

A FRESH START
at Connecting with People
Who Are Hidden and Hurting



June 17, 2021

Practical Resources for Churches

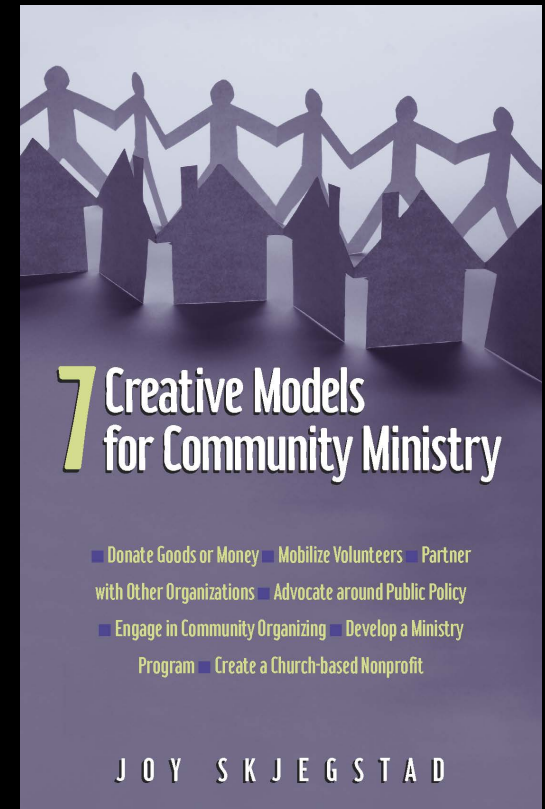
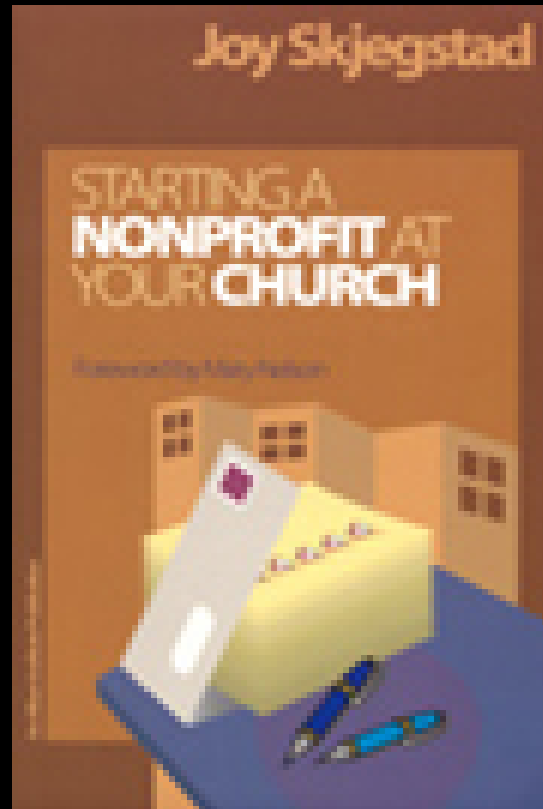
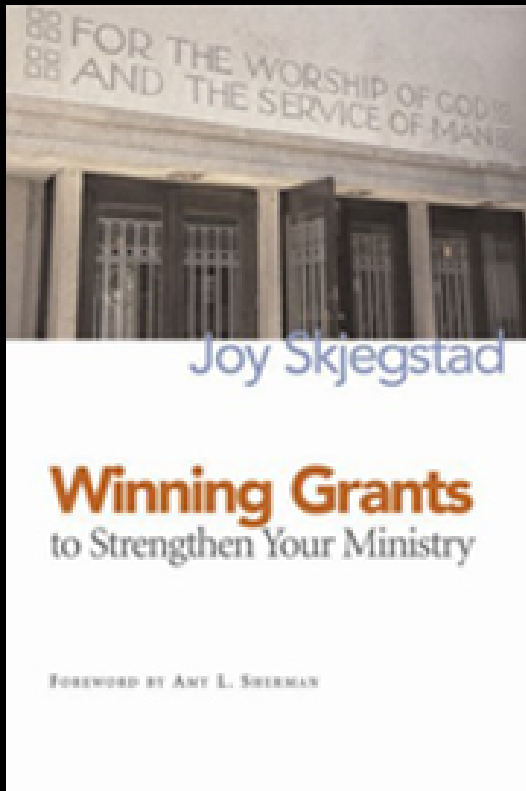


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Joy Skjegstad is a national speaker and consultant on nonprofit management and ministry development. She has more than 30 years of experience starting and growing nonprofit organizations, with a special focus on faith-based groups, and youth and community development.



