

TRAUMA INFORMED SPIRITUAL CARE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma* (Westminster, UK: Penguin Books, 2015). ISBN: 978-0-670-78593-3

Genre: Autoethnographic and ethnographic narrative non-fiction, psychology and psychiatry, mental health

Intended audience: Emotional, psychological, spiritual, trauma-informed care providers

Thesis summary: van der Kolk provides incredible detail and insight into care and treatment of trauma survivors, weaving together his own experience administering studies, interviews, group therapy, and treatment as a doctor, with ethnographic summaries of survivors' experiences, whether as veterans, survivors of childhood abuse, rape victims, and so on. Along with these human examples of trauma's effects are his insights gleaned as a physician, demonstrating how trauma affects the body, mind, and behavior, and how various interventions might lead to increased neuroplasticity, healing, and recovery.

Assessment: This is an extensive read which reveals how commonplace trauma is in many lives and as a society, and gives language to an experience of surviving trauma, the experience of treating it dynamically, and the havoc that is caused in our lives especially when untreated and unprocessed. Van der Kolk explains what happens at the neurological level when trauma occurs, and what happens in the body, giving the reader clear examples of the relationship between the discrete (embodied, internalized) and the big picture (impacts on individual behavior, relationships, and larger webs of human connectivity).

2. Bessel Van Der Kolk's non-fiction psychological best seller, *The Body Keeps The Score* is a chaplains holy grail in my honest assessment. Our job is to provide trauma informed care, often in the form of joining our clients. I believe caregivers from chaplains to therapist could provide better care if they understood trauma and its intricacies, as laid out in the book.

3. Bessel Van Der Kolk begins with the 'The Rediscovery of Trauma' via the experience of his early Vietnam vet clients suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Bessel thoroughly explains how our brains respond to and function on trauma in, 'This is Your Brain on Trauma.' In 'The Minds of Children' section it's made clear how deeply trauma can impact a child's attachment style. This includes long term impacts on their future relationships as adults and their overall concept of love. It's revealed how tricky memory can be in the 'The Imprint of Trauma' sections and the consequences of remembering what would seemingly be the unforgettable. Bessel Van Der Kolk ends with a variety of 'Paths To Recovery' in his closing section, a positive end to a very heavy but liberating text.

4. All in all, this was one of the best books I've read throughout this guided reading. Every chapter left my mind blown open with the gears spinning with alternative approaches to care for my clients. I really feel like I've been able to help clients begin the long process of metabolizing their trauma, work I would have never known how to do prior to this text.

1. Bruce D. Perry and Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook--What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love, and Healing* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006). ISBN: 9780465056538

2. This psychological non-fiction is ideal for Child Psychiatrists, especially ones who specialize in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). I think caregivers like therapist, chaplains, priests, and perhaps even teachers could greatly benefit from reading this book as well if they are working with children who may be experiencing ACE.

3. Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz discuss the impact and intricacies of childhood trauma by going into detail about prior clients they have worked on. By describing the physiological response to fear and trauma on a child it becomes clear the immediate and long-term impacts of ACE, like autoimmune disorders and stomach issues. The authors point out the unique nature of having a patient that is a child, they get to make few choices about their care and often provide little information about their circumstances. The therapist – child relationship has unique boundaries and calls for innovative approaches due to the power dynamics at play. We were left with rays of hope and some breadcrumbs to healing like power of therapy, the earlier the better, and the impact of music and art.

4. This was an incredibly informative and triggering read. While I'm glad to have read it, I would primarily recommend it for folks dealing with traumatized children or severely impacted adults. I think folks working in prison settings could benefit from understanding examples of childhood trauma.

1. Joseph McDonald, ed. *Exploring Moral Injury in Sacred Texts* (London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017). ISBN: 9781785927560

2. In the 'Buddhist Scripture and Moral Injury' chapter of *Exploring Moral Injury In Sacred Texts* the audience would seemingly be Buddhist caregivers. In a broader sense this book is for caregivers, chaplains, and healers looking to address healing from a trauma informed perspective. This reading is specifically useful for Buddhist prison ministry as it's truly a tale of karmic consequences and rehabilitative justice.

