



CPSC Notes

COUNCIL FOR PASTORAL AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLORS

No 37 – August 2026

A calling to Christian ministry

Dear Affiliates,

Greetings to all servants of God in your various capacities and contexts.

We are living in such busy times that are marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. It is in times like this, that we need to be stable and grounded in our service to God and for what He has called us for. Let us be encouraged and understand that serving God who loved us, is all about the love for Him and caring for what He cares for, which is the people that are entrusted in our care under our diverse ministries and giftings.

Let us reflect on this scripture in the book of John ¹⁵ *So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."* ¹⁶ *He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."* ¹⁷ *He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep" (John 21:15-17 NKJV)*

When we are called to ministry, above all other things, it is a calling to love Christ. Before Jesus entrusted Peter with the responsibility of feeding the lambs, which portrays a duty of a minister to promote in every way the spiritual welfare of God's people, especially the weak and feeble, if we think about the lambs, he had to pass the test of love for God.

As a minister, Peter was first confronted with this deeply personal question: *"Do you love Me more than these?"* Loaded in this question seems to indicate that we must be above the ordinary citizen or ordinary member of the church or society when it comes to loving Christ. It seems that we may be ordinary people but should have some extraordinary character and personality that is *"more than these"*. It is significant that Jesus did not begin by asking Peter about his gifting, leadership ability, theological knowledge, past successes, eloquence or familiar



standards. He addressed him with the condition of his heart. From that place of love flowed the commission to care for God's people.

I wondered why Jesus would ask Peter about his love for Him, not once but three times. When I think about it, I realise that **Jesus was putting emphasis on this matter of love because ministry is never meant to be a place of rest or glory but a place of duty and perseverance.** It is a place of service and sacrifice,

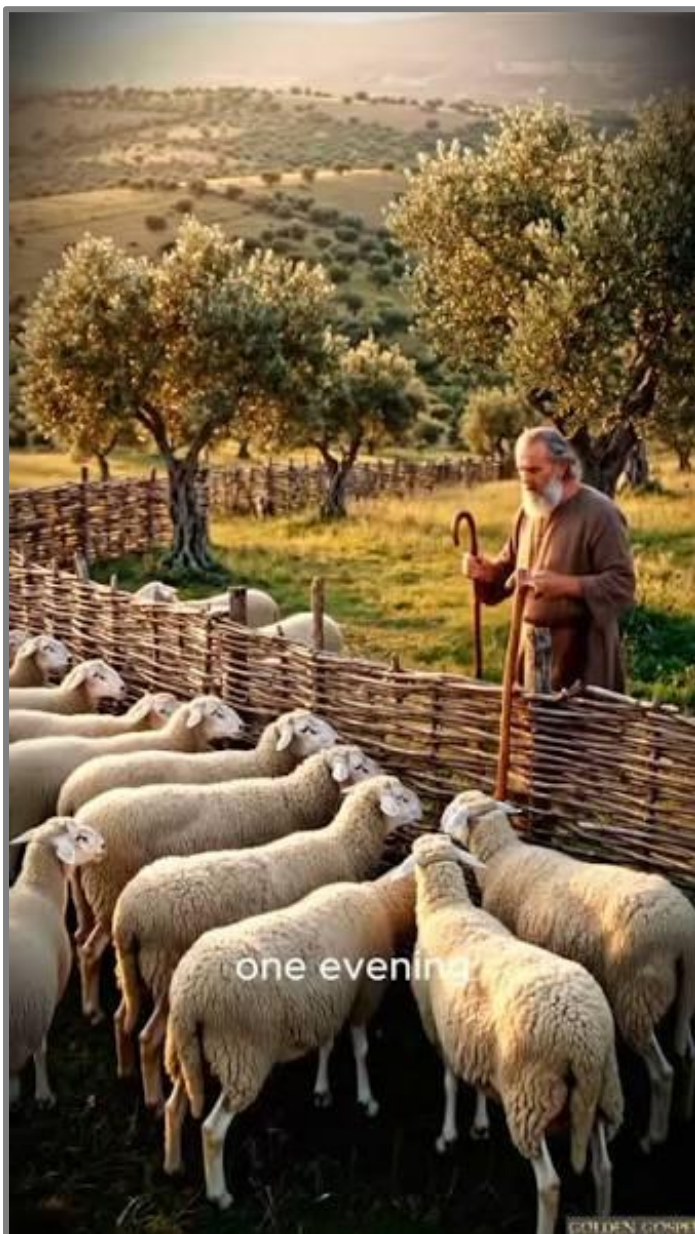
just like Jesus Christ did for us as Paul testified in Romans 5:8 *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"*.

Caring for others also requires that we remain deeply connected to the One who called us.

It is the love for Christ that should be the basis and foundation of Christian ministry today. Every pastor, pastoral counsellor, ministry leader, and servant of God has been entrusted with a sacred responsibility—not merely to lead programmes or manage church activities, but to lovingly feed and tend the people whom He has purchased with His own blood.

As pastors, our membership in congregations belongs to God; as counsellors, those people as clients at our tables belong to God; as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, despite our strengths and weaknesses, these are His sheep, they are His lambs and we are the stewards entrusted with their care, driven by the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. As we reflect on this threefold question *"Do you love me?"* and being commissioned to *"feed My lambs," "tend My sheep,"* and *"feed My sheep"* so emphatically, then we know that ministry involves more than church attendance and preaching from the pulpit.

It calls us to nurture the spiritually young, strengthen the mature, comfort the hurting, restore the wandering, protect the vulnerable, and continue to patiently walk alongside those whom God has placed in our care.



Faithful ministry requires both truth and compassion, conviction and gentleness, spiritual authority and humble service.

As shepherds, we are called to reflect the heart of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. He knew His sheep by name, sought the lost, healed the broken-hearted, and laid down His life for them. In a world where many people carry unseen burdens, our calling extends beyond proclaiming the Word to embodying Christ's love through compassionate presence, wise counsel, prayer, encouragement, and faithful discipleship.

Yet, caring for others also requires that we remain deeply connected to the One who called us. Ministry can become demanding, and the weight of caring for others can leave shepherds spiritually and emotionally weary. Jesus' question to Peter serves as a continual invitation for each of us to examine our own relationship with Him. Our effectiveness in ministry is not sustained by our strength, experience, or programmes, but by our abiding love for Christ and our dependence on the Holy Spirit.

As you read this month's newsletter, may you be encouraged to reflect afresh on the privilege and responsibility of your calling. May your love for Christ be continually renewed, your passion for His people strengthened, and your commitment to faithfully care for those entrusted to you deepened. Let us remember that every life we touch is precious to God, and every act of faithful service contributes to His eternal kingdom.

May we remain faithful shepherds who feed His lambs, tend His sheep, and honour the Chief Shepherd until He comes. *"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."* (1 Peter 5:4, NKJV)

God bless you

— Dr Jack Mashiapata, CPSC Chairperson ■

Disrupting patriarchal cultural norms and misogynist readings of the Bible in premarital counselling

By Dr Gugulethu Ndlovu

This is the first of a series of articles discussing the need to modify Premarital Counselling (PMC) to correct gender inequalities in African Christian settings. The article series is adapted from a chapter of my PhD thesis based on literature and my knowledge and experience as a black (Nguni) female who is a clergy member. My research study explored the PMC experiences of clergy and married individuals in black Pentecostal and Evangelical churches in South Africa.

These articles are aimed at sensitising pastoral counsellors who provide PMC to African Christian couples. By



having a better understanding of their context and the voices of influence involved in preparing them for marriage, pastoral counsellors can better assist these couples with building healthy, violence-free marriages.

Introduction

As a point of departure, it is important to establish the significance of this discussion.

Premarital counselling is a specialised kind of counselling aimed at intervening at the transition point of the beginning of a marriage in order to give couples a stronger

foundation for a stable and satisfactory marriage¹. Christian premarital counselling, in particular, is based on a biblical perspective of marriage.

Although there is no evidence of adverse effects from participating in PMC², PMC can fuel marital abuse when permeated by patriarchal cultural norms and values³. Literature affirms that patriarchy and culture contribute to the root cause of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).

The First National Gender-Based Violence Study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa pointed to patriarchal societal norms and structures as the root cause of GBVF in South Africa⁴.

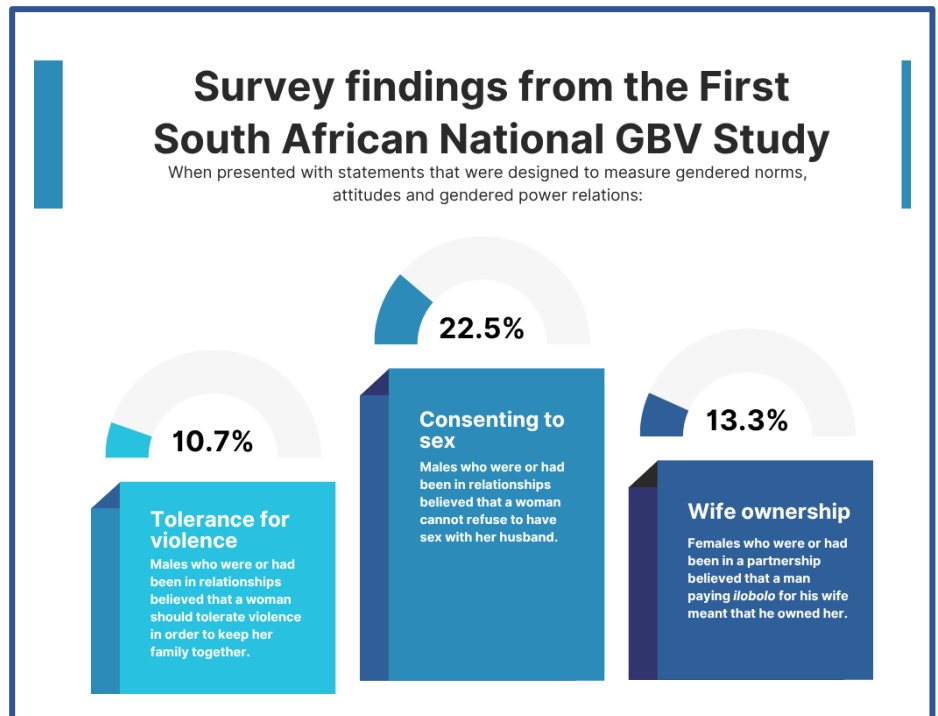
This is significant considering that South Africa is currently facing a GBVF crisis. South Africa's femicide levels are almost five times the world's average⁵, with fifty-six percent of reported femicide cases being women who were killed by a spouse or intimate partner⁶.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to challenge patriarchal societal norms that drive GBVF by sensitising premarital counsellors concerning harmful patriarchal ideologies, cultural practices and Biblical misinterpretations that are counterproductive to building stable marriages.

Current marriage preparation practices

Before we can outline and challenge these problematic norms and values, it is important to understand current marriage preparation practices amongst African Christians. In most parts of Africa, as in the United States and Canada, the majority of PMC is offered within religious institutions⁷. This is a result of the Church's long history of addressing couples before their wedding. For many churches, PMC is a prerequisite before officiating a marriage.

Together with PMC offered by clergy, there also exists African indigenous marriage preparation in the form of advice-giving by senior family members. **In traditional African communities, marriage is not just an agreement between the couple, but between families.** This is because African life centres around the preservation of a clan and its culture, and marriage is a means of preserving and extending a clan⁸. African families therefore have a responsibility to participate in the establishment and success of all the marriages within their clan.



In traditional African society, marriage preparation is a continuous process beginning in childhood up to marriage. Marriage preparation forms part of traditional initiation or puberty rites in most African societies.

Certain teachings reinforce harmful gender roles. It is important that we preserve tradition while updating the content to not only be relevant, but biblically accurate too. The advice must reflect equality and mutuality as prescribed in Scripture, remembering that both husband and wife are created in the image of God.

¹ R.F Stahmann, "Premarital counselling: A focus for family therapy", *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22/1 (2000) 104–116.

² Stahmann, "Premarital counselling: A focus for family therapy", 107.

³ S. Chisale, "For Better or Worse: Pedagogies of Premarital Counselling and Intimate Wife Abuse: An African Woman's Interpretation", *Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa*, 22/1 (2016) 55–69.

⁴ Human Sciences Research Council, "The First South African National Gender-Based Violence Study 2022: A Baseline Survey on Victimisation and Perpetration" (2024).

⁵ S. Mkwanzani and M. Nathane-Taulela M, "Gender-based violence and femicide interventions-perspectives from

community members and activists in South Africa", *Frontiers in Global Women's Health* 5 (2024).

⁶ Sonke Gender Justice, "The National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide", Accessed November 19, 2024. <https://genderjustice.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/The-National-Strategic-Plan-on-Gender-Based-Violence-and-Femicide.webp>

⁷ A. Osei-Tutu, A. Oti-Boadi, A.A Affram, V.A Dzokoto, P.Y Asante, F. Agyei & A. Kenin, "Premarital Counseling Practices among Christian and Muslim Lay Counselors in Ghana", *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling*, 74/3 (2020) 203–211

⁸ G. Mwiti and A.C Dueck, *Christian counselling: an African indigenous perspective* (Fuller Seminary Press, 2006).

Senior family members giving counsel to a couple before they marry is also an integral part of the marriage process.



The practice is known as *ukuyalwa* ('to be given instruction or advice') in isi-Zulu. It used to be directed to both the groom and the bride, but it is

now common practice for it to be solely directed towards the bride. This alone reveals a gender disparity as it does not reflect the husband as a party in the marriage, equally responsible for its success.