New Book!
Order from
Judson Press

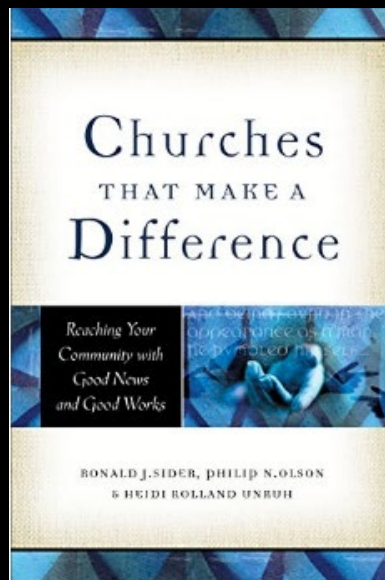
REAL CONNECTIONS:

Ministries to Strengthen Church
and Community Relationships

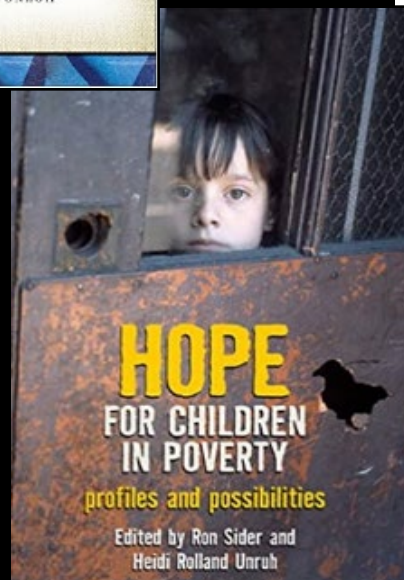
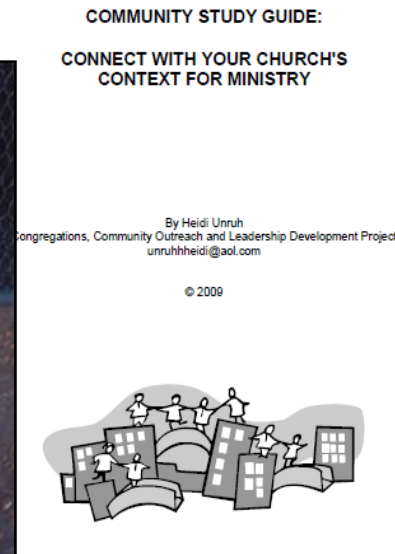


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Congregations & Community Outreach Project



Coming alongside leaders and their good ideas, so good works can shine! (Eph. 2:10)

Our Vision

We envision a community in which everyone has a connection with someone who:

- sees their unique worth
- enjoys their company
- is with them in their struggles
- and brings out their best.



Chat Box Question

When was a time you felt invisible?

OR

*When was a time someone (not family)
connected with you that made you feel
valued and special?*

Epidemic of Loneliness

- One in four adults live alone
- 40% of adults report being chronically lonely
- A fourth of adults have no one they feel close enough to share a personal problem with



Epidemic of Loneliness

- Loneliness is as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day
- Higher risks of anxiety, depression, dementia
- Loneliness increases odds of early death (for seniors by 45%)



**"Loneliness and the
feeling of being unwanted
is the most terrible poverty."
(Mother Teresa)**



Summary ... CONNECTIONS MATTER

Life is better
with friends :)



Why Connect? Jesus as a Model



Why Connect? The Joy of Friendship



Why Connect? The Church Needs Everyone's Gifts

Including People with Physical Disabilities in Church

BY: SHERENA LOH



Reaching Out to Hidden and Hurting People



Hidden People

- Isolated by disabilities, illness, or age



Hidden People

- Single parents with kids at home and no transportation



Hidden People

- People living in institutions (youth detention centers, group homes, shelters)



Hurting People

- Economic crisis or poverty
- Personal loss
- Abuse
- Addiction



Lonely People: Young Adults

- Young men are the loneliest group
- Two-thirds of young adults feel no one really knows them well
- 40% of young adults agreed with the statement, “I feel completely alone.”

