**Trauma and Chaplaincy**

St. John’s Episcopal Church

April 18, 2018

**What is trauma or PTSD?**

An event and experience that is “outside the range of usual human experiences” and overwhelms coping skills

**What is the difference between trauma and stress?**

1. Event
2. Harmful (moves beyond stress)
3. Adverse Effects

**Influences that effect trauma reactions**

1. Duration
2. Scope of event
3. Human error
4. Malicious event
5. Lack of warning

**Trauma dimensions:**

1. Physiological
2. Psychological
   1. Emotional
   2. Cognitive
   3. Behavioral
3. Spiritual/Theological

**Types of Trauma**

* War/Combat Victims
* Crime Victims
* Mass Violence
* Childhood neglect or sexual abuse
* Domestic Violence
* Adult physical or sexual assault

**Physical Effects**

* Put your body into survival mode
* You release adrenaline and cortisol that signals flight of fight
* Hormones help you to react rapidly for self-protection
* Put simply – Fight, Flight, Freeze

\*Essentially your body changes as a result of your response to trauma, altering your brain development

**Interventions**:

1. **Ministry of Presence**
   1. Objective: Facilitate spiritual healing through an intentional ministry of presence.
   2. What is ministry of presence?
      1. Defined: Making yourself available to others by your own presence. In making yourself available, you open yourself up to authentic encounter and cultivate “sacred ground.”
   3. Things to remember:
      1. There is no “agenda”
      2. Gently and appropriately be pro-active in your provision of spiritual care – be cautious
   4. Examples:
      1. Details about relationships, life circumstances, etc. so it is important to maintain a positive, pro-active spiritual presence – reemphasize trust, safety, consistency, and confidentiality
      2. Remember names!
2. **Meaning Making**
   1. Objective: Assist the person in meaning making following trauma
   2. Things to remember in the context of Gubbio and St. Johns
      1. Keep it simple – something for the day
      2. This is not a ritual!
   3. Examples:
      1. Going to the “Mary Shrine” and praying
      2. Offering a Rosary
      3. Taking a moment to be grateful for something of the day
      4. Paper and coloring materials
      5. Paper and pencils for writing
3. **Prayer**
   1. Objective: To assist a person with the use of prayer as a coping strategy in order to strengthen their spiritual connection to the divine and to cathartically ventilate negative emotions.
      1. I would amend this definition a little and say:   
         Through prayer, we open up an explicit time and space for relationship with the divine and, by doing so, diffuse negative emotions.
   2. What NOT to do!
      1. Evangelize
      2. Force Prayer
      3. Use language that is harmful – rather, take their lead