

Worshiping in Times of Crisis and Trauma

Mount Aery Baptist Church

2019 Symposium on Worship



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Framing the Conversation

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being. Relationship, community and societal trauma are also noted.

Social-Ecological Model of Trauma and Resilience

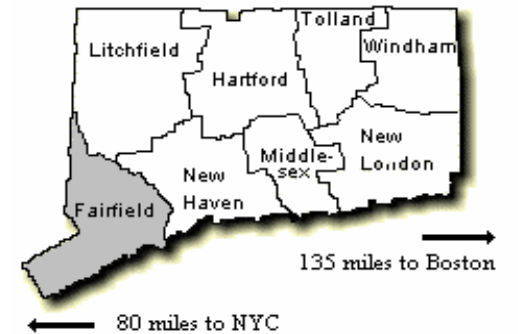


<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html>



Why Mount Aery is trauma sensitive

- Mount Aery Baptist Church is 96 years old/900 members
- Centrally located in an urban city with 148,000 residents
- Bridgeport is a medium sized northeastern city with economic and social problems.
- Huge gaps in disparities
- Ranking among the poorest cities in the United States, Bridgeport is located in affluent Fairfield County where the income gap between rich and poor is the 2nd most unequal region in the nation
- Increased gun violence over the past 10 years



We grow stronger through Worship...

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24 NIV)

At the Mount, we take worship seriously; therefore, we are intentional about nurturing an atmosphere where everyone is at liberty to praise and worship.

With our hands lifted up and our mouths filled with praise



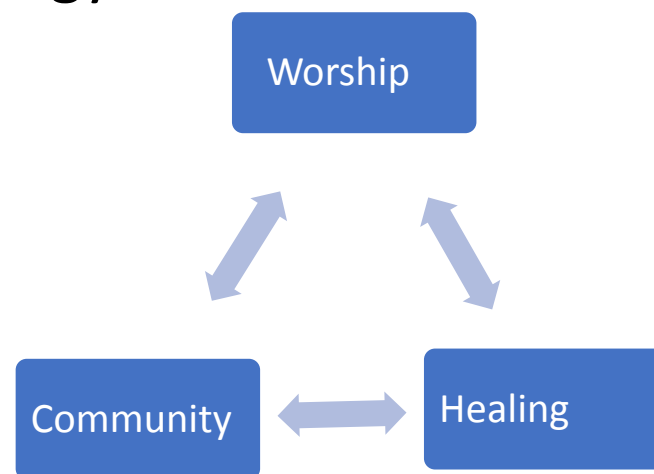
Trauma Informed/Healing Centered Worship

- Offer worship experiences where everyone can feel free to express their love for God and feel agape love in return
- Worship services should be a safe and sacred space where the journey of healing can begin
- Worship is a “place” where the redemptive and restorative love of God meets humanity
- Be sensitive when planning your worship service
- Work in partnership with the prayer ministry
- Transformative healing happens best in community (Body of Christ)
- Develop relationship and referral process with mental health professionals



Lessons Learned/ Best Practices

- Adopting a trauma-informed approach to worship holds great promise for enhancing and deepening our worship experience and can improve congregational well-being
- Fully trauma-informed ministries may entail significant time and financial investments, and continuous staff and leadership commitment and training
- Churches must generate an awareness of the impact of trauma, encourage staff wellness, improve hiring practices, and enhance organizations' physical, social, and emotional environments
- Awareness of the impact of trauma should be demonstrated through preaching and in the context of worship
- Develop a Biblical response to trauma grounded in your own theology



Changing Organizational Culture through Trauma Informed Practices

- Trauma informed worship promotes a shift in culture
- **Worship can be a trauma trigger**
- Language is important
- Successful implementation of initial changes may help make the case for future investments in trauma-informed care, including the adoption of a comprehensive trauma-informed care ministry model
- Adopt a daily ritual of self care for worship leaders and others
- Connect with our inner strength
- Recognize your own trauma triggers



Resources

- [SAMHSA.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)
- [mtaerybaptist.org](https://www.mtaerybaptist.org)
- [nancykingwood.com](https://www.nancykingwood.com)
- [sanctuarymodel.com](https://www.sanctuarymodel.com)

ACES Adverse Childhood Experiences/is a term given to describe all types of abuse, neglect and other traumatic childhood experiences. The landmark Kaiser ACE study examined the relationships between these experiences during childhood and reduced health and well-being later in life.

