For some it is shame, others may not have been believed what was shared. Others have become estranged from their families because the trauma originated with the family.

One of the biggest challenges is being in a place where trust is available to us. Of course after

some types of trauma, trust can be significantly fearful. Having been betrayed already, trust is a fragile area, and many are reluctant to take the chance of being hurt again.

While it can be difficult to get out and face people and meet people, one of the ways to combat loneliness is to find common interests with others. This may mean finding activities such as

pottery making, sewing clubs, volunteering at a food pantry or homeless shelter where you can meet others with similar interests.

While these individuals in the groups may not become close friends, they are others who share a common bond and can help to reduce some of the loneliness experienced. In addition, it is possible to make friends there.

Challenges of Saying Yes

They didn't understand. I wanted to say no, but I said yes. I was afraid they wouldn't care about me.

Instead of listening to what I wanted, I'm now exhausted. It is overwhelming. I want to help physically and emotionally, but it is so hard on me. I wish I could just say no. I wish they

would just understand. I wish they could just read my mind. I wish they knew how hard it is for me to do when asked.

Between the lack of sleep, the depression, the chronic pain, I struggle to even do what I need to do. But I can't afford for them to not like me. Instead I say yes in spite of my abili-

ties. So I pay a lot.

Submitted by:
bellalouise

Alone

There's no one around here I trust. I'm alone all the time isolated. It's like I'm invisible. I wish I was invisible, then I'd be better off. Then there'd be a reason no one sees me and they just walk by.

I'm afraid that they won't believe me—that they won't protect me—

that they'll hurt me again. I can't be hurt again. I worry about it all the time.

Submitted by:
Anonymous

Music that Ministers (Continued on Page 6)

There are two songs recorded that have lyrics that seem to be very appropriate for survivors of trauma. They are moving, comforting, encouraging, hopeful, and beneficial.

Heal the Wounds

Album: How You Live

Group: Point of Grace

I used to wish that I could rewrite history
I used to dream that each mistake could be erased
Then I could just pretend
I never knew the me back then

I used to pray that You would take this shame away
Hide all the evidence of who I've been
But it's the memory of the place You brought me from
That keeps me on my knees and even though I'm free

Heal the wound but leave the scar
A reminder of how merciful You are
I am broken, torn apart, take the pieces of this heart
And heal the wound but leave the scar

I have not lived a life that boasts of anything
I don't take pride in what I bring
But I'll build an altar with the rubble that You've found me in
And every stone will sing of what You can redeem

Heal the wound but leave the scar
A reminder of how merciful You are
I am broken, torn apart, take the pieces of this heart
And heal the wound but leave the scar

Don't let me forget
Everything You've done for me
Don't let me forget
The beauty in the suffering

Heal the wound but leave the scar

A reminder of how merciful You are
I am broken, torn apart, take the pieces of this heart
Heal the wound but leave the scar

Heal the wound but leave the scar
A reminder of how merciful You are
I am broken, torn apart, take the pieces of this heart
And heal the wound but leave the scar, leave the scar

Jesus Never Fails
Album: This Changes Everything
Group: Cana's Voice

So many souls have tested Him throughout the course of time
So many still reach out to Him with broken hearts and minds
And everyone of them will say with no exception that they find
Jesus never fails

Even in the days of old, He brought His people through
And then He came to show His love when He died for me and you
And then He rose again to prove that every story had been true
Jesus never fails

Jesus never fails
Jesus never fails
You might as well get thee behind me Satan, you cannot prevail
Because Jesus never fails

Sometimes this world brings troubles that I find so hard to bear
I know I could not make it without Jesus being there

It's so encouraging to know however deep we're in despair
That Jesus never fails

So what can I do to prove to you
Tell me how can you deny
No untold facts,

Music can be extremely healing. There are many songs out today in the Christian genre that can be healing.