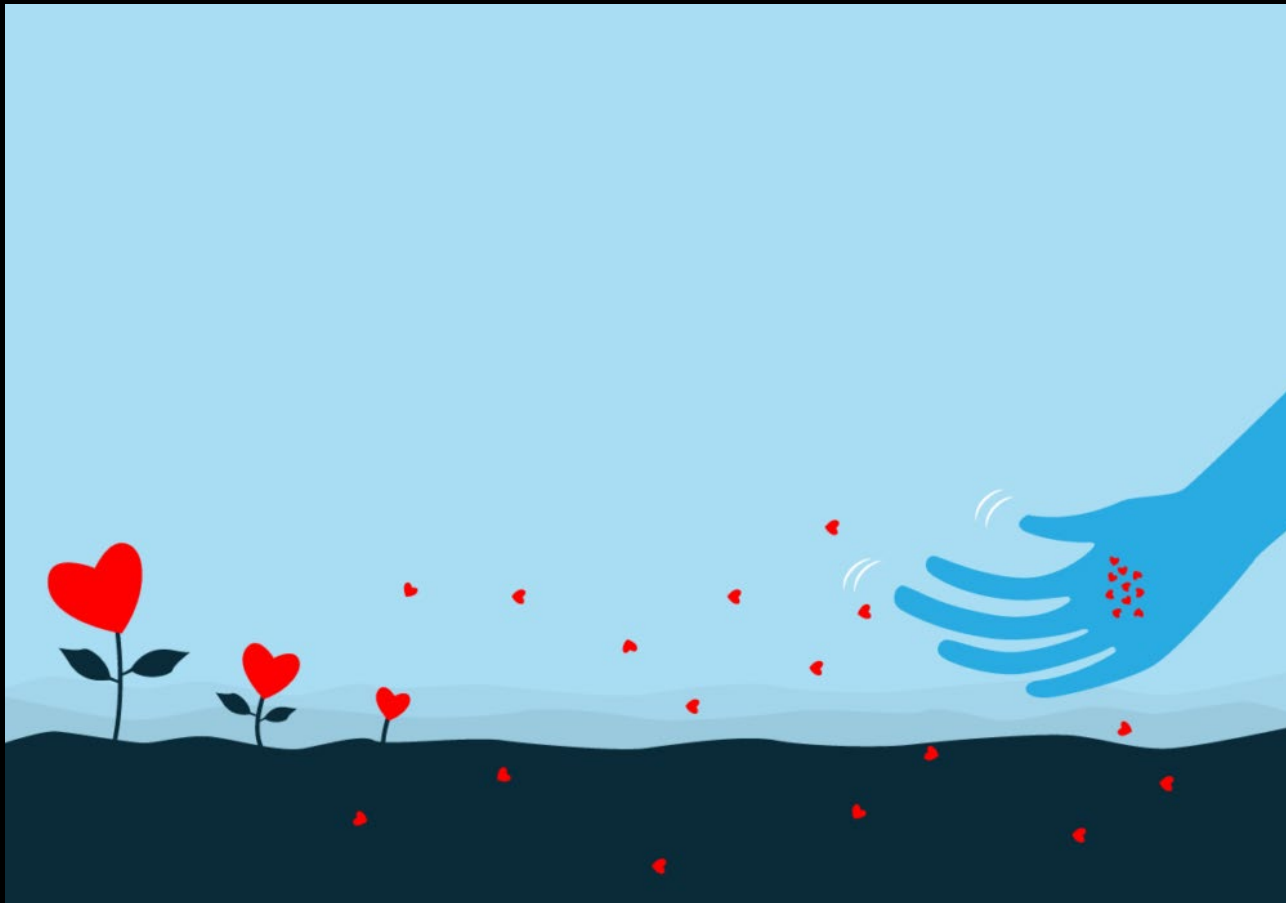


Seeing People

- Step outside the routine places where you connect with people
- Be sensitive to the nudging of the Holy Spirit
- Get to know people at a place that you volunteer
- Notice people who appear to be lonely

Strategies for Cultivating Caring Connections

Focus on relationship ... not just meeting needs



Eat Together



Eat Together

A few ideas:

- Eat alongside people at a meal service program
- Invite a single mom & kids to a picnic playdate
- Share a holiday meal with someone who has lost a loved one
- Work with young adults at your church to host a backyard potluck
- Have lunch with a Meals on Wheels recipient

Invite Stories

Be curious to learn about a person's life story
Be respectful and "non-judgy"