For African Christians in South Africa, *ukuyalwa* is not limited to the family setting but is also practiced in some form or other in the church. It is common practice in some African churches for church mothers and fathers to come together to advise premarital couples before their wedding day⁹. Findings from my study revealed that pastoral premarital counselling is not a widespread practice in black Pentecostal and Evangelical churches¹⁰. Most

married individuals were not provided with premarital counselling by their pastors but were prepared for marriage through advice from senior church members.

The preparation for marriage of African Christians therefore involves an interaction of different knowledge systems which must be understood if PMC is to be helpful in African Christian contexts.

The coming articles will deal with the interaction of cultural and religious knowledge and expectations communicated during marriage preparation. Our discussion will focus on gender roles as well as perceptions of fertility and sex.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dr Gugulethu Ndlovu is a pastoral counsellor who recently graduated with a PhD in Theology with Pastoral Studies (NWU). She was ordained at Mount Olives Ministries where she has been pastoring for the past thirteen years. Alongside her academic qualifications, she is trained in basic counselling skills, couple counselling and is trained in the Prepare/Enrich program. She's the founding director of Knotted by Gusquare where she helps couples tie a knot that will not easily unravel and empowers Christian leaders in their role of preparing couples for marriage. ■

ACRP Position on the CRL Rights Commission's Proposed Regulation of Religion

Official Release

Pretoria, South Africa – 7 July 2026

By Dr GP (Gerhard) Botha

The Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP) notes with concern the continuing public debate regarding the role of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic (CRL) Communities, commonly known as the CRL Rights Commission, in relation to the proposed regulation of religion in South Africa.

ACRP affirms without reservation that religious communities must act with integrity, accountability, transparency and due care toward all persons who participate in religious life. We share the concern of South Africans regarding instances of abuse, exploitation, financial misconduct and harmful practices committed under the cover of religion. Such conduct is unacceptable, must be con-



demned, and must be addressed firmly through the appropriate legal, professional and community-based mechanisms.

At the same time, ACRP remains firmly of the view that the answer to misconduct in religious settings is not the creation of coercive state-controlled structures that duplicate existing laws, undermine self-governance, or place religious practice under inappropriate governmental control.

ACRP's Position

ACRP supports responsible self-regulation within the religious sector, guided by recognised ethical standards, professional development, peer accountability and existing legal remedies. ACRP is a recognised professional body for Christian religious practitioners and exists to strengthen ethical practice, professional recognition, lifelong learning and accountability among those who serve in ministry.

⁹ Chisale, "For Better or Worse: Pedagogies of Premarital Counselling and Intimate Wife Abuse: An African Woman's Interpretation", 61

¹⁰ G.E Ndlovu, Experiences of premarital counselling among African Christians in South Africa: A practical theological study (North-West University, 2025).

ACRP therefore supports constructive engagement with the CRL Rights Commission and other public institutions where such engagement protects religious freedom, strengthens ethical conduct, and helps religious communities address misconduct responsibly. However, ACRP does not support any process that would result in state licensing of religious leaders, compulsory registration of religious belief communities through coercive structures, or legislative measures that would unnecessarily restrict freedom of religion, association and conscience.

Principles Guiding ACRP

- Freedom of religion must be protected. South Africa's constitutional democracy recognises the right of individuals and communities to practise, organise and govern their religious life without undue interference.
- Abuse must be addressed decisively. Criminal, civil, financial, labour, immigration, educational and governance laws already provide mechanisms to act against unlawful conduct, and these mechanisms must be applied effectively.
- Self-regulation should be strengthened. Religious communities and professional bodies should be supported to uphold ethical standards, discipline misconduct and promote responsible leadership.
- State overreach must be avoided. Any framework that gives the state power to determine who may preach, lead, organise or practise religion risks undermining constitutional freedoms and the independence of faith communities.
- Dialogue must be inclusive and transparent. Processes affecting religion must include broad, meaningful consultation across faith traditions and must not single out or unfairly burden any particular religious community.

Call to the CRL Rights Commission and Parliament

ACRP calls on the CRL Rights Commission and the relevant parliamentary structures to prioritise constitutional compliance, meaningful consultation, and the effective use of existing legal and professional mechanisms before considering any new regulatory intervention in the religious sector.

ACRP stands ready to participate constructively in any process that seeks to protect vulnerable people, uphold ethical ministry, strengthen professional accountability and preserve the constitutional freedom of religious communities to govern their own affairs responsibly.

ACRP is therefore actively encouraging clergy to affiliate with the Professional Body, strengthening its position as a major role-player in this matter.

Conclusion

ACRP believes that the responsible path forward is not state control of religion, but the strengthening of ethical self-regulation, professional accountability, existing legal enforcement and respectful cooperation between faith communities and public institutions.

Issued by:

Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP)

Contact: Dr GP (Gerhard) Botha, CEO:
gerhard.botha@acrp.org.za

ACRP is a professional body recognised in South Africa by SAQA in terms of Section 13 of the NQF Act 67 of 2008 – SAQA Reg No PB0000110

E: info@acrp.org.za | W: www.acrp.org.za

T: +27 73 557 4716

ACRP affiliation fees 2027

2026/08/07

To All ACRP Affiliates

Dear Affiliate

One of the most important responsibilities of the ACRP is to ensure that we remain a strong, sustainable, and credible professional body capable of serving our affiliates with excellence for many years to come. This requires careful financial stewardship and a commitment to balancing affordability with the resources necessary to maintain and improve the quality of our services.

Accordingly, we hereby confirm the approved 2027 affiliation fees, which will become effective with the commencement of the annual renewal process in October 2026.

We remain deeply grateful for your continued support and partnership. Your affiliation is an investment not only in your own professional standing, but also in the

CPSC Application and Upgrade fees	
Application fee	R270
Student application fee	R270
Upgrade fee (Evaluation)	R250

CPSC Subscriptions	
Associated Affiliate	R440
Sub-Category 1 - Religious Practitioner	R440
Sub-Category 2 - Advanced Religious Practitioner	R440
Sub-Category 3 - Basic Religious Professional	R640
Sub-Category 4 - Intermediate Religious Professional	R640
Sub-Category 5 - Advanced Religious Professional	R950
Sub-Category 6 - Religious Specialist	R950
Sub-Category 7 - Advanced Religious Specialist	R950

advancement of ethical, competent, and accountable Christian ministry throughout South Africa.

Together, we are strengthening the future of ministry and ensuring that the profession continues to be recognised, respected, and well represented.

Sincere regards

Dr GP (Gerhard) Botha

Chief Executive Officer, ACRP

Empowering Professional Ministry

E: info@acrp.org.za

W: www.acrp.org.za

T: +27 73 557 4716

Empowering Professional Ministry



COUNCIL UNDER ACRP



Pastoral Counselling

Therapeia: A living story of pastoral counselling in Pretoria

Adapted for Therapeia by Linette Retief

When the Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors (CPSC) was established within the Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP), its vision was clear: to professionalise pastoral and spiritual counselling in South Africa.

Recognised by SAQA, the CPSC set out to safeguard integrity, elevate standards, and ensure that Christian counsellors were not only spiritually sensitive but also professionally accountable. Its mission was to guide the profession, protect the public, and align counselling with the evolving needs of society — from hospitals and schools to correctional services and community centres.

This vision found a living, breathing embodiment in Therapeia, the pastoral counselling initiative of the Oosterlig Dutch Reformed Church in Pretoria. What began as a response to a gap in services has grown into a vibrant, professional hub that mirrors and amplifies the very objectives of the CPSC.

The Seed of Therapeia

For years, the NGO **Coram Deo** had faithfully provided pastoral counselling to Oosterlig's congregation and the wider Pretoria community. But in 2021, Coram Deo relocated to Centurion, leaving behind a vacuum. The absence was keenly felt — pastoral counselling had become a lifeline for many, and suddenly, that lifeline was gone. It was in this moment of need that Oosterlig's senior minister, **Dr Roedolf Botha**, convened a discussion. Could the congregation itself rise to the challenge? Could volunteers, guided by professional standards, continue the work? The idea was bold, but it carried the spirit of collaboration and faith. On **9 November 2021**, an information session was held. The seed was planted, and from it grew **Therapeia**.

The Birth of a Movement

Therapeia was founded on guiding principles that ensured quality and inclusivity:

The True Meaning of Therapeia

The name Therapeia carries a depth of meaning that perfectly reflects its mission.

Rooted in the ancient Greek verb *therapeuō* (θεραπεύω), it means "to serve" or "to attend to."

In classical times, it described devoted care — whether tending the sick, serving a household, or fulfilling duties with respect and compassion.

In the Biblical context, therapeia takes on an even richer dimension. The New Testament often uses the word to describe Jesus' ministry of healing and restoration. It was never limited to physical cures; it encompassed emotional renewal, spiritual wholeness, and the restoration of community. In Luke 9:11, for instance, Jesus heals those in need, embodying therapeia as compassionate service.

Thus, the word captures the essence of holistic care – body, mind, and spirit united in healing. For Oosterlig's initiative, the name is not a mere label but a declaration: Therapeia exists to serve, to restore, and to bring devoted care into the lives of those who seek help. It is a living continuation of the Biblical call to healing, woven into the modern practice of pastoral counselling.

- Only **professionally qualified pastoral counsellors** would counsel clients, regardless of religion, race, or gender.
- Therapeia would not train counsellors itself, but it would provide **practical experience** for students and opportunities for experienced counsellors to act as academic supervisors.
- Services would be **free of charge**, supported by Oosterlig's budget, facilities, and administration.
- Counsellors would receive **ongoing training**, both general and specialised, at no cost.
- Membership fees for professional bodies like the **CPSC** would be paid on behalf of Therapeia members, ensuring alignment with national standards.
- To provide holistic care, Therapeia would build a **network of partners** — doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, social workers, dietitians, lawyers, and financial advisors.

From the outset, Therapeia was not just filling a gap; it was building something larger, something that resonated with the **CPSC's mission of professionalisation**.

The Snowball Effect

The manager of Therapeia captured the essence of its growth with a vivid metaphor:

"If people stand together and plan a little, they can make a big impact by delivering professional counselling services at no cost or low cost. The scope of the services is orders of magnitude greater than what an individual could achieve. The irony is that professionals are now contacting Therapeia and offering their services. It is like a snowball that starts rolling, and as it rolls, it gathers more and more snow and builds greater momentum."

This snowball effect has indeed become Therapeia's story. What began with a handful of counsellors has grown into a thriving community, attracting professionals beyond the Oosterlig congregation who want to be part of something meaningful.

The Status Quo: A Flourishing Service

By 2025, Therapeia had facilitated **over 1 000 counselling sessions**, with about 30% of

clients being new each month. Its facilities included four counselling rooms for adults and teenagers, and a specialised **theraplay room for children**, complete with an observation window. Recognising the growing need for child counselling, Therapeia doubled its capacity in this area.

Therapeia also launched a **biweekly support group** for those who had lost their joy in life — a seed for more specialised groups in the future. Training became a cornerstone: more than 20 sessions per year, often accredited with CPSC for CPD points, kept counsellors abreast of developments in narrative practices and pastoral knowledge.

With **18 active counsellors and therapist and two students soon to qualify**, Therapeia reached a capacity of over 100 sessions per month, peaking at 132 in 2026. Its more than **15 network partners** ensured that clients with serious mental illnesses could be referred seamlessly to clinical psychologists and psychiatrists.

Looking Ahead: Expanding the Vision

Therapeia's journey is far from complete. Recognising that most of its services are reactive, the initiative is now planning **proactive courses**, particularly to equip parents in guiding their children toward adulthood.

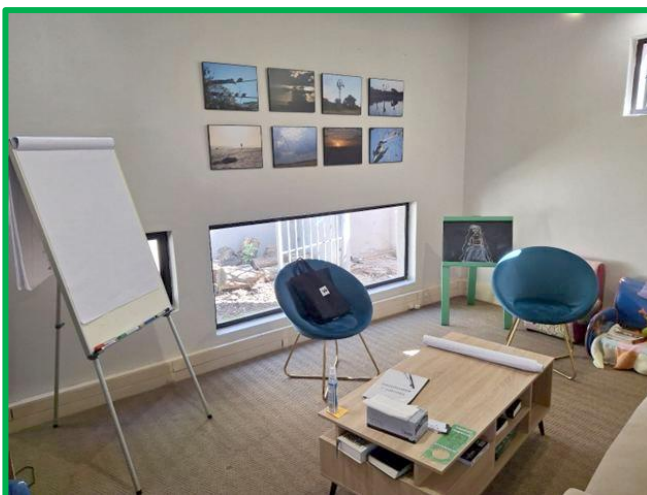
Accessibility is also a priority: although Oosterlig is an Afrikaans-speaking congregation, Therapeia's information is available in English, and its website ensures visibility through Google searches.

This forward-looking approach dovetails with the **CPSC's objectives** of expanding accessibility, aligning with socio-political needs, and integrating counselling into diverse contexts.

Alignment with CPSC: A Perfect Fit

The synergy between Therapeia and the CPSC is unmistakable.

- **Professionalisation:** By requiring counsellors to be registered with professional bodies, Therapeia embodies the CPSC's commitment to high standards.
- **Ethics and Accountability:** With codes of conduct



and CPD-accredited training, Therapeia ensures its counsellors remain accountable and current.

- **Accessibility:** Free services, inclusive counselling, and proactive outreach reflect the CPSC's goal of making pastoral care available to all.
- **Integration:** By partnering with medical and legal professionals, Therapeia mirrors the CPSC's vision of inter-professional collaboration.
- **Growth and Dignity:** The snowball effect of professionals joining Therapeia enhances the dignity of the profession, just as the CPSC intended.

In essence, Therapeia is not merely aligned with the CPSC — it is a living demonstration of the council's mission in action.