Music that Ministers (continued from Page 5)

No mysteries, its all so cut and dry
 On the witness stand of your life,
 I'll be the first to testify
 That Jesus never fails

Jesus never fails
 Jesus never fails
 You might as well get thee behind
 me Satan, you cannot prevail
 Because Jesus never fails

Scriptures of Comfort

Matthew 11:28
 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Psalm 62:1
 My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.

Psalm 9:9
 The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.
 And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord,
 have not forsaken those who seek you.

Psalm 23:4
 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no
 evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Colossians 3:2
 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Romans 8:37
 Yet in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who
 loved us.

John 14:1
 Don't let your hearts be troubled, Trust in God, and trust also in me.

2 Timothy 1:7
 For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but a power, love,
 and self-discipline.

John 14:27
 I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I
 give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

Psalm 16:11
 God will show me the path of life.

*Scriptures can be
 comforting.
 Spending time in
 God's word,
 particularly your
 favorite
 scriptures.*

Self-Care in Intimacy

Robyn Brickel, MA, LMFT shared the following in her article, [Loving a Trauma Survivor](#): Understanding Childhood Trauma’s Impact on Relationships.

The Importance of Self-Care For Trauma Survivors and Their Partners

Trauma survivors and their partners have different needs for support. How can one respond when the other is grappling with mental health issues? How do you calm things down when overwhelming emotions get triggered?

It takes therapy for couples to find answers that are most healing for them. But some general

tips for trauma survivors and their partners that can help are:

- Have a really good support system for each of you and the relationship. Make time for family and friends who are positive about your relationship and respect you and your loved one.
- Find a trauma-informed therapist to guide you as a couple or as individuals in your effort to better understand yourselves and each other.
- Find resources outside of therapy such as support groups or other similar activities

Take time for psychoeducation. Learn about the nature of trauma, self-care and healing techniques like mindfulness. For example, one helpful model is Stan Taktin’s “couple bubble.” This is a visual aid to help partners see how to become a more secure, well-functioning couple. Surrounding yourself and your partner with an imaginary bubble “means that the couple is aware in public and in private they protect each other at all times. They don’t allow either of them to be the third wheel for very long, at least not without repair. In this way, everybody actually fares much better.”

Survivors and their partners need support too, to help with intimacy issues.

Support Group Descriptions (continued on page 9)

Coping with PTSD

Trauma can cause Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for a small percentage of individuals after abuse, natural disasters, violent crime, and more. This support group is five weeks in length and spends each group addressing various ways to cope with various symptoms of

PTSD. This group allows for an overview of the trauma experienced without graphic details to prevent triggering others in the group. The Self-Care workshop is required to participate in this support group.

Creative Journaling for Survivors

This workshop is a two

hour experience in a variety of ways to journal besides writing out the journal in the form of a journal. An example of this group would be the use various elements and markers to create a message from inside based on feelings or experience.

Just for Fun

Y R A D N U O B S G N I T S 3 5 R E A R
 W R I T I N G T M V L F R I E N D W Z P
 E M O T I O N A L S A L E B A G K H A H
 N U V I E T H E M M I N L A M B K A Z Y
 C N M G E L T L I T S L A T E R H R H S
 O O P A S T E L A M E T T Y C A R I Y I
 U L A P E R Y G N I E V I C E A Q N Y C
 R P R R R I D E L A G O O D C B O G Y A
 A C T I V I T I E S E U N V O L V E L L
 G O N R S H A R E S N O S P O U S E Z A
 E T E U U T R A Z S I Z H O U S E O O Z
 M T R S C S T T E T H S I N T I M A C Y
 E O O T H Q T L A V E T P E N S I S A D
 H A A E Z T O C O V E R S N G N O S U G
 T O D C A R I N G I V E V O V Q T E U G
 O P O A T N S U R Z E E O H A C M R K N
 E E V M U E V T O E A S U P P O R T R I
 O N V M T U V U U H O T G P V O T I L K
 N S M O Z U T Z P S R A A I E L I V D L
 L O N E L I N E S S T N U A L O N E C A
 L
 C H A T T I N G Z D E T A L O S I M O T