Enjoy a Common Activity

Crafts, games, watching sports

Invite them to teach you a new skill



Bring People Together

Bring people with similar life experiences together for mutual support



Serve a Common Cause



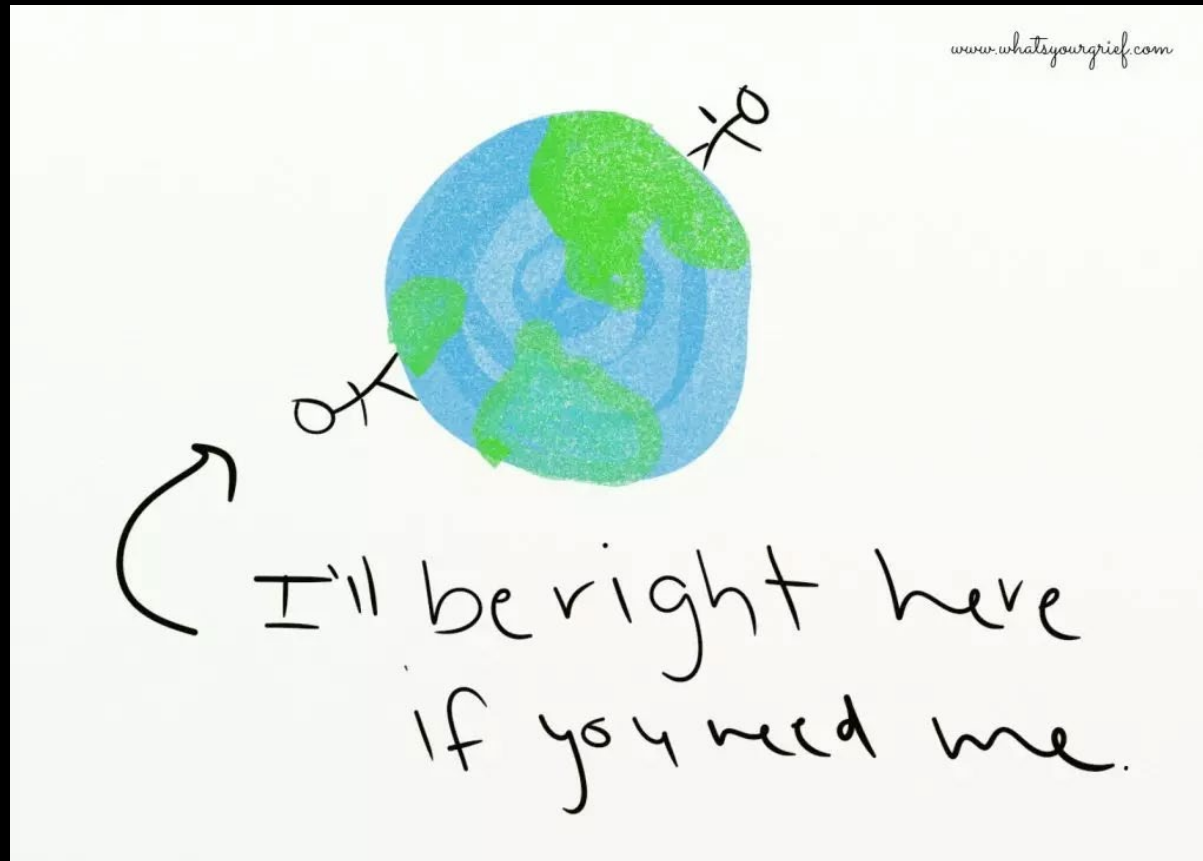
Being a Friend to Someone When They Are Hurting

Just being there for
someone can sometimes
bring hope when all
seems hopeless.

InspirationBoost.com

“You Were There for Me”

Make yourself available by asking,
“How would you like me to be supportive?”