A story of faith, professionalism, and community

The story of Therapeia is one of faith meeting professionalism, of a congregation stepping into a gap and creating something that now serves far beyond its walls. It is a story of counsellors who give freely, of professionals who join willingly, and of clients who find healing without barriers.

Most importantly, it is a story that confirms the vision of the CPSC: that pastoral and spiritual counselling, when professionalised and dignified, can transform lives and communities.

Therapeia is proof that when people stand together, plan wisely, and act with faith, the snowball of impact grows — gathering momentum, gathering people, and gathering hope. ■

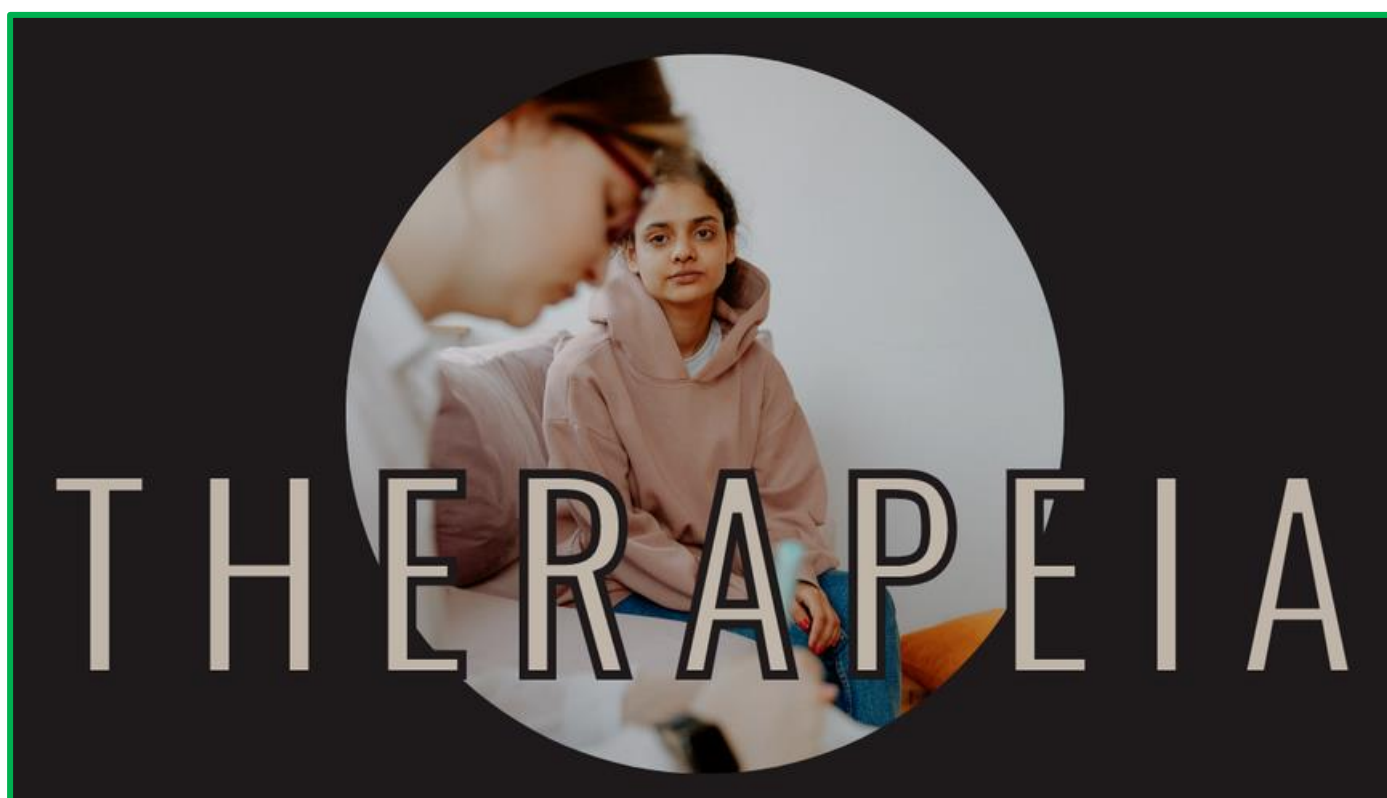
A Call to Action

The story of Therapeia is not only about what has been achieved — it is also about what could be possible if more counsellors embrace the vision. **The aim of this article is to show the impact that CPSC members can have when they organise themselves into supportive networks.**

Imagine counsellors in the same area meeting once a month: sharing insights, acting as sound boards, and helping one another navigate difficult cases. Such gatherings could spark referrals, strengthen professional bonds, and ensure that no counsellor feels isolated in their work.

The next step is even more transformative: offering counselling to those who cannot afford professional help. One of the most effective models is to partner with a congregation willing to provide facilities and administrative support, while negotiating a sustainable funding arrangement. **Starting counselling services without such institutional backing can be daunting — but with collaboration, it becomes achievable.**

Therapeia has shown the way. Its snowball effect demonstrates how collective effort multiplies impact. **Now, the invitation is open: if you want to learn more or explore joining this movement, contact Therapeia via WhatsApp at 071 156 2644 or visit the website [Therapeia at Oosterlig](http://www.therapeia.org.za).**



Resilience theory and collaboration with Pastoral counselors to implement resilience theory as another layer of support structure in South African schools

By Andrew Mosebo

Introduction

During the 2018 Presidential Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted the need for Department of Basic Education to speed up programs aimed at making available psycho-social support to vulnerable learners in schools (PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT DIRECTORATE, 2020: 11).

The statement is in line with alarming evidence of the impact of psychological and social challenges that South African school-age children face (Kiweewa, Knettel, and Luke, 2018:133). The need to provide counselling and guidance in schools has always been met with insufficient empathy, under-resourced personnel, and a lack of funds to expand these services. Kiweewa et al. (2018) saw it fitting, from an African perspective, to call for the integration of counselling and guidance within the school approach, which can be very critical in the South African context.

A key aspect of a child's development has been the utilization of critical aspects of child and adolescent developmental theory, which summarizes the entire developmental stage through the stages of counselling and guidance. For that reason, resilience theory will be a key figure in assisting learners in schools.

Ramadie (2026) further highlighted the need to fast-track the implementation of psychosocial support for teachers and learners in schools. This is emphasized by the statement that psychosocial support should be an educational priority rather than an optional service (Ramadie, 2026: np). Introducing resilience training in schools will lay the foundation for learners' psychosocial well-being.

Pastoral counsellors working from a perspective of helping learners build resilience towards striving to foster a spiritual engagement that integrates theory and practice to support learners. This will allow us to look at education from a South African perspective as an invitation for all South Africans to find joy and comfort despite the struggles of life, socioeconomic inequality, different forms of abuse, child-headed households, peer pressure, and other social challenges. This will enable us to take pride in our nation's collective efforts to ensure that all learners have a fair chance of completing their basic schooling.



Pastoral counsellors can play a significant role in promoting and implementing resilience in schools through counselling and spiritual guidance, which are at the core of resilience theory.

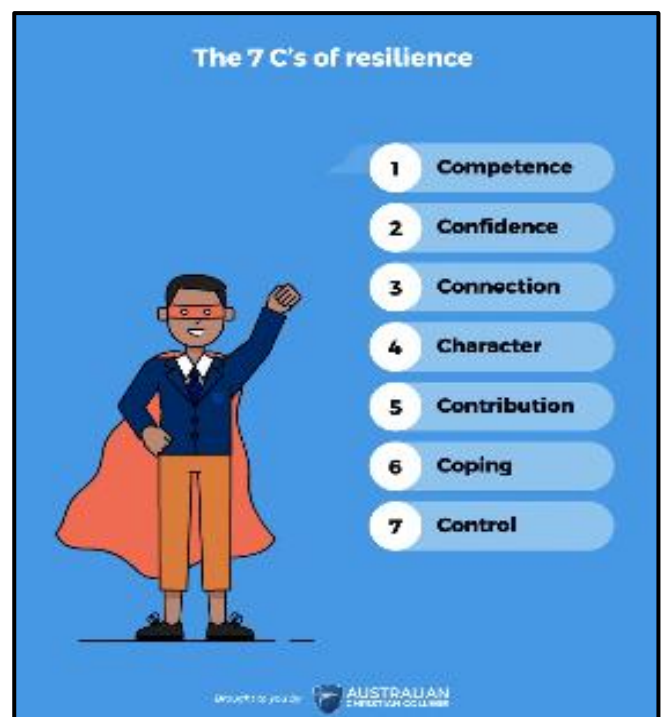
Resilience theory, as highlighted in the previous article, was developed in a school context, although there is a need for consensus when defining resilience (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick & Yehuda, 2014). Aligned with Ramadie's (2026) call for urgent psychosocial support, it is fitting to define resilience theory as a psychosocial support that enables responses to crises while also serving as a preventive measure against potential crises. From the definition,

it will be easier for learners to learn about mental health education, learn about emotional regulation, and develop a positive coping mechanism. Having counselling

sessions available anytime, with pastoral counsellors available when needed, and applying resilience theory can be another layer of support in schools.

The implementation of resilience theory in schools is most

critically needed to help schools manage the emotional struggles that boys of this age struggle with.



The reason why boys have been highlighted as needing urgent assistance is the fact that older boys appear to suffer the most with hidden struggles, which appear through aggression in most cases (Ramadie, 2026: np). This is evident by the number of SAMS reports coming

out of our schools of gangsterism, violence, and risky behaviour because of peer pressure, with boys making over 90% of those reports in our schools, which says a lot.

Through resilience, one will attribute psychosocial support as effective, as it will help mostly boys and learners in schools develop a sense of belonging and learn constructive ways to handle social challenges while building healthier identities.



As part of striving to make sure that psychosocial support through the implementation of resilience theory is effective, schools must have psychosocial programs that will help schools create safer, more inclusive environments, which will allow learners to succeed in life and not be examined on only academics, but on how they become positive participants in the future beyond school age.

Pastoral counsellors can play a significant role in promoting and implementing resilience in schools through counselling and spiritual guidance, which are at the core of resilience theory.

Two ways pastoral counsellors can support the effective implementation of resilience theory in schools include:

- offering a hopeful perspective for both learners and teachers, and
- providing critical steps for navigating social challenges.

Pastoral counsellors have the expertise to assist care seekers in adjusting to challenges through the implementation of three phases: recovery, growth, and sustainability. This is further emphasized by pastoral counsellor's ability to help care seekers engage in adaptive processes, thereby helping individuals find meaning in life.

Two ways pastoral counsellors can support the effective implementation of resilience theory in schools include offering a hopeful perspective for both learners and teachers, and providing critical steps for navigating social challenges.

Conclusion

While resilience is a contested concept, it can be defined to accommodate different disciplines. But a very important

Building resilience—the ability to adapt and cope with challenges—helps children manage stress, anxiety, and uncertainty.

concept in the development of learners, particularly in schools. This is very much in line with helping schools support learners who are dealing with trauma, anxiety, and behavioural challenges. The article discusses the role resilience theory can play in schools. A definition must explain what resilience is, what it does in schools, and the key role pastoral counsellors can play in bridging the gap in psychosocial support. A more in-depth discussion of resilience theory will form part of the upcoming series in schools.

References

- Kiweewa, J.M., Knettel, B.A. and Luke, M.M., 2018. Incorporating comprehensive counselling and guidance models into school curricula in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 40, pp.133-147.
- Schuhmann, C.M. and van der Geuten, W., 2017. Believable visions of the good: An exploration of the role of pastoral counsellors in promoting resilience. *Pastoral Psychology*, 66(4), pp.523-536.

Biography

I was born in Johannesburg and currently reside in Brandfort, Free State Province. I am a teacher by profession with the following qualifications from UFS: B.Ed. (Senior and FET); PGDip in Education (Curriculum Studies); Advanced Diploma in Theology and an M.Th. Master's in Practical Theology. After nine years of teaching, I have served as a Junior Lecturer at the University of the Free State. Through daily interaction with learners, I came to realize that many in public schools are overwhelmed, leading to academic underperformance and eventually dropping out of school before completing their basic education. If a school employs a full-

alize that many in public schools are overwhelmed, leading to academic underperformance and eventually dropping out of school before completing their basic education. If a school employs a full-

time Pastoral Counsellor, learners can receive regular guidance and counselling. I have a huge passion for seeing learners from predominantly disadvantaged backgrounds defy the odds and achieve success in life, driven by the motto "Future through Education". I trained and registered as a Pastoral Counsellor to better assist the

South African learners. My master's dissertation, entitled "Christianity and social responsibility of youth ministry and Pastoral Care as a support structure for school learners," provides more detailed information on pastoral counselling in public schools. ■

Pastoral encounters: A sacred meeting place

By Marius Ellis

Offering care and counselling to others is a privilege that should never be taken for granted. As pastoral caregivers we are given the opportunity to listen to what lies hidden deep in care seekers' hearts and to become part of life stories that others may never hear or know. The question is: *With what mindset do we enter this sacred meeting place that God has made possible for us?*



Nel van Doorn, pastoral therapist, researcher and author, reminds us that every encounter between people takes place in the presence of God (Van Doorn, 2020:258). Therefore, there is a responsibility on us to meet the other with dignity, respect and compassion. Hanneke Meulink-Korf and Aat van Rhijn built on this by emphasising that the pastoral encounter should be characterised by a mindset of acceptance rather than judgement (Meulink-Korf & van Rhijn, 2002:158).

The pastoral encounter should be characterised by a mindset of acceptance rather than judgement.