3. The sacred text in reference is the Buddhist story of redemption and universal salvation called Angulimala. Angulimala was a favorite student of his guru until jealous students turned the guru against him. The story goes that his guru grew to have such distrust for him he demanded a *mala* (necklace) of one thousand fingers to complete his studies. Angulimala went on to murder people, collecting their fingers until the Buddha stumbled into his lair. It is here the Buddha uses his *iddhi* (psychic powers) to calmly walk just out of reach, despite the fact that Angulimala is running towards him. When Angulimala reaches a point of frustration he screams for the Buddha to stop, to which the Buddha replies, "I have stopped, you stop." It is in this response, referencing the violence Angulimala has yet to stop that brings the violent one to renounce his violent ways. Overcome with remorse and shame, Angulimala goes on to become a model monk. The Buddha goes on to introduce Angulimala to King Pasenadi, encouraging him to seek a rehabilitative model of justice, rather than continuing to use punishment. Not only did the Buddha's approach stop violence, it allowed Angulimala to be restored and rejoin society in this new role. Angulimala went on to save a mother giving birth and retires to the forest to meditate, earning him the highest spiritual level in early Buddhism. Angulimala still had to face his karmic consequences, which came in the form of brutal beating by a mob. Angulimala does not fight back and crawls back beaten and broken to the Buddha where he reclaims his birthname having endured his final change to a non-violent life.

4. This is a story full of grace, accountability, healing, transformation, and hope for a better way of dealing with those caught in our broken criminal justice system. I think this is a brilliant text to offer to incarcerated clients who seem to benefit from Buddhist mediation practice.

Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma And Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1992). ISBN: 978-0-465-08730-3

Genre: Nonfiction / Psychology / Feminism / Post-traumatic Stress Disorder / Social Work / Politics

Intended audience: Professionals offering spiritual, mental, or other forms of care to trauma survivors, academics, social workers, some trauma survivors (probably those in Phase III of recovery), activists and organizers (esp. in antiwar, women's rights, or children's rights movements)

Thesis Summary: In Part I, Herman provides a comprehensive timeline and history of trauma and trauma treatment. She introduces the concept of Complex PTSD which is now widely used as a diagnosis for survivors of long-term, repeated trauma. Herman draws from a wide range of case studies from combat veterans, to political prisoners, to survivors (both children and adults) of domestic and sexual abuse. Using these cases, Herman locates individual cases of trauma into a broader social and political framework. In Part II, Herman discusses the Stages of Recovery. The first task of trauma recovery (Safety) is (re)establishing a sense of safety within the trauma survivor's body and within the world. The second stage, Remembrance and Mourning is when the survivor begins to process their experiences by sharing the story and identifying corresponding emotions. This stage also provides space for the survivor to mourn the losses they have experienced as a result of the trauma. In the final stage, Reconnection, the survivor's task is to establish a new sense of self with the trauma experience integrated into their story without being the defining piece of it.

Analysis: Comprehensive, moving, and insightful, this book ought to be a required read for anyone entering into any kind of work with trauma survivors. The book provides such a wealth of knowledge as Herman draws from an array of medical and mental health professionals and scholars as well as from survivors of many different traumas. This text offers helpful information about the harmful ways that trauma has been (or not been) addressed in communities historically and identifies still relevant problems that interfere with providing the care and support that trauma survivors need and deserve. I was pleasantly surprised to discover how political of a book this is. Herman recognizes that any lasting and effective response to trauma or effort to prevent trauma has to include individual work happening alongside mass political movements.

1. Larry Kent Graham, *Moral Injury: Restoring Wounded Souls* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017). ISBN: 9781501800757

2. This book is primarily written towards ministers, but is accessible to and encouraged for lay leaders and others offering pastoral care.