Terms of Recovery

Loneliness	Support	Assertive	Phone
Relationships	Groups	Boundary	Texting
Caring	Partner	Encouragement	Chatting
Friends	Spouse	Alone	Letter
Activities	Family	Isolated	Notes
Fear	Counselor	No	Writing
Sharing	Trust	Later	
Sad	Emotional	Communication	
Intimacy	Physical	Talking	

Upcoming Support Groups

Self-Care Workshop—Online
 Saturday, April 22, 2017
 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm Eastern Time
 (Required for most support groups offered)

Self-Care Workshop
 Saturday, April 22, 2017
 10:00 am to Noon Eastern Time
 Clinton, Indiana
 (Required for most support groups offered)

Creative Journaling for Survivors
 Friday, April 28, 2017
 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm Eastern Time
 Clinton, Indiana
 (Self Care Workshop NOT required)

Coping with PTSD
 Saturdays, April 29 to May 27, 2017
 10:00 am to 11:30 am Eastern Time
 Clinton, Indiana
 (Self Care workshop IS required)

Self-Care Workshop
 Saturday May 6, 2017
 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm Eastern Time

Rockville, Indiana
 (Required for most support groups offered)

I've Been Sexually Abused—Now What Workshop
 Friday, May 12, 2017
 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm Eastern Time
 Rockville, Indiana
 (Self Care Workshop is NOT required)

Trauma and Addiction
 Saturday, May 20 to June 24, 2017
 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm Eastern Time
 Rockville, Indiana
 (Self Care Workshop NOT Required)

Trauma and Addiction
 Friday, May 19 to June 23, 2017 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm Eastern Time
 Clinton, Indiana
 (Self Care Workshop NOT Required)

Coping with PTSD—Online
 Mondays, May 29 to June 26, 2017
 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm Eastern Time
 (Self-Care Workshop IS required)

Support Groups can reduce isolation and the feelings of "I am the only one".

Support Group Descriptions (continued from page 7)

I've Been Sexually Abuse—Now What?
 This workshop is a guide to various issues of adult survivors of sexual abuse. This two hour group is educational in nature and designed for survivors who are new to learning about their sexual abuse or early on in treatment. It contains resources and worksheets that can be used with a counselor.

Self-Care Workshop
 This workshop is open to any survivor of trauma. It is addressing how to stay safe if triggered or upset during a support group. It is an opportunity to plan for safety as well as an introduction to our support groups.

It is a required workshop for those who wish to participate in most of our groups. This is offered both in person and online.

Trauma and Addiction
 This support group last six weeks and focuses on those who are survivors of trauma and have an addiction. Addictions could be substances, sex, self-harm, food, and more. This group looks at the relationship between trauma and addictions and looks at the awareness of the individual wanting or needing to look at each of these together.

MISSION

The mission of Hope Recovery is to provide Christian-based supportive compassion in the lives of trauma survivors by assisting them in recovery, providing support, resources, committed volunteers, and standards of excellence.

VISION

Hope Recovery aspires to provide excellence in service and support while assisting trauma survivors in achieving their recovery goals.

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Online Christian Support message boards are available at www.christianforums.com

Online Secular Support message boards are available at www.7cups.com/1259571

If you're feeling **suicidal**, please contact 800-SUICIDE or if outside the US, go to www.befrienders.org

If you are being **abused**, experiencing incest or rape, please contact RAINN at 800-656-HOPE. RAINN provides links to international agencies.

If you are in a **violent relationship**, call 800-799-SAFE. For international contacts, go to www.hotpeachpages.net/a/index.html

We're on the Web

www.hope4christianrecovery.org



When all seems like a struggle, there is hope.

Subscribing to Bridge of Hope

Fees:

Free to Survivors.

Go to our website listed above and go to the Publications tab. At the bottom of that page you'll find this publication files.

Donations:

Donations from supporters and professionals of survivors of trauma are requested to cover the costs of the website to continue our services.

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Donations are tax deductible.

**You Are
Not Alone!**