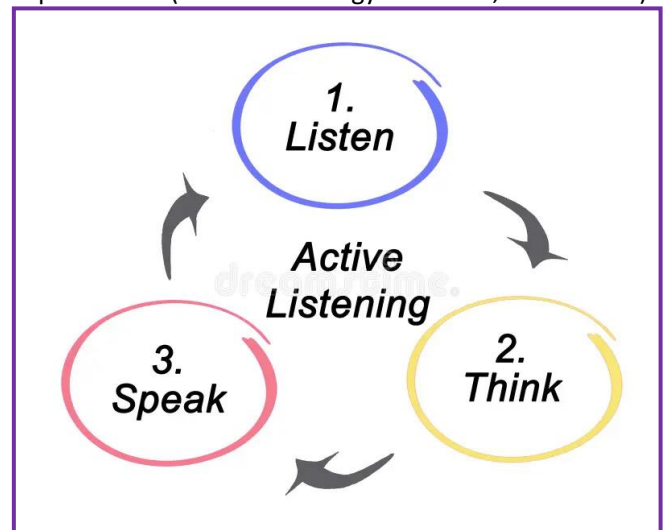
When care seekers experience understanding and empathy through our words, and recognise through our questions, observations, and insights that we are genuinely present with them in their struggle, a space is created in which they feel safe to reveal what is taking place within them.

As pastoral caregivers, we would do well to remember that it is God who makes this encounter possible – not us. We are invited to participate in the encounter, trusting that God uses our presence to remind the other person that they are seen, known, and valued in the midst

of their circumstances.

It is precisely because God makes this encounter possible that we have the responsibility to ensure that the other person is truly heard and seen.

Put differently, we have the responsibility to listen actively to what God may be revealing to us through the other person and the ways in which He is connecting us through the encounter. **Active, or connected, listening is far more than hearing spoken words.** It is an attentive presence that listens for the unspoken messages communicated through tone of voice, body language, eye contact, emotions, and lived experience (Ducommun-Nagy et al., 2023:239).



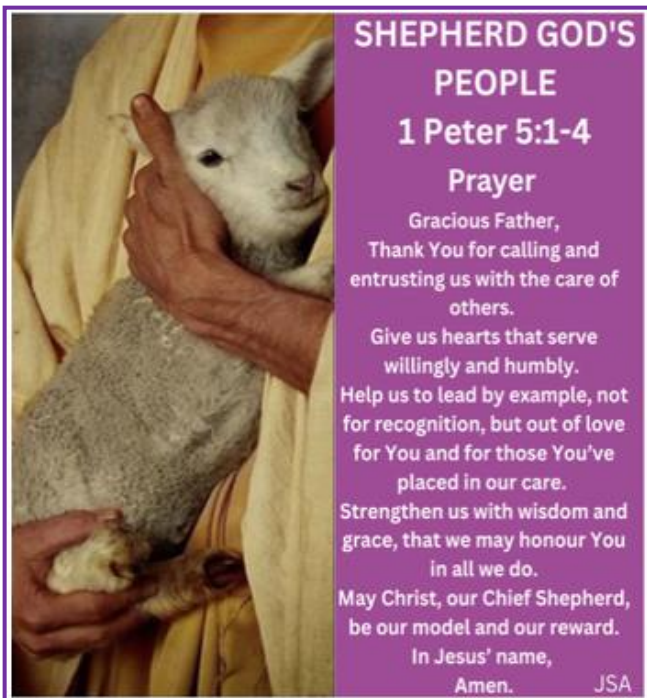
Active listening means attending to the person's longing to feel safe in our presence, their desire to be accepted without judgement, and their need to trust that they will not be harmed within the encounter.

Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher and theologian, describes a true encounter with the other as much more than just a conversation. According to him, a genuine I–You encounter is a reflection of man's encounter with God (Buber, 2023:xiii). When someone shares his or her deepest fears, losses, and hopes with us, we enter a sacred space in which we not only get to know others better, but also discover something new about God, about ourselves, and about being human.

Consequently, a pastoral encounter may be understood as a transformative experience. Neither the pastoral caregiver nor the care seeker leaves the encounter the same as they entered it. As we become more attentive to God's presence and His work within the encounter, we

begin to see ourselves, the other person, and the unfolding process of healing in a new light. A pastoral encounter, therefore, does not call first and foremost for technique, but for presence (Riessen, 1991:237-239).

If we do not enter the encounter with this mindset, we run the risk of simply hearing the other's story without 'actually' meeting them within it. The depth of their struggle, the search for peace, or the influence trauma has on identity can then go unnoticed. We leave the encounter unchanged, while the sacred opportunity to travel with the others is lost.



For me, Pastoral care and counselling does not primarily mean having answers to every question or offering solutions to every problem. It means being intentionally present and observing with wonder what God reveals to me through the other person (Large, 2015:77). I often discover more about what people need to experience healing than I can teach them about how healing 'should' take place. The encounter does not become a place where I bring about change, but where I witness God's work in the lives of others (Doehring, 2006:113).

Pastoral care and counselling is therefore a sacred space that God opens up to us. Our primary focus should not be on answers or techniques, but on the mindset and attitude with which we meet the other. When we truly see the other as God sees them – as a human being already living in the presence of the healing God – our own role is filled with humility. It is God that makes this encounter possible, not me!

As Emmanuel Levinas teaches us, the encounter with the Other calls us to ethical responsibility (Large, 2015:77-99). I become a fellow traveller who opens myself to the face of the Other, trusting that truth and healing unfold as I listen with responsibility, reverence, and hospitality. The pastoral encounter therefore becomes not a place

where I act on God's behalf, but where, together with the Other, I discover that God is already present, bringing truth, reconciliation, and healing to light.

REFERENCES

- Buber, M. 2023. I and Thou. 100th anniversary reissue. Translated by W. Kaufmann. New York: Free Press.
- Doehring, C., 2006. The Practice of Pastoral Care: A postmodern approach. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Ducommun-Nagy, C., Meulink-Korf, H. & De Vries, G. 2023. Revitalizing relationships: The Resources of Contextual Therapy with inspiration from the pastoral process and interfaith studies. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media.
- Large, W. 2015. Levinas' Totality and Infinity. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Meulink-Korf, H. & Van Rhijn, A. 2002. The Unexpected Third: Contextual Pastoral Care, Counselling and Ministry: an Introduction and Reflection. Wellington: Christian Literature Fund Publishers.
- Riessen, R. 1991. Erotiek en dood – met het oog op transcendentie in de filosofie van Levinas. Kampen: Kok Agora.
- Van Doorn, N. 2020. Encouraging encounters. Reframing time by dialogue in the intergenerational pastoral process. Wellington: Bilecor.

Marius Ellis is the youngest of three siblings. He was born in Pretoria and completed his theological studies at the University of Pretoria, where he graduated both B.Th. and MDiv degrees Summa Cum Laude. He achieved his M.Th. Summa Cum Laude through the University of Stellenbosch.

Marius has a deep passion for people and for sharing in their life stories. He has been involved in pastoral care and counselling for more than a decade, and he considers it a privilege to walk alongside people through both their heartache and their breakthroughs. He states that he learns more from the "other" than he can ever hope to teach them and believes that it is often within the encounter between two people that God illuminates the answers we need to find healing. Through conversation, listening, prayer and silence, he trusts that the Holy Spirit works within both himself and the care seeker.

Marius enjoys writing, sculpting, running, playing golf, cooking and gardening. He has completed the Ironman competition and previously served as Chairperson of the Student Representative Council. He was also the recipient of an Abe Bailey Bursary.

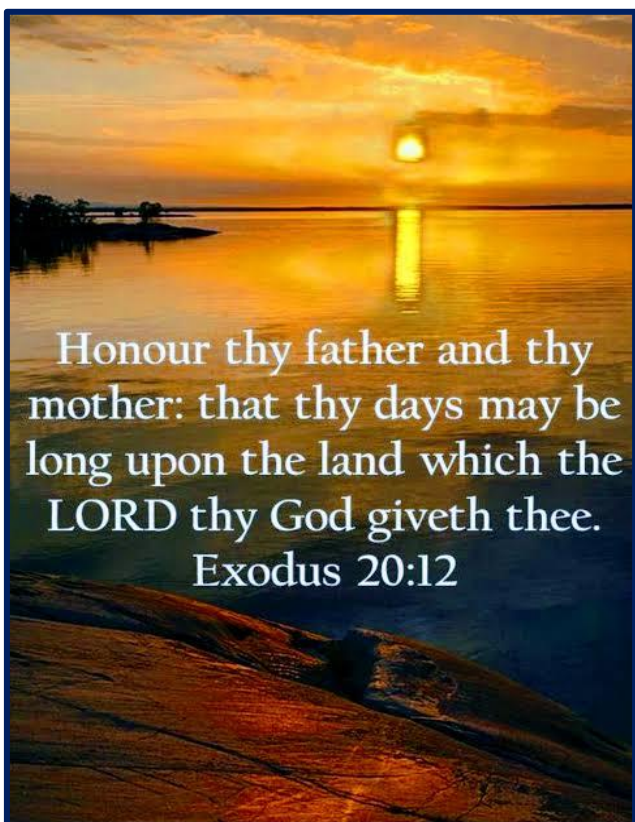
At the heart of his work is a simple conviction: every person's story matters, and no one should have to walk through life's difficult seasons alone.

Honour your father and your mother

By Heinrich Von Herholdt Lottering

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
- Ex 20:12

We sadly live in a time when very often in the field of psychotherapy once problem areas have been identified in clients' emotions and coping abilities, the next step is to find the culprit to blame for the pathologies. This often leads to strained relationships in the client's family and friend circle, which in turn do not promote healing, but worsen the prognosis.



In the initial phase of therapy when you start honestly unpacking your feelings and exploring your previously tucked away hurt, it is crucial to understand it may get worse before it gets better. The purpose of therapy is to objectively comprehend the complex aspects of your problem and how to address and effectively dismantle it, not who's to blame for it. You might not have control regarding the cards dealt to you, yet it stays your responsibility how you are going to play them.

From an attachment's perspective, the emotional bond with one's caregivers and parents forms in the first five years of life. Protection of these attachment bonds is very important even if the relationship was not without flaws. The purpose of therapy is to help the client understand that parents-child relationships are complex and multifaceted. The best approach is not to determine who was

right or wrong, but rather to find understanding in why individuals behaved as they did. No relationship is without flaws and negative memories.

Channelling anger and resentment at parents who have a very important role in emotional support and care even in adulthood, rarely makes for a healthier emotional state. Studies have shown that adults who carry perpetual resentment at a parent often battle with feelings of insecurity even as far as feeling unworthy to be loved by partners and their own children. Children living with strained parent-grandparent relationships have higher percentages of anxiety, anger and behavioural disorders.

It is crucial for adult children to realize that keeping all the balls in the air - including marital demands, child care, work, finances and their own emotional battles - is a daunting task for parents and almost impossible to execute perfectly.

The blame game provides a plausible excuse for misbehaviour and anger. It provides a platform for clients to deny responsibility for their behaviour, with their victimhood justifying that they are powerless in mending their actions and incapable of change.



STEPS TO TAKE GROWING OUT OF BLAMING OTHERS

- Recognize your blaming behaviour when you do it.
- Reflect on the purpose of wanting to blame others – which feelings are you trying to avoid?
- Cultivate self-compassion. It is human to make mistakes.
- Recognize that post modernism promotes this kind of behaviour
- Recognize your own contribution to your suffering.
- Identify how you can more successfully address your suffering.
- Experiment with handling being vulnerable.
- Be aware of negative self-talk.
- Cultivate assertive communication that emphasizes how you were impacted rather than how you feel.

Another purpose it serves is to provide a way out of having to deal with feelings of shame and guilt and disappointment in self. This attitude becomes a daily defence mechanism and a deceptive way to preserve their self-esteem.

Taking responsibility for your world-view flaws, emotional battles and character iniquities is a daunting task. It can often cause anxiety, depressed emotions and feelings of worthlessness. Yet continuing in the perpetual blame game robs one of the opportunity for growth, developing emotional resilience and betterment.

True empowerment comes when you can face your hurt and anger, acquire methods to digest the once seemingly overwhelming mountain of emotions and if possible, to grow and become stronger and more equipped to deal with life's relationship challenges and disappointments.

Eph 6:1-3 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. 7 Consequences of Blaming Others For How We Manage Anger. <https://www.psychologytoday.com> 10th November 2018
2. Let's Take the Blame Game Out of Therapy. <https://www.oneheartcounselingcenter.com> 4th February 2022
3. Escaping the Blame Game. <https://www.psychologytoday.com> 18th September 2021
4. Is Therapy Always About Blaming Your Parents? <https://www.talkingtherapynorth.co.uk> 21st Oct 2025
5. The Cost of Blaming Parents. <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu> 23rd December 2014 ■

The counsellor-client relationship: The foundation of effective counselling

By Marianne Viljoen

Research over the past several decades has consistently demonstrated that the quality of the counsellor–client relationship is one of the strongest predictors of successful counselling outcomes regardless of the theoretical orientation or techniques used (Bordin, 1979; Wampold & Imel, 2015; Saxler et al., 2024).

The pastoral counsellor has the advantage with regards to the counselling relationship in that we work from the viewpoint that the client is a child of God in need of our mercy, compassion and care. This means that we bring respect and warmth to the new relationship, desiring to truly understand the client's problems and concerns from his/her perspective.

The following aspects outline the building blocks of the client-counsellor relationship:

1. Empathy and Kindness

Empathy refers to the counsellor's ability to understand the client's thoughts, emotions and experiences from the client's perspective while communicating that understanding effectively.

Carl Rogers (1957) identified empathy as one of the three core conditions necessary for therapeutic change.

Recent research continues to confirm that empathy strengthens the therapeutic alliance and contributes to positive treatment outcomes (Saxler et al., 2024).

Empathy, trust and respect are the cornerstones of the counsellor – client relationship.