3. All people carry moral wounds, some of which lead to moral injury. Graham works with "four pillars of healing and resilience in moral living," which include: naming, framing, enacting, and revising (xii). He further asserts that moral healing requires collaborative contextual creativity. Within this contextual creativity, we engage the four pillars. Naming moral dissonance, dilemmas, and injuries is the first step to changing our moral narratives; framing what we've named in actionable terms with a sense of benevolence towards self and others is the next step; enacting asks us to engage the situation we've reframed using moral problem-solving; revising is the process of receiving and reincorporating the outcomes of our enacting into our self-understanding (26). Throughout the book, Graham presents strategic examples, exercises, and resources.

4. Although repetitive in some places, this book is helpful in part because it focuses on the moral stress, dissonance, and injuries that all people (not just veterans) experience. Graham is a Christian and writes from his perspective as a Methodist, but his work is easily translated away from that frame.

Lexie Bean, et al. *Written on the Body: Letters from Trans and Non-Binary Survivors of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence* (London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018). ISBN: 978-1-78592-797-3

Genre: Prose anthology, TGNC/NB themes, sexual and domestic violence

Intended audience: TGNC/NB survivors of violence

Thesis summary: This collection of letters, poems, prose, stories, and wishes to, from, and for trans and non-binary survivors of violence gives shape to deeply personal wounds and experiences, while demonstrating the community of shared experience that seeks to lend support to its members. This is a queer, non-linear, depressive assemblage of narratives which

demonstrate the additional complexity of sexualized and bodily violence for those outside cisnormativity, and serves to offer hope and reclamation in stories shared in community.

Assessment: The format of this book is effective in complicating essentialist narratives of identity, violence, and gender, and instead, in its offering of personal, creative, unresolved and incomplete snippets of stories, demonstrates the humanity and spectrum of experiences of survival as gendered human beings. This is an intimate read, full of stories one shares with trusted friends, and imparts a sense of sacred community for the reader - felt even when one does not belong to the TGNC/NB community to which it is explicitly directed.

Mark Wolynn, *It Didn't Start with You: How Inherited Trauma Shapes Who We Are and How to End the Cycle* (New York, NY: Viking, 2016). ISBN: 978-1-101-98037-8

Genre: Nonfiction / Psychology / Self Help / Mental Health

Intended audience: Individuals looking for insight on navigating their trauma or difficult family situations / Easily digestible read for people newer to the fields of psychology and trauma / Mental health care providers

Thesis summary: In *It Didn't Start with You*, Wolynn explores the concept of intergenerational trauma and argues that people are constantly living out the traumas--or sometimes the repercussions--of their family members. Wolynn posits that any trauma or tragedy that has remained unprocessed will inevitably show up at a later time in one's family tree. Wolynn leans heavily on his own life experiences and suggests throughout the book that one of the most essential tasks of breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma involves mending one's relationship with their family--especially their parents. Within the book, Wolynn provides exercises to engage the reader and lead them through his Core Language Approach. The Core Language Approach helps individuals locate what Wolynn calls their "core trauma" through investigating family history and through use of language. The book is intended to offer people healing from their trauma and to help them discover new and healthier ways to experience themselves and their relationships.

Assessment: Overall I found this book to be quite problematic. There were a number of unsubstantiated scientific claims made by Wolynn--some of which may in fact be true, but were nevertheless not supported within the book. At (at least) one point in his book, Wolynn makes reference to a verse from the Bible (Numbers 14:18) and uses it to reinforce the claim that children will inherit the traumas (or pay for the sins) of their ancestors. This is harmful theology that is casually tossed in a book claiming to be rooted in science. Additionally, Wolynn's insistence on people mending relationships with their parents, I think, is incredibly problematic. In his case, and I imagine some others, doing so was or is a possibility. However, there are many people who don't know their parents or who have intentionally and bravely disconnected from their parents because of the danger the relationship posed. Ultimately, I think it is important to explore the concept of intergenerational trauma and to discuss how our family histories continue to impact us and our clients/patients/parishioners but there are much better resources than this to help with that work.