“You Really Listened to Me”

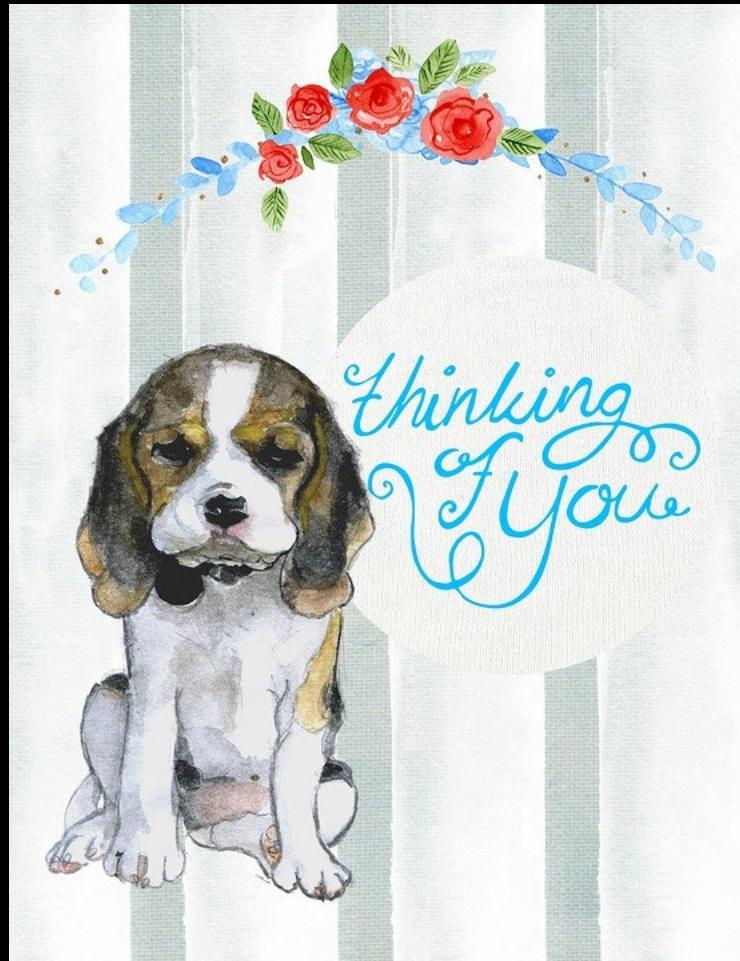
- Not problem-solving
- No judgment
- Be comfortable with silences
- Talk less
- A ministry of presence

“You Helped My Light Shine”

- Find out what sparks their hope and joy
- Do life-enriching activities together
- Do something together to bless others
- Facilitate restorative alone time

From Isolation to Connection

Regular check-ins, acts of kindness, mutuality,
find the fun



Connecting with People with Disabilities



Connecting with People with Disabilities

- Address this person directly
- Be patient, don't interrupt
- No baby talk
- Place yourself at eye level
- Make your mouth visible
- Ask before helping

Connecting with People with Disabilities

Q: How does a person with a disability
want to be treated?

A: Like a person!

(So just relax and be yourself!)

Connecting with People with Health Challenges

- Learn about what they are facing
- Let them talk about it
- Let them *not* talk about it
- Don't take things personally
- Respect your boundaries



Connecting with People with Health Challenges

Also reach out to family / caregivers



Connecting with People with Mental Health Issues

A teal speech bubble graphic with a white tail pointing towards the bottom left. Inside the bubble, the text "Let's Talk About Mental Health" is written in a dark grey, sans-serif font. Below this, in a smaller font, is "A Ministry of First Presbyterian Church Beaver".

Let's Talk About
Mental Health

A Ministry of First Presbyterian Church Beaver

When Your Friend Struggles with Mental Health

- Be flexible about plans
- Acknowledge their pain is real
- Realize socializing can be costly
- Accept who they are, as they are
- Enjoy what the moment has to offer

When Your Friend Struggles with Mental Health

*“Set aside your judgement and
don’t give up on your friends.
They are fighting a battle you
may never fully understand.”*

Angela Howard, “How Mental Illness Affects Friendships”

When Your Friend Struggles with Addictions



(10% of American adults report being in recovery)

When Your Friend Struggles with Addictions

“Personally, just having people listen, not judge, and be willing to accept that I was a human with different circumstances was essential to helping me see my own worth and finding purpose.”