2. Trust

Trust develops when clients experience the counsellor as honest, reliable, competent and respectful of confidentiality. Without trust, clients are unlikely to disclose deeply personal concerns.

Research consistently shows that trust is a cornerstone of a strong therapeutic alliance (Seebacher et al., 2024).

3. Respect

Respect means that you accept the client as a person of worth without judgment, while still addressing harmful behaviours appropriately.

Rogers (1957) argued that respect creates psychological safety, enabling clients to explore painful emotions and develop healthier ways of coping. Respect also means acceptance of the client's cultural background and belief systems.

4 Authenticity

A pastor-client relationship cannot be faked. Your opinion of the client and feelings towards the client should be real, honest and open. Congruent counsellors communicate honestly and appropriately, fostering openness and mutual respect (Rogers, 1957).

5. Boundaries

Clear ethical boundaries provide structure, protecting both counsellor and client and contributing to a sense of safety. Appropriate boundaries enhance trust and preserve the integrity of the counselling relationship (MacDonald & Dobud, 2024).

Conclusion

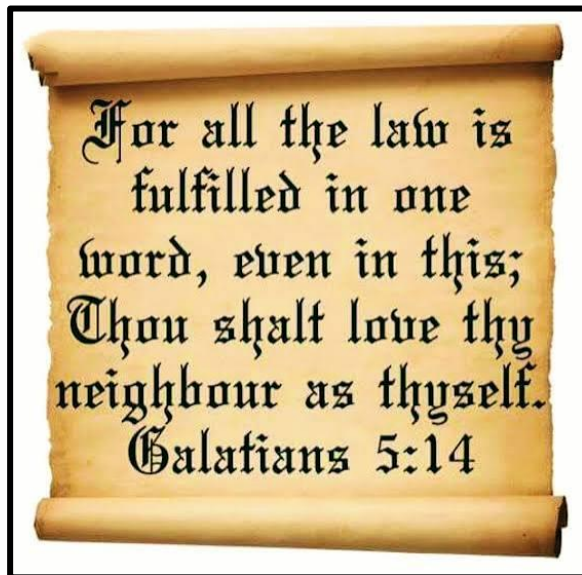
The counsellor–client relationship remains the heart of effective counselling practice.

Empathy, trust and respect are the cornerstones of the relationship. As the relationship unfolds we will verbally and non-verbally build ethical boundaries, and show cultural sensitivity.

There are more skills needed in the process of successful counselling, but the aspects as discussed must form the foundation from which we work and create an environment in which meaningful personal growth can occur.

Regardless of counselling orientation, the therapeutic alliance consistently emerges as one of the most robust predictors of successful outcomes (Bordin, 1979; Wampold & Imel, 2015; Saxler et al., 2024).

In essence we are striving to fulfil the commandment which asks of us to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.



REFERENCES:

- * Bordin, E. S. (1979). *The generalizability of the psychoanalytic concept of the working alliance*. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 16(3), 252–260.
- * MacDonald, J. B., & Dobud, W. (2024). *Counselling effectiveness and the therapeutic alliance*. Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- * Rogers, C. R. (1957). *The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change*. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 21(2), 95–103.
- * Saxler, E. S., Schindler, T., Philipsen, A. P., & Lux, S. L. (2024). *Therapeutic alliance in individual adult psychotherapy: A systematic review of conceptualizations and measures for face-to-face and online psychotherapy*. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15.
- * Seebacher, B., Geimer, C., Neu, J., Schwarz, M., & Diermayr, G. (2024). *Identifying central elements of the therapeutic alliance in the setting of telerehabilitation*. *PLOS ONE*, 19(3).
- * Wampold, B. E., & Imel, Z. E. (2015). *The Great Psychotherapy Debate: The Evidence for What Makes Psychotherapy Work* (2nd ed.). Routledge. ■

Debate: The Evidence for What Makes Psychotherapy Work (2nd ed.). Routledge. ■

S.A. Trauma Informed Care for Abused Children

By Hannes van Rensburg from HVR Trauma & Pastoral Counselling

Part 1: A trauma-informed care approach responding to adverse childhood experience

Trauma is like a storm. Some storms are devastating and leave a lot of destruction in their wake. Others passed with only dark clouds. However, in most storms, there is much that is beyond our control. You cannot choose when storms occur, nor can you decide where they occur. You do not know where they will strike the hardest, how long they will last, nor can you always predict how fierce they might become.

Trauma, like storms, is unpredictable, and no one is ever adequately prepared for all its possibilities. When children experience trauma, they and their families do not know how to navigate their way through the storm and often feel as if their world has been turned upside down. Children and families do not know where they can be safe and protected from such incidents.

As professionals who work in the space of protecting children and pursuing justice in cases of abuse, we can shine a light in the dark, provide a raincoat in the storm when it is needed most, and know which way to walk towards

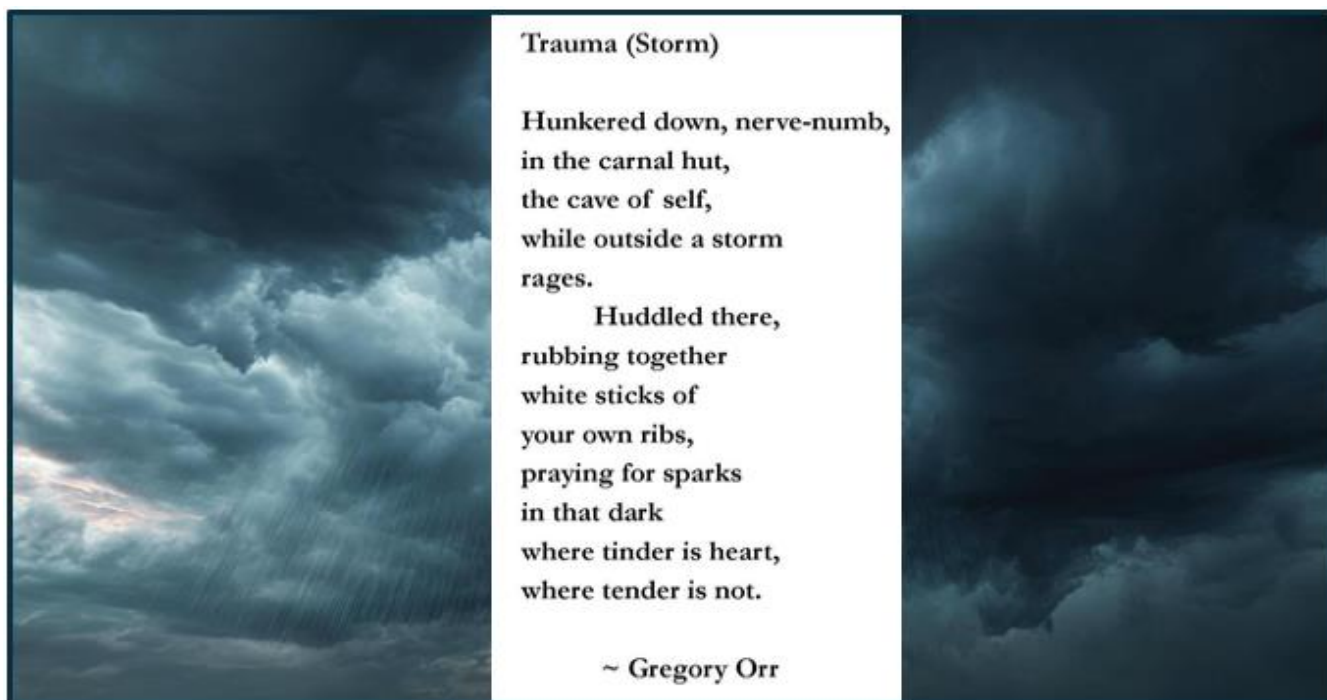


safety. By walking alongside children and their families, we can help them navigate a dark time in their lives with gentleness and kindness. It does not make the storm go away, but it can soften the destruction it leaves behind when traumatized, children and their families desperately need a calm, safe, and trusted presence to guide them.

1.1 Who are helping professionals?

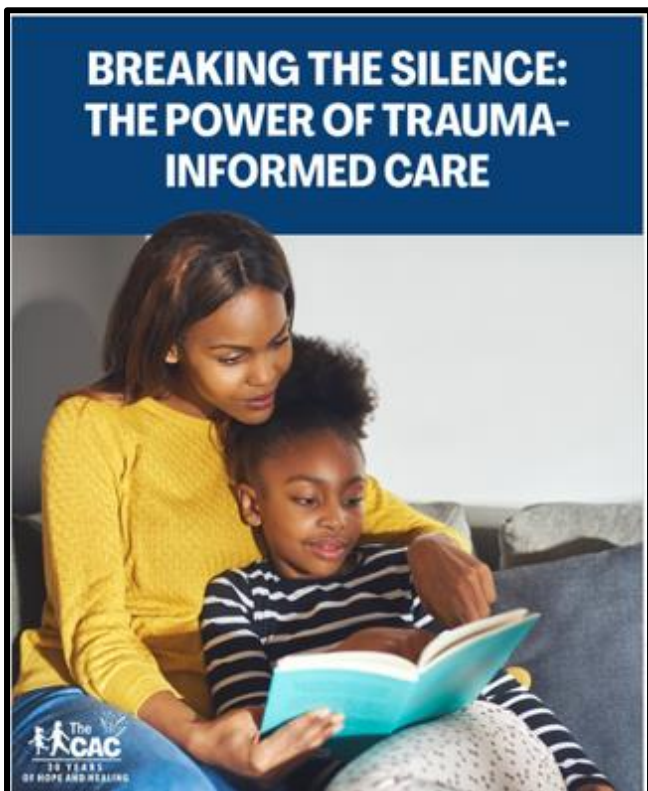
This includes all professionals and non-professionals who work directly with children who have experienced trauma and may then be engaged with the child protection or justice sectors. Although the list is not comprehensive, it includes the following:





Social workers (statutory, forensic, school, therapeutic, and auxiliary), medical professionals (doctors, nurses, and allied medical professionals), police officials, prosecutors, presiding officers (magistrates and judges), therapists (psychologists, registered counsellors, and play therapists), child and youth care workers and educators.

1.2 Your role as a helping professional



Many children in South Africa grow up in environments where they are regularly exposed to trauma. This may include physical or sexual abuse, domestic violence, neglect, community violence, poverty, or loss of caregivers due to illness or crime.

These traumatic experiences, especially when they happen repeatedly, or at a young age, can interfere with a child's brain development, emotional regulation, learning and ability to form trusting relationships.

Children may show signs of trauma through anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, or difficulty at school and may struggle to feel safe even when the danger has passed.

We know that traumatic events in childhood can affect a child's growth in many ways over a long period. The first response a child receives, especially in places like police or social worker offices, significantly affects how safe they feel about what comes next. If done well, this first help can make a child feels safe, cared for, heard, and protected. When the helping professional gets it right, it helps all the other professionals who work with the child afterwards.

When you provide early child support, you are the anchor in the storm, providing hope that others who come after will also keep them safe.

1.3 Types of trauma

Various types of traumas that should be considered are explained below.

1.3.1 Single-incident (acute) trauma

Single-incident (acute) trauma occurs because of a sudden and shocking event. It has a clear beginning and conclusion, such as a car accident, robbery, physical attack, or the sudden death of a loved one.

1.3.2 Chronic trauma

Chronic trauma is caused by long-lasting or repeated harmful experiences. It's not just one event of a specific type of trauma but a continuous pattern of harm, such as living in poverty, facing ongoing domestic or community

ACUTE

Experience of a single distressing event that occurs over a short period of time.

- Natural disaster
- Serious accident
- Loss of a loved one
- Assault
- Dog bite
- Medical emergency
- Hate-based violence
- School shooting

CHRONIC

Experience of repeated or ongoing exposure to distressing events.

- Experiencing bullying
- Being in a war or combat zone
- Repeated exposure to racism
- Enduring community violence
- Experiencing homelessness

COMPLEX

Experience of repeated or multiple distressing events over an extended period, often interpersonal in nature beginning early in life.

- Child neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Impaired caregiving
- Trafficking
- Witnessing intimate partner violence

violence, or dealing with constant instability. The key point is that the threat of the specific trauma never stops, so the body and mind remain in a constant state of survival, with little or no chance to rest or recover.

1.3.3 Complex (*polyvictimisation*) trauma

Complex trauma refers to the experience of multiple types of traumas that are repeated over time. This involves different forms of abuse, neglect, or violence. It usually begins at home.

It is often inflicted by caregivers or trusted individuals. Children who face one form of trauma are frequently victims of other types of traumas, increasing their risk of long-term psychological harm and developmental disruption.

1.3.4 Trauma of commission and omission

Childhood trauma can result from both acts of commission (e.g. physical, sexual, and emotional abuse) and acts of omission (e.g., neglect, failure to protect, and deprivation). Acts of commission are direct, harmful actions, whereas acts of omission involve.

Failure to provide necessary care or protection can lead to harm. Both types of traumas can have significant and lasting effects on children's development and well-being.

1.3.5 Developmental trauma

Developmental trauma occurs when a child faces repeated negative experiences early in life, especially with people who should care for and protect them, such as parents. It affects their growth in all aspects: emotional, physical, and social. This trauma usually comes from neglect, abuse, or other harmful events during critical early years and can hurt their ability to form healthy bonds and grow.

Because a child's brain and body are still developing, these experiences can change how they view themselves, others, and the world. It also makes it harder for them to trust, manage emotions, feel safe, and build a stable sense of who they are.

Children suffering from developmental trauma may experience the following:

- Have difficulty calming down or regulating emotions
- Be aggressive, withdrawn, or exhibit clingy behaviour
- Have delayed development of language, social and motor skills
- Struggle with attention and concentration
- Distrust adults or have an intense need for control
- Exhibiting over-responsible behaviour (acting like an adult too soon).