1. Nadine Burke Harris, *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity* (New York, NY: Mariner Books, 2019). ISBN: 9781328502667

2. This book is nonfiction and part memoir. It includes vignettes from Burke Harris' medical practice and life and reflects her research and experience working with children and their families in San Francisco. It is intended for broad audiences,

3. Central to *The Deepest Well* is the research that produced the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) survey. Burke Harris saw young patients who were experiencing physical symptoms of ACEs much earlier than previously hypothesized. Her research indicates that childhood adversity changes our biological systems, but that it is not irreversible. The

inevitability of later poor health outcomes is not guaranteed if interventions are put in place--the earlier the better.

4. This is a binge-worthy book and would make a great documentary mini-series. It includes both the ACE questionnaire and the one developed by her practice.

1. Nancy J. Ramsay and Carrie Doehring, eds. *Military Moral Injury and Spiritual Care* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2019). ISBN: 9780827223783

2. This is a collection of essays previously published in *Pastoral Psychology* on spiritual care related to military moral injury. It is primarily designed for caregivers and its contributors come from a variety of religious traditions and vocations.

3. Significant takeaways from throughout the book include: the importance of embodiment and recognizing the goodness of creation; knowing the spiritual orienting systems of the care-seeker; the usefulness of spiritual practices of lamentation and being witnessed to; the benefits of creative creation, including telling stories (even in fragments); spiritual practices can help reconstruct the moral self; community engagement is critical for recovery from emotional wounds; specificity matters when naming transgressions; muslims in the military are less likely to declare their religious preference and often lack access to spiritual practices and connections that are life-giving; guilt allows for reconciliation while shame increases isolation; ministry of presence is central; ambiguous loss/grief can be a helpful framework when thinking about moral injury; civilian communities must acknowledge their complicity in war and its consequences.

4. This book has a lot of concrete ideas about how to provide care for veterans suffering moral injury that are applicable in non-veteran communities as well. I've started using some of the questions that promote resilience in check-ins for work and found them beneficial for conversations.

1. Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother's Hands* (Las Vegas, NV: Central Recovery Press, 2017). ISBN: 978-1-942094-47-0

2. *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem is a self-help book that works to address white supremacy in America and the ways we embody it—whoever you are. From a white person to a person of color there are tips and tricks for everyone from all social locations.

3. In *My Grandmother's Hands* Resmaa breaks down the power of human instinct and survival, where fight, flight, and freeze reside. By including body practices intermittently throughout the book, the author forces you to turn deeply inward and begin the painful work of retrospection. It truly is a book that, if done correctly, can begin to rewire white supremacy from our brains. In part one, 'Unarmed and Dismembered' we discuss the creation of whiteness and how history is passed from body to body. The uncomfortable and necessary conversation surrounding the trauma the black body has / still endures is had in this section as well. While in part two, 'Remembering Ourselves' we learn about the soul nerve and how connected to our gut it is. Part three ends with 'Mending Our Collective Body' where advice is offered for creating a counter culture to the culture of white supremacy we currently live in. Resmaa reimagines another world through healing.

4. I loved this text and truly recommend it for everyone. I think this text should be a required reading for chaplains and caregivers like therapist and doctors. Most often I find self-help books to be pretty useless, but this text is truly transformative because it's more than just a text. It's a work book and life mantra all wrapped into something digestible for most people.