- Seth Dewey, Substance Misuse Health Educator

When Your Friend Struggles with Addictions

- Avoid becoming “enmeshed”
- A friend is not the same as a sponsor
- Connect with help if needed

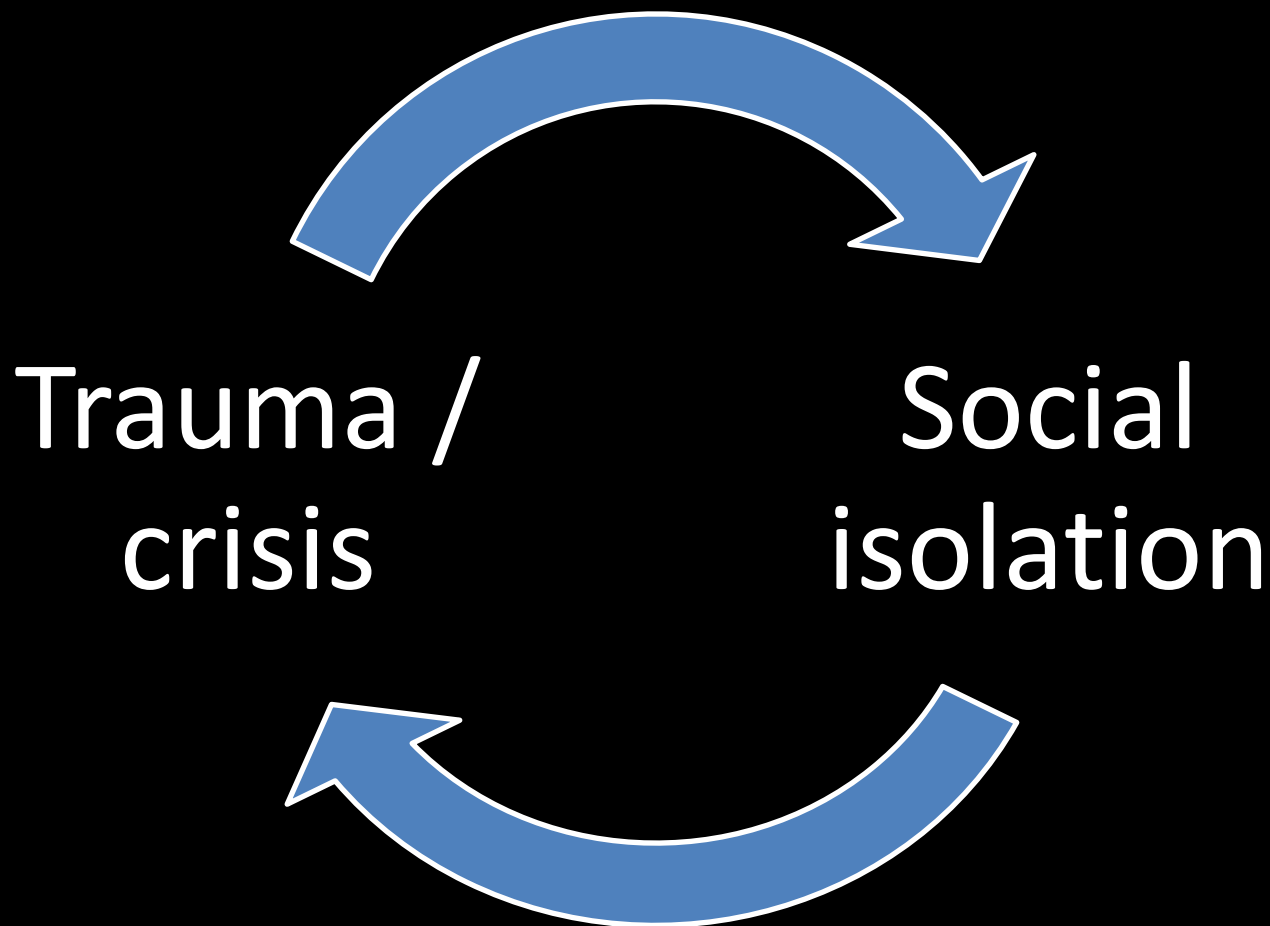
Trauma-Informed Connections

Trauma: deeply distressing experience that causes physical or emotional damage.

Childhood trauma such as abuse, neglect, violent loss, or family breakup can have repercussions lasting into adulthood.