1.3.6 Intergenerational trauma

Intergenerational trauma happens when the effects of trauma are passed down from survivors to their children or grandchildren, even though these later generations do not directly experience the original event.

Intergenerational trauma can affect entire families and communities by creating patterns of fear and distress.

One way this shows up is in "cycles of abuse," where parents with unresolved trauma may unknowingly pass their feelings and behaviours on to their children. Children learn and repeat these reactions by observing their parents.

An example of this could be harsh physical punishment. A person who grew up being beaten severely by their parents is more likely to punish their own children harshly.

1.3.7 Historical trauma

Historical trauma refers to the deep emotional and psychological wounds that have been passed down across multiple generations. This trauma affects the entire community. It often comes from things like war, colonisation, or cultural loss that was never fully healed or recognized. Because of the transgenerational nature of this type of trauma, survivors and their families may feel ongoing grief, anger, distrust, or sadness as a community.

The key points of historical trauma include:

- Linked to major events: Targeted at a specific group over a long period.
- Loss of cultural continuity: When people lose connection to their culture, language, or traditions passed down through generations.
- Identity disruption: When trauma or separation shakes a person's sense of who they are or where they belong.

Apartheid in South Africa is a clear example of this. The long history of racial violence, the forced removals and police brutality still affect many South Africans today. Events like the Sharpeville massacre, Soweto uprising, and destruction of District Six are remembered by families and communities, shaping how younger generations understand safety, justice, and identity. The end of Apartheid and the consequent transition mark a rupture in power, identity displacement for South Africans, and uncertainty about their place in society.

1.3.8 Collective trauma

Collective trauma is the shared emotional impact of a single, overwhelming traumatic event (such as natural disasters or pandemics) on an entire community or society. It is felt immediately by many and affects how society functions and relates. Communities often create rituals or talk to help them understand and cope with trauma. It can cause lasting fear, grief, anger, and anxiety in communities.

Unlike individual trauma, collective trauma persists beyond those who directly experience it. Later generations who didn't witness the event might remember it differently, and the story

can change over time.

The key points of collective trauma include:

- It happens in the present or recent past
- Is caused by sudden, widespread events (e.g. violence, disaster)
- It changes group behaviour, trust, safety, and social bonds

In South Africa, as in the rest of the world, COVID-19 is a collective trauma because it affected entire communities at once, disrupting daily life, creating widespread fear, and causing deep emotional and social stress. People experienced grief and loss of loved ones, jobs, and normal life; isolation because of lockdown; fear and uncertainty about health, income, and the future; and breakdown of trust in systems, leaders, and even each other.

What is the difference between historical and collective traumas?

They often overlap; for example, historical trauma can cause ongoing collective trauma.

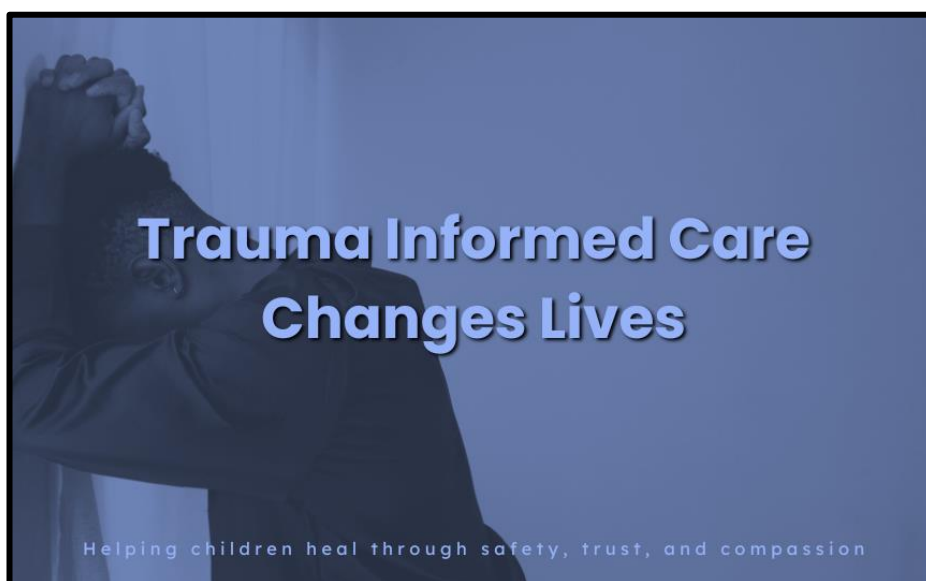
1.3.9 Secondary trauma

Secondary trauma, or secondary traumatic stress, is the emotional pain that children feel when they are indirectly exposed to trauma. This can happen by:

- Being around caregivers who are themselves traumatised
- Seeing traumatic events happen to others
- Going through child protection and justice systems, where children have to tell their trauma stories many times to different people in these systems, children might face trauma not only from what happened to them (like abuse or neglect) but also from the process of being helped, such as investigations, medical examinations, court cases, and foster care. Recounting their stories repeatedly can exacerbate their trauma.

1.3.10 Vicarious trauma

Vicarious trauma happens when someone is affected by hearing or seeing the traumatic experiences of others. Constant exposure to such stories can profoundly impact individuals. It often affects you as a helping professional who works closely with trauma survivors. In South Africa, where trauma and violence are common,



we often underestimate the extent to which this work can affect us.

Taking care of yourself so you can take care of others:

An integral part of trauma-informed care is taking vicarious trauma seriously. You cannot care for others if you are in a state of trauma.

This requires helping professionals to continuously monitor their levels of stress and vicarious trauma and to implement mechanisms to manage them.

When considering helpful strategies for maintaining emotional health, it may be beneficial to think of both “rest” and “recharge” as equally important.

For example, taking leave can provide rest, but it should be combined with activities that recharge you, such as knitting a blanket, gardening, or building a fence for the garden.

What recharges us may be unique to each person; therefore, it is essential to try different strategies and pay close attention to what works for you.

When children are exposed to trauma (such as abuse, violence, neglect, or loss), it can profoundly affect how they think, feel, and behave. Their brain and body respond by staying in survival mode, which can lead to long-term challenges in learning, trust, emotions, and relationships. Trauma-informed care recognizes this and responds with compassion rather than judgment.

By creating safe, consistent, and empowering environments, trauma-informed care helps children begin to heal. It shifts the question from “What’s wrong with this child?” to “What happened to this child?” This approach helps prevent re-traumatization and promotes resilience.

1.5 Trauma-informed principles

The TIC approach incorporates trauma-informed principles that are practical tools that help you avoid making things worse, and instead help children feel seen, heard, and protected.

When a child has experienced ACEs, they may see the world as unsafe, people as untrustworthy, and them-



WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE?

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Trauma-informed (TI) care is care in which participants recognize, understand, and respond to the impact of traumatic stress. This maximizes physical and psychological safety and recovery through building meaningful relationships among individuals, families, and professionals. It involves fostering safety, healing, and meaningful connections while exploring the many ways trauma shows up in children’s lives and the supports that can make a difference.

1.4 What is trauma-informed care?

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is a way of understanding how trauma affects the brain, body, feelings, health, behaviour, and relationships.

It focuses on creating safe, trustworthy, and supportive spaces. We already know that children who have been hurt need care and protection from the state. But now, science helps us understand how trauma changes a child’s developing brain and nervous system. This knowledge guides us to respond in ways that allow the child to feel as safe and secure as possible. Caring now has a scientific foundation.

1.4.1 Why does trauma-informed care matter?

Trauma-informed care for children is important because it helps them feel safe, understood, and supported.

selves as helpless or broken. Trauma-informed principles help counteract this.

1.5.1 Safety

By following this principle, you ensure the physical and emotional safety of yourself, the caregivers, and the child. You act like calm waters in a storm, helping to calm the chaos for a child.

A doctor who encourages a child during an examination explains the medical procedures and processes to promote a sense of security and predictability.

1.5.2 Trustworthiness and transparency

Building trust involves consistency in actions, transparent and honest age-appropriate communication, and following through on commitments.

A social worker explains their role and what will happen next when removing a child from an unsafe environment using simple language and a caring tone of voice.

1.5.3 Peer support

By following this principle, you help children connect with others who have similar experiences, thereby creating trust and hope. Supportive friends and positive role models can aid the healing process. *Note: If children may be witnesses in a trial, the facts of their trauma should not be discussed in group settings*

A social worker organizes a group therapy session for children to share their feelings about being placed in foster care as a result of domestic violence.

1.5.4 Collaboration and mutuality

By following this principle, you strike a balance between your own power, the caregiver's power, and a child's power. You include the child and family in decisions whenever possible, helping the child feel empowered and respected.

A medical professional allows a child to hold a favourite toy during an examination to build cooperation with the child. A social worker offers a child a choice of where to sit, at the table and chairs or on the carpet.

1.5.5 Empowerment, voice and choice

By applying this principle, you can identify a child's strengths and help them feel empowered by allowing them to make choices. You support children in expressing themselves in a safe space. A medical professional offers the child a choice to hold their hand while taking a genital swab.

1.5.6 Cultural, historical and gender sensitivity

By applying this principle, cultural stereotypes can be avoided, and insight can be gained into how past trauma impacts a child. You respond in ways that respect a child's culture and background, recognizing how these factors shape their experience of trauma.

A teacher who includes pictures in activities that reflect a child's cultural background, affirming their identity, and promoting a sense of belonging.

In the next article, I will be dealing with your role as a helping professional.

Kind Regards,

Hannes van Rensburg

HVR Trauma & Pastoral Counselling

hannes@hvrtraumacounseling.co.za or www.hvrtraumacounseling.co.za

Pastoral care in a fractured world: A womanist practical theological perspective in an African context

By Dr Zamantshali Dlamini

Introduction

This article explores the role of pastoral theologians in responding to the complexities of a fractured world, with particular attention to the work of pastoral counselling from the perspective of an African woman practical theologian.



From a womanist practical theological perspective in an African context, pastoral counselling engages with the broader systems that shape suffering and resilience.

Lartey (2013:4) posits that pastoral care needs to be grounded in the exigencies of people's experiences of life – their pain, sorrows, losses and disasters.

This article highlights the counselling skills required for such engagement, while drawing on personal and contextual experience to demonstrate how pastoral theology functions as both a reflective and transformative practice.

While womanist theology emerged within African-American contexts, its emphasis on Black women's lived experiences, survival, and flourishing provides a critical lens that is both resonant with and adaptable to African women's theological reflection.

Pastoral Counselling in a Fractured Context

The signs of the times call for pastoral theologians who are able to respond meaningfully to complex and fragmented realities. From a womanist practical theological perspective in an African context, pastoral counselling engages with the broader systems that shape suffering and resilience.

It speaks to ministry of presence, discernment, and accompaniment. It involves walking alongside individuals and communities through grief, trauma, transition, and meaning-making.

In my own pastoral engagements, I have encountered how deeply trauma is embedded in everyday life. In cases of gender-based violence, survivors are in need of

counselling. Such requires braver spaces grounded in active listening, empathetic presence, and a space that is non-judgemental. There is always a need to be mindful of systemic realities that create pervasive traumatic experience. This insight equips a pastoral counsellor to avoid re-traumatisation.

Gender, Embodiment, and Voice

From the perspective of an African woman practical theologian, pastoral counselling must engage critically with issues of power, embodiment, and voice. This reality calls for a counselling praxis that is both liberative and restorative.

In practice, this means intentionally affirming women's stories as valid sources of theological reflection. It also means creating a holistic strategy that not only critiques oppressive practices but also promotes cultural transformation to ensure a safer and more equitable future for all genders (Mudimeli and Khosa-Nkatini 2024,7).

A pastoral care role is to listen not only to words, but also to silence, emotion, and physical expression.

Creating space for narrative engagement and reflective questioning allows women to reclaim their voices. A pastoral care role is to listen not only to words, but also to silence, emotion, and physical expression.

Ethics and Cultural Context

Ethical practice is foundational to pastoral counselling. Counsellors must adhere to confidentiality, respect and ubuntu.

However, within African contexts, these principles redefine communal relationality. This creates both opportunities and tensions. For example, while community support can be a source of healing, it can also reinforce harmful silences, particularly around issues like gender-based violence. In such situations, the pastoral counsellor must exercise discernment, balancing respect for cultural contexts with the responsibility to protect individual dignity and well-being.

Integrating Spirituality and Psychosocial Care

Another critical dimension of pastoral counselling is the integration of spirituality and psychosocial competence.

In my experience, individuals often seek pastoral care because they are searching for meaning in the midst of suffering. Here, skills such as theological reflection, spiritual discernment, and appropriate referral become essential. Offering a prayer, a scripture, and other spiritual practices are starting points. However, recognising the capacity of other mental health professionals is not a limitation of pastoral care but a mark of ethical responsibility.

Pastoral Counselling as Social Justice Practice

Pastoral counselling in a fractured world cannot remain confined to individual care; it must also engage structural realities.

Social justice is therefore not an optional dimension but a core aspect of pastoral theology. The pastoral counsellor is called to a prophetic role. The prophetic call is about challenging systems of oppression. For African women theologians, this means confronting patriarchal interpretations of scripture and tradition that perpetuate harm. Counselling also means advocating for healing that enhances societal transformation.

Ongoing Formation and Reflexivity

To sustain this work, pastoral counsellors must engage in continuous learning, interdisciplinary dialogue, and reflective practice. Equally important is introspect positionality, biases, and vulnerabilities.

In my own journey, I have come to see that effective pastoral care requires not only academic knowledge but also emotional and spiritual maturity.