Shelley Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010). ISBN: 978-0-664-23503-1

Genre: Religion / Nonfiction / Psychology / Theology / Spirituality

Intended audience: Academics / Theologians / Spiritual Care Providers

Thesis summary: *Spirit and Trauma* begins with an introduction to trauma theory and its many intersections with both psychology and literature. Building from this foundation in trauma studies, Rambo begins to discuss the concept of “witness” and its role and importance in trauma and trauma recovery. After laying this ground, Rambo then moves into a theological analysis of these ideas particularly through focusing on Holy Saturday, the middle day between Jesus’ death and his resurrection. Rambo defines trauma as that which does not go away. She argues that the common theological and liturgical interpretations of Holy Week do not adequately speak to the experiences of trauma survivors. Often the move from death to resurrection happens too suddenly rather than remaining between the two. That place of remaining, however, is often where the trauma survivor is situated. Throughout the book, Rambo draws largely on the works of theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar and his reflections on the mystical experiences of Adrienne von Speyr. Rooting her work in scripture, Rambo also provides an in depth reanalysis of the Gospel of John and the witnessing role played by Mary Magdalene and the beloved disciple. Ultimately Rambo presents a pneumatology that she calls “Middle Spirit” and conceptualizes as that which is both witness and love. Middle Spirit inhabits the space of remaining while also creating the capacity to begin imagining life beyond death.

Assessment: This deep theological piece really complimented the other more clinical books I read this semester. I found Rambo’s focus on Holy Saturday to be a really fascinating and helpful way to think about trauma and how it fits into the gospel narrative. I appreciated the introduction this book provided me to the works of von Balthasar and von Speyr and the specific focus on one particular gospel narrative. Overall I feel that Rambo offered a very thorough and deep theological take on the concepts of trauma and witness. I think that this book would be helpful for people preparing to be chaplains or spiritual care providers because of how it links theology to the clinical study of psychology. This was a dense read that took me a bit longer than some of the other books. I wouldn’t necessarily recommend this for someone who lacks a foundation in theological studies because it would be easy to get lost in the jargon and the format of her argumentation

Wonchul Shin and Elizabeth M. Bounds, "Treating Moral Harm as Social Harm: Towards a Restorative Ethic of Christian Responsibility." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 37/2 (Fall-Winter 2017): 153-169. ISSN: 1540-7942

Genre: Christian ethics, narrative commentary

Intended audience: (White) Christian theologians, ministers and pastoral care providers, restorative justice advocates, and ethicists

Thesis Summary: Shin and Bounds evaluate two narrative accounts which exemplify moral injury as experienced by those on the margins. The authors look to the ways small encounters of moral injury compose a lifetime of social harm and larger structural injustice which supports and enables such harm. In response, they argue for a “Christian moral responsibility grounded in restorative justice” as demonstrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan which recognizes the vulnerability of those in marginalized social positions to social harm - predicated on the hegemonic value of personal responsibility - and asserts collective accountability as moral repair and that which makes possible relational “neighbor-love.”

Assessment: Most compelling in this piece is the demonstration that social and moral harm are often mundane, ordinary encounters which make up the fascial-space of a life, rather than explosive instances of violence, which make them more insidious as they are built into the fibers of biases supported by hegemonic structures such as nationalism, white supremacy, classism, etc.

Shin and Bounds are rather passive in the way they frame hegemonic structures - perhaps as a way to blur identity distinctions in a call toward coalitional community. But what is apparent in their argument is the “we” who need to realign and live from a renewed Christian ethic is a white, middle-class, cisheterosexual, English-speaking, conservative populace which

reacts out of explicit and implicit bias. The argument would be stronger if the authors were more explicit about the actual populations which embody structural violence.

Additional texts

Trauma and Transformation at Ground Zero: A Pastoral Theology--Storm Swain

Carrying Them with Us: Living Through Pregnancy or Infant Loss--David M. Engelstad and Catherine A. Malotky

E. Hobgood. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1999. "Wasting Human Lives: A Christian Response to Hyper-Incarceration in the United States." In *Markets and Morals: Spirit and Capital in an Age of Inequality*, pp. 143-156. Edited by Robert P. Jones and Ted A. Smith. Routledge, 2017.

Treating the Trauma Survivor--Carrie Clark