For example, three-fourths of adults in substance abuse treatment have a history of abuse and other trauma

Connections Help Break the Cycle



How Trauma Can Affect Relationships



Flight, fight or freeze
response—

May show up as:

- *Trust issues*
- *Hyper-sensitivity*
- *Hopeless, stuck feeling*

Trauma-Informed Connections



- Don't judge or try to fix them
- Stay curious
- Be trustworthy
- Appreciate their gifts

Set Healthy Boundaries

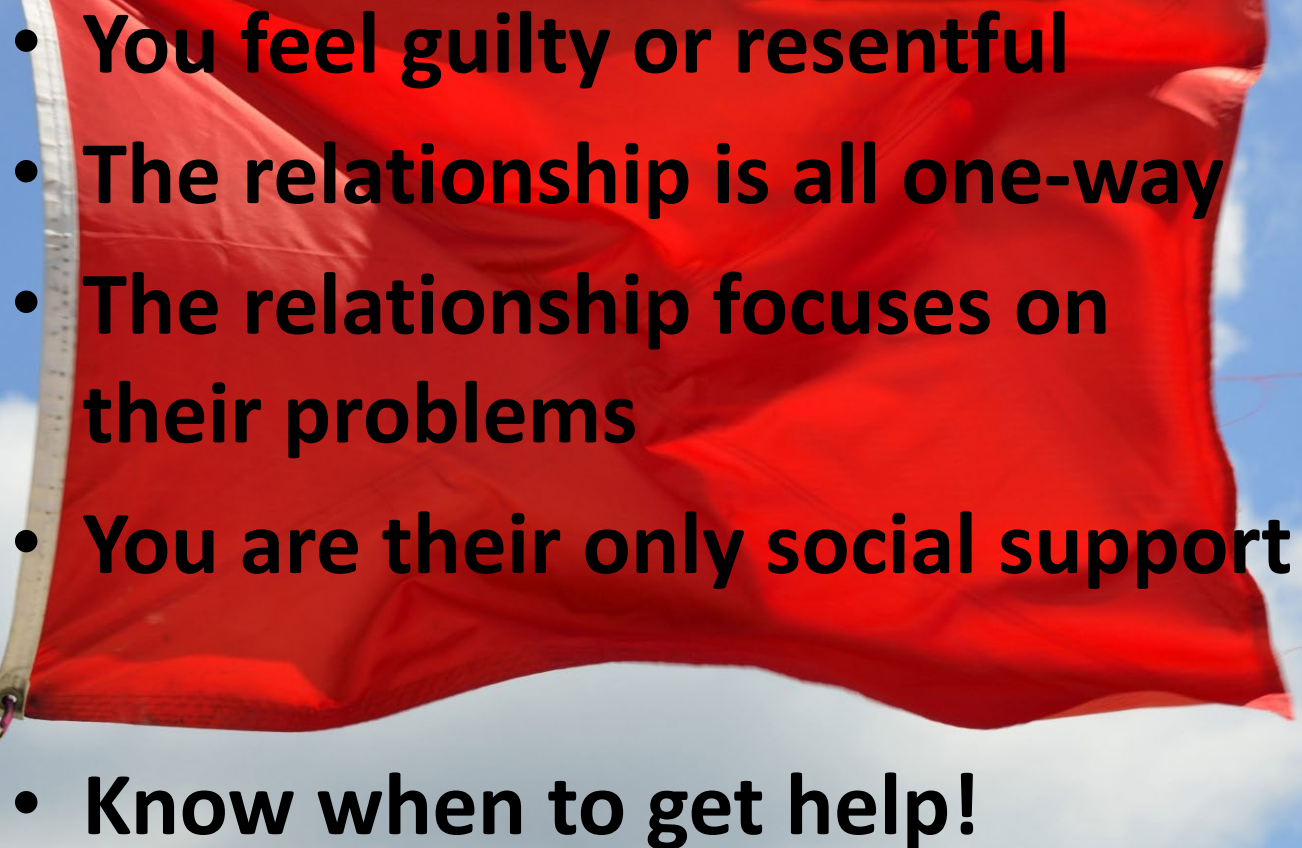


What I want

What's OK with me

What's NOT OK with me

Recognize Red Flags

- 
- **You feel guilty or resentful**
 - **The relationship is all one-way**
 - **The relationship focuses on their problems**
 - **You are their only social support**
 - **Know when to get help!**

“You can be special to me”



How Can We Help Your Church?

Services we provide:

- **Consulting** on planning new ministry
- **Coaching** to support a leader or team
- Facilitate **asset discovery** process
- Facilitate **listening** process in the church and community
- **Training** webinars or conversations

How Can We Help Your Church?

Training topics include:

- Helping Your Church Process Its “Covid Year”
- Becoming a More Relationship-Rich Church
- How to Talk to Strangers
- Engage New and Loosely Attached Church Attenders
- Becoming a Church That Listens Well
- Connecting with People Who Are Hidden & Hurting
- Getting to Know Your Neighbors

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