Conclusion

This article has explored the role of pastoral theologians in responding to a fractured world through the lens of a womanist practical theologian.

It has highlighted the importance of trauma-informed care, ethical practice, and the integration of spirituality and psychosocial competence, while emphasising the need for a liberative and justice-oriented approach.

Ultimately, pastoral counselling is both a sacred and transformative practice. It holds together care and critique, personal healing and social change. It becomes a vital space for restoring dignity, amplifying silenced voices, and reimagining possibilities for flourishing.

References

- Lartey, E.Y., 2013. Postcolonializing God: New perspectives on pastoral and practical theology. Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd.
- Mudimeli, L.M. and Khosa-Nkatini, H.P., 2024. Cultural dynamics of gender-based violence and pastoral care in South Africa. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 80(2), p.9353. ■

Bio

Dr Zamantshali Dlamini, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Practical and Missional Studies in the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of the Free State. She previously served in the Gender, Religion, and Health Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus). She is known for her interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, which critically engages the intersections of faith, culture, justice, and pastoral care, drawing on insights from both psychology and theology. Born and raised in KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Zama (as she is

known) initially pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology before undertaking further interdisciplinary studies, culminating in a PhD in Theology from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

She began her professional journey as a high school teacher and school counsellor, experiences that laid a strong foundation for her later work in pastoral care and counselling. Driven by a deep passion for ministry, she became actively involved in pastoral work, facilitating women's retreats within the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

Her pastoral ministry is deeply interconnected with her professional experience as an education specialist in government, where she worked with learners facing learning difficulties and behavioural challenges. This work expanded her pastoral lens, equipping her with psychosocial insight, trauma awareness, and practical counselling competencies. Together, these experiences inform a holistic praxis of care that integrates spiritual formation with educational and psychosocial support, particularly among vulnerable populations.



Boundaries with Teens – Part 1

By Dr Hanlie Meyer, Counselling Psychologist in private practice and CPSC affiliate

It is never too late: Hope for parents beginning the journey

In the previous series, we explored how boundaries help children develop responsibility, self-control, honesty, and healthy relationships. We saw that **boundaries are not primarily about control, but about helping children experience the consequences of their choices within the safety of loving relationships.**

As we now turn our attention to the teen years, many parents may feel both curious and anxious. Parenting adolescents can feel very different from parenting younger children. The strategies that worked so well when they were children may suddenly seem ineffective, leaving parents wondering whether they have done something wrong.



Before we begin discussing practical boundaries for teenagers, we need to start with something far more important: hope.

For many parents, the teen years begin with fear.

Some of you may feel scared because you remember your own adolescence and the mistakes you made. You may recognise traits and a temperament style in your child that made life difficult for you as you grew up. (And your own mother might highlight this, stating “She is just like you.”)

As parents we long for something better for our own children. We do not want them to go through the same struggles we went through, and we might be scared that we will not be able to prevent it happening.

Others may be scared because you look at the world around you and see dangers you never had to face. And



It is never too late: Hope for parents beginning the journey with teenagers.

many of you may carry something even heavier than fear about the future: regret about the past.

I often hear parents say things such as:

"I shouted too much."

"I was too strict."

"I was not strict enough."

"I worked too much."

"I did not spend enough time with my child."

"I only realised later that my child was struggling."

"Have I damaged my child permanently?"

"My child is so strong-willed that I always feel I am in a battle or a warzone. How will I manage now that she is an adolescent!?"

These concerns are understandable. The responsibility of raising children is immense. No parent enters the journey fully prepared. Most of you are trying to do the best you can with the knowledge, emotional resources, and support available to you at the time. Yet you may carry a deep sense of guilt, wondering whether the mistakes you have made have already determined the outcome of your teenager's life.

There might also be a third emotion present in some parents: resentment. This might sound harsh. Some parents might resent their spouses because they feel alone raising the children. There are also those who might resent the strong-willed or neurodiverse, or "different" child! I often hear parents saying that they love their child, but they do not like the child at all!

So, there might not only be guilt-feelings about mistakes made, but also about harbouring such "un-Godly" feelings about the child! All the above may leave a parent paralysed even before the teen-phase has properly kicked in!

The good news is that both Scripture and neuroscience provide a very different message.

God created us in His image and even though sin -- because of the Fall -- messed this up, He did not give up! Apart from the fact that He took upon Himself the pun-

The central message of this article is simple:

It is never too late to move toward healthier relationships, healthier boundaries and healthier patterns of thinking and behaviour.

ishment all of us deserve (please remember this discouraged, scared parent!) and sent His Holy Spirit to indwell our innermost being and personality (Eph. 3: 16), He also created us with brains that can accommodate renewal and are actually built to improve with use. All this can and does take place under guidance of Holy Spirit.

Let us flesh out these statements a bit:

God works in processes

First of all God never gives up on His creation or his human image bearers.

When reading the Bible, we do not find perfect people being used by God. We find people who make serious mistakes, sometimes repeatedly. Abraham struggled with fear born from unbelief. Moses struggled with insecurity due to his past experiences and the grave mistake he made killing an Egyptian. Joseph suffered the results of his unwise and bratty behaviour towards his older brothers! David made devastating moral choices in moments of weakness. Peter denied Jesus. Yet God continued His work in their lives.

This is important for you to remember as a parent.

God is not surprised by human weakness. He is not surprised by your teenager's weaknesses, and He is not surprised by your weaknesses as a parent.

Throughout Scripture, God consistently reveals Himself as One who works through long processes of growth and transformation. We often want immediate change, but God usually works through gradual development.

This truth has important implications for parenting teenagers. You may become discouraged because change

seems so slow. You may see the same struggles recurring month after month and conclude that nothing is happening.

From all the examples I mentioned above, it is clear that God remains at work beneath the surface long before the results become visible.

Let us now turn to the latest information from Neuroscience.

The adolescent brain is designed for change

For many years scientists believed that the brain became largely fixed at a relatively young age. We now know this is not true.

The brain remains capable of change throughout life. This ability is known as neuroplasticity.

Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability to change its structure and function based on experience, learning, relationships, habits, thoughts, and behaviour.

Dr Andrew Huberman explains that the brain is continually adapting to what we repeatedly think, feel, and do.

The experiences that receive repeated attention tend to strengthen specific neural pathways. Pathways that are used less frequently tend to weaken over time.

This means that change remains possible.

Perhaps even more encouraging is that adolescence represents one of the most important periods of brain reorganisation since early childhood.

The adolescent brain is undergoing significant reconstruction. Existing pathways are being strengthened or removed. New patterns are being developed. The brain is becoming more specialised and efficient.

This has both positive and negative implications.

Negative habits can become more deeply entrenched during this period. However, healthy habits, healthy relationships, emotional maturity, spiritual growth, and wise decision-making can also become deeply established.

In other words, the teenage years represent a tremendous opportunity for growth.

You may naturally focus on the risks of adolescence, but do not overlook its potential.

God designed the teenage brain to learn, to grow, to adapt and through all this, to mature. One trait God uses in this process, is the adolescent's enormous curiosity together with the tendency towards risk-taking (which obviously drives parents crazy!).

Although this process is very seldom easy, I want you to remember that God is at work – He loves our children much more than we do! After all they are His image bearers, and it is His desire that they develop as such. Accomplishing deep character changes and character formation, is above our paygrade: it is God's work! And He is faithful.

The next important aspect that I want to emphasise, is the fact that Neuroscientists indicate that there is a difference between the brain and the mind.

The brain is not the mind

As Christians, we need to approach neuroscience with both appreciation and discernment.

Neuroscience can teach us a great deal about how the brain functions. However, the Christian worldview understands that human beings are far more than biological machines.

The brain is an extraordinary organ created by God. It processes information, stores memories, coordinates movement, and helps us interact with the world. Yet the brain is not the whole person.

Many Christian thinkers, including Dr Lee Warren, emphasise the distinction between the brain and the mind. While these concepts are closely connected, they are not identical.

The brain is the physical organ.

The mind includes our thoughts, beliefs, intentions, attention, values, and choices (See the references to Lee Warren's discussion of brain function and mind renewal, Andrew Huberman's educational work on neuroplasticity, and Curt Thompson's work on relational neurobiology).

The brain may automatically generate fear based on previous experiences. It may interpret current situations through the lens of past pain. It may constantly try to predict future danger based on earlier disappointments.

Lee Warren, amongst others, indicate that the brain is a predictor of disaster. An article by MaryCatherine Mac-

Donald in Psychology Today, explains this model very well¹¹.

Parents often experience this themselves.

A mother whose teenager has lied before may immediately assume dishonesty, even when there is no evidence. A father who was rejected by his own parents may become extremely sensitive to normal teenage withdrawal.

The brain is constantly making predictions.

Yet we are not helpless victims of those predictions.

Through deliberate reflection, healthy relationships, renewed thinking, and the work of the Holy Spirit, we can challenge inaccurate narratives and strengthen healthier ones.

Paul writes in Romans 12:2: "*Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*"

The remarkable finding of modern neuroscience is that the renewed mind described in Scripture can influence the physical structure of the brain itself.

Repeated godly thinking, gratitude, forgiving, prayer, acts of courage and many more intentional mind-shifts, influence brain pathways.

The brain responds to what the mind repeatedly attends to. This is called self-directed neuroplasticity. According to the quoted neuroscientists, neuroplasticity occurs constantly – the importance is the **directed** neuroplasticity. Every Psalm and every word of encouragement in Scripture, aims at this process! So millennia before neuroscience has brought this aspect to light, God already knew about it as He created it!

The brain is the physical organ.
The mind includes our thoughts, beliefs, intentions, attention, values, and choices.

¹¹ [https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/the-hope-](https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/the-hope-circuit/202605/the-body-doesnt-keep-the-score)

[circuit/202605/the-body-doesnt-keep-the-score](https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/the-hope-circuit/202605/the-body-doesnt-keep-the-score)

This should give you tremendous hope as a parent.

The power of relational presence

Curt Thompson's work in relational neurobiology highlights another important truth: **people change most effectively within relationships**. God did not create us as isolated individuals. From the beginning, humans were created for relationship with God and with one another.

The developing brain is deeply influenced by relationships throughout life, but particularly during adolescence.

This can be surprising when you are parenting a teenager.

Research consistently demonstrates that you remain one of the most significant influences in your teenager's life. The influence simply changes in form.

Teenagers often appear to care more about friends than family. They may become quieter, more private, and less eager to spend time with their parents.

Many parents interpret this as rejection. For parents who are sensitive to rejection because of their own experiences, this is upsetting. Yet the reality is that healthy development requires a certain degree of separation. Adolescents are beginning to discover who they are as unique individuals. Part of this process involves developing opinions, preferences, and identities that differ from those of their parents.

We will explore this in much greater detail in future articles.

For now, it is important to understand that your teenager's increasing independence does not mean you have become unimportant. In fact, research consistently demonstrates that you remain one of the most significant influences in your teenager's life. The influence simply changes in form.

Here is how it works: during childhood, parents often exercise direct control. During adolescence, parents shift increasingly toward influence, guidance, wisdom, and relational presence.

Healthy boundaries create predictability, provide structure and safety, which when communicated in an atmosphere of love and patience, encourages growth.

Your teenager may resist advice in the moment. They may appear not to listen. Yet the emotional environment you create continues to shape development in profound ways.

This is why boundaries remain so important: healthy boundaries create predictability, provide structure and

safety, which when communicated in an atmosphere of love and patience, encourages growth.

I want to conclude this first article with the parable of the Prodigal son recorded in Luke 15: 11 – 32.

Tim Keller and Tim Mackey (from Bible Project) opened my eyes to the fact that we have here the story of a father and two lost sons!

Let us explore it a bit. Please note that I sometimes go beyond what the text tells us, to make it more applicable to our experiences. Use your own prayerful discernment to sift through what I say!

The father and the two lost sons

We always read the story through the lens of the youngest son who rebelled openly.

He demanded his inheritance, left home, and wasted everything.

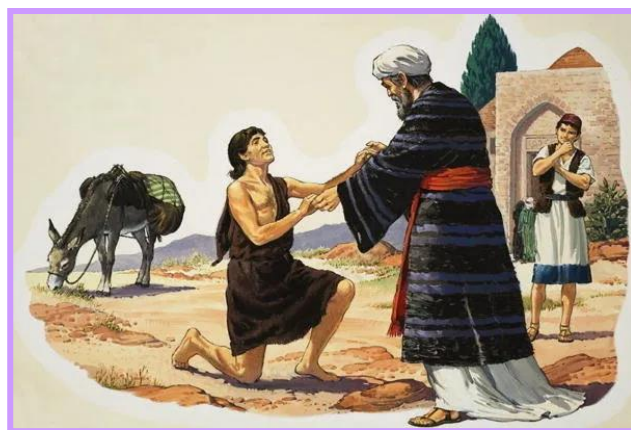
Most parents can easily recognise this son. He represents the teenager who openly resists authority and makes destructive choices.

The second son appears more respectable: he stays home, works hard and follows the rules meticulously.

Yet when his brother returns his bitterness, pride, resentment, and emotional distance become visible – he, too, is lost.

One son is lost through rebellion.

One son is lost through self-righteousness and acting as a servant, not as a son.



The remarkable focus of the story, however, is not the failures of the sons but the character of the father.

The father moves toward both sons.

He runs toward the rebellious son.

He leaves the celebration to seek the resentful son.

His desire is relationship – although the text does not indicate that the older son responded well to this. Remember the focus of the story is the father heart, not the explicit result.

What do we as parents learn from this story?

Your teenager may resemble the younger son.

In the ancient culture, his demand to receive his part of the inheritance actually indicated that he wished his father were dead! It was humiliating and he could be stoned to death by the community. He was addicted to pleasure in all forms. In today's language we may extrapolate this to the teenager being addicted to pornography, risk-taking activities like smoking, drinking, having sex with various partners... -- you know the hazards that you sometimes imagine at three in the night! Yet he had to get to a point where he realised what he was doing. He had to make the decision to turn back in repentance and go back to his father. He could not merely dream about it. And he did. With his mind he made a choice. His brain had the ability to respond to this choice. Yet he had to act on it for self-directed neuroplasticity to take place – and open the door for the Holy Spirit to direct the process!

But your child may also resemble the oldest son: always working hard, always sticking to the rules, “staying on the straight and narrow”. From this story, we see that this does not indicate that he/she is okay. It often happens that one teenager in the house is very difficult and another child seems to be the model child. Do not be fooled by this and do not make this child your confidante – ever.

Very often these children sit in my office as adults and relate their feelings of rejection and abandonment as the parents focussed so much on the troubled child and used the model child to relieve pressure and help carry the burden. These children often harbour resentment towards the sibling and even the parent and become the people pleasers. Like the oldest son in the story, they act and sometimes feel more like servants than sons.

In the same way the younger son had to repent of his bad behaviour, the older son eventually will have to repent of his good behaviour, as is indicated in the story.

As parents you can imagine what went through the father's mind! The agony, the self-doubt, the humiliation – what did the people think? The heartbreaking loss of his youngest son. Will he ever return? Where did he sleep? What did he eat? You know what it feels like. The text does not tell us how he acted towards the oldest son.

Did he expect of him to make up for the loss – or did the oldest son take it on himself to do so, hoping that he would please his father and make up for the loss he sees his father experiencing?

Form the text it seems that the father was surprised by the oldest son's resentment. That could very easily happen in our circumstances as well. We could focus on the loss and worry so much that we do not notice that resentment is building up in the “good” child.

Raising children is a scary yet wonderful opportunity for us as parents to develop our relationship with God and overcome our own hurts.

What did the father do? Let us remember this is a depiction of Father God. It portrays His consistency and desire for restoration of the relationship. As the father was always on the lookout to see his son returning before the community saw him, Father God is constantly involved in your child's life even though you may not see it. He loves you and He loves your child. Your calling as a parent remains the same towards both the rebellious one and the “oldest” son:

- **Move towards relationship** – even though your child might not respond. Overcome your own insecurities so that you can persevere without manipulation. You are also an image bearer even though you might feel broken – you cannot and need not use the “success” or the “failure” of your child as an indicator of your worth. The story does not give any information on what the father did right or wrong. The story emphasises the father's faithfulness and consistency.
- **Do not allow your hurt** about the rebellious son, to create distance between yourself and the apparently good child. Move towards relationship with this one as well without making him/her a burden bearer or confidante.
- **Maintain boundaries.** As we move through the articles, we will learn from the different authors how to do this in the face of resistance, anger, disrespect, sulking or open rebellion.
- **Tell the truth in love.** Your child does not need to like it. But this asks you to be grounded in the truth of who you are in Christ. Remember to look in the mirror of the Word of God to see who you are and not in the mirror of your past hurts so that your own brain may not predict disaster only. This will only lead to unwise behaviour on your side.
- **Allow consequences.** Remember what we learnt about reality consequences vs relational consequences in previous articles? This is what God allows – He never moves away, but He seldom prevents the reality consequences. However, when we turn in repentance to Him, He acts. Be willing to do the same
- **Remain emotionally present.** This is probably the most difficult thing to do! You can get so exhausted by the constant battle or worry, that you can fall in a deep depression or give up. You might want to punish your child with emotional distance. Remember that the “good” son witnesses all of this and silently decides to be different so that you may like her/him. Your won relationship with and trust in God is extremely important to sustain you and give you discernment. But it is also important to have people around you who can support you and to whom you can turn when things are difficult, or the burden seems too big to bear alone.

You need time out. You need time to rest and gain perspective. Raising children is a scary yet wonderful opportunity for us as parents to develop our relationship with God and overcome our own hurts.

- **Do not abandon the relationship.** You have a relationship with your child – even if your child chose to immigrate to the furthest corner of the planet! He/she cannot get you out of his/her mind – and neither can you. What your child does with this, is his/her own responsibility and property. Your responsibility is to stay in God's love for you and your relationship with Him and the people around you who love you to get through dark days and nights. Remember that the "good" son's behaviour is an effort to stay in relationship with you and to be noticed and accepted. He/she might even do so to prove that he/she is better than the sibling who causes trouble.

This does not mean approving destructive behaviour. Neither does it mean removing consequences.

Rather, it means refusing to allow conflict, disappointment, or fear to destroy connection.

The father's posture in Luke 15 reminds us that redemption remains possible even when situations appear hopeless.

Parents do not need to be perfect

You may secretly believe that successful parenting requires perfection.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Children do not need perfect parents. In fact, living with perfect parents would probably be impossible and from experience I can tell you that it places an unbearable burden on the child. Children need parents who are willing to learn, to apologise, grow, acknowledge mistakes and model Spirit-directed neuroplasticity! If your child can witness your trust in God's love, grace and mercy, he/she can develop hope for him/herself.

The most empowering things to hear from a parent are:

"Please forgive me."

"I wish I handled that better."

"I was wrong."

This does not weaken parental authority. It strengthens it. Teenagers learn humility, responsibility, and accountability by observing these qualities in their parents.

As Christians, we never parent from a position of superiority. We parent as fellow travellers who are also being transformed by God's grace.

A journey of hope

As we begin this series on boundaries with teens, I would like to encourage every parent who feels discouraged. The teenage years are not a sign that your child is broken.

Nor are they proof that you have failed. We will learn from the quoted authors that adolescence is a unique season of development. It is often messy, emotional, confusing, and unpredictable. Yet it is also one of the most important opportunities for growth that God has built into human development.

The God who designed the adolescent brain understands exactly what He is doing.

He has created young people with a remarkable capacity for learning, change, and growth.

He has also given you opportunities, even after many mistakes, to influence that growth through loving relationships, healthy boundaries, consistent guidance, and faithful dependence on Him.

It is never too late to take a step in a healthier direction. It is never too late to repair a relationship. It is never too late to learn new skills.

And it is certainly never too late for God to continue His work in the life of a teenager—or in the life of a parent.

In our next article, we will explore what adolescence actually is, when it begins, how parents can recognise its arrival, and why their once predictable child may suddenly seem like a completely different person.

References

- Cloud, H. (2024). *Becoming an Adult*. Worthy Books.
- Huberman, A. (Various publications and educational resources on neuroplasticity and adolescent brain development).
- Keller, T. (2008). *The Prodigal God*. Dutton.
- MacDonald, M. C. (2026). *The body doesn't keep the score*. Psychology Today.
- Thompson, C. (2010). *Anatomy of the Soul*. Tyndale House.
- Warren, L. (2023). *Hope Is the First Dose*. WaterBrook.
- The Holy Bible. Romans 12:2; Luke 15:11–32.

Cell: 082 550 0167

E-mail: hanlie.meyer@mweb.co.za

Address:

Jean Avenue 86B,
Doringkloof,
0157



Dr. Hanlie Meyer

Counselling Psychologist

Ps 0008710 • Pr 8616272

Expertise • Integrity • Empathy

Emotional carpet bag

By Mrs Roxanne Bailey, Career Guidance Counsellor, Independent Psychometrist and Pastoral Counsellor

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." – John 8:12, KJV

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." – Matthew 11:30, KJV

Introduction

In an increasingly uncertain world, individuals and families often carry a complex mixture of hurts, pressures, and emotional burdens that can leave them feeling despondent.

The 1964 film *Mary Poppins*, with Tony Walton's distinctive production design, offers a compelling metaphor for understanding this emotional landscape. Walton deliberately contrasted the colourful warmth of Mary Poppins' attire with the stark navy, black, and grey tones of the banking world—an artistic choice that reflects the broader contrasts of the Edwardian era.

Set in 1910, this period is often remembered as a time of elegance and leisure for the upper classes, yet it was also marked by profound social change, widening inequalities, and growing anxieties about Britain's global position. Beneath its polished surface, the era revealed tensions between tradition and modernity, privilege and poverty, structure and emotional need.

Within this context, Mary Poppins arrives at the Banks household, a family navigating uncertainty, rigid expectations, and emotional disconnect. While Mr. Banks believed his children required stricter discipline and order, their deeper longing was to be seen, valued and emotionally held by both parents.

Mary Poppins becomes the embodiment of warmth, relational attunement, and joyful intervention -- bringing colour, imagination, and psychological safety into a world defined by restraint. Her iconic carpet bag, filled with unexpected tools and remedies, symbolises the therapeutic truth that life contains both challenges and the internal and external resources needed to face them. This metaphor provides



a powerful framework for understanding how psychological support helps individuals unpack their emotional "bags," recognise their coping capacities, and restore balance amid adversity.

Barnabas enters the early Christian community during a period of fear, mistrust, and uncertainty — especially after Saul's conversion, when believers were unsure whom to trust.

Though his given name was Joseph, the apostles called him *Barnabas*, meaning "son of encouragement," because he consistently brought strength, reassurance, and emotional grounding to those around him.

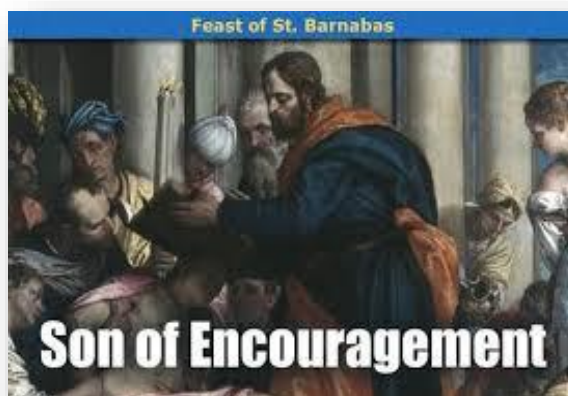
Much like Mary Poppins, Barnabas steps into a community marked by strain and apprehension, offering not only practical support but also the deeper pastoral gifts of affirmation, advocacy, and spiritual insight.

Where Mary Poppins uses her carpet bag to reveal tools that restore order and imagination, Barnabas carries relational and spiritual tools — generosity, discernment, compassion, and the ability to see potential where others see only risk.

His presence stabilises the early church in the same way

Mary Poppins stabilises the Banks family: through steady, attuned care that helps people rediscover their resilience and sense of belonging.

Content



By integrating these two figures—one from film and one from Scripture—we see a shared truth emerge.

In our modern world, where individuals and families often feel overwhelmed by pressures, disconnected relationships, and internalised expectations, both Mary Poppins and Barnabas

remind us of the transformative power of compassionate presence. They illustrate that healing begins when someone enters our lives with encouragement, structure, and the ability to see what we cannot yet see in ourselves. Their stories offer a pastoral and psychological truth: within every person's "carpet bag" of experiences — both painful and hopeful—there are tools for growth waiting to be uncovered. With the right support individuals can learn to balance the bitter with the sweet, finding renewed strength for the journey ahead.

Mary Poppins had the following items in her carpet bag:

- **Standard lamp:** A floor lamp, described as lighted.
- **Potted plant:** A plant with glossy leaves.
- **Hat stand:** Sometimes described as a coat stand.
- **Large wall mirror:** A gilt-edged mirror.
- **Shoes and Clothing:** Various personal items.
- **Painting:** A framed picture



Although these items may seem ordinary, they carry significant meaning—especially when one is assisting someone with relationship difficulties.

Whether someone is facing uncertainties or emotional struggles, the standard lamp metaphorically symbolises the presence of just enough warmth and glow to shed light on the situation and reveal new possibilities, allowing the difficulty to be seen in a new way.

It may frequently symbolise the individual consciousness, the ego, or the "self," as described in the works of Carl Jung or interpreted within spiritual psychology — where the lamp is seen as a symbol of enlightenment or an inner guide that offers emotional direction. In this sense, *light* becomes a "cognitive map" and an "emotional driver," as described by Tomassoni, R., Galetta, G., and Treglia, E. (2015).

The potted plant represents nurturing, new beginnings, and growth — an invitation to explore the causes of one's hurt and

the situations or triggers that contribute to it, so that the healing process can begin.

In many psychological and spiritual traditions, a potted plant symbolises inner growth and spiritual development. Jung noted that plant imagery reflects a deeper, impersonal kind of life—something that grows according to spiritual rather than biological laws, nourishing the soul much like "greening" or renewal.

Because a plant depends on a gardener for water and light, it also represents the need for intentional care and daily effort in one's inner work; growth does not happen automatically. And since potted plants often sit on windowsills, they can be seen as a gentle meeting point between the safe, familiar world of the ego and the wider, unknown world of the unconscious, allowing a filtered, manageable connection with deeper parts of the psyche.

C. Cooper (2014) cites the following: "The house therefore nicely reflects how man sees himself, with both an intimate interior or self-viewed from within and revealed only those intimates who are invited inside and a public exterior or the self that we choose to display to others".

Just like Mary Poppins' bag, there are so many items within the carpet bag which reflects a part of the uniqueness of each individual -- together it simulates our own "house", meaning our "self".

It has been seen from a historically and biblically perspective that hats have symbolized authority, nobility, or a divine order, thus serving as a covering for the head — the centre of perception. However, some interpretations suggest a hat can act as a protective "mantle" for the mind, representing spiritual shielding against hiding of a secret or uncertainties or not understanding one's inner difficulties or not sure how to make sense out of a trauma or situation or even a conflict.

Furthermore, a hat stand can represent wisdom when your situation or inner self is understood, such as protection.

"Most people who look to their faith for support find it helpful. In studies of veterans of combat, hospital patients, parents of children with physical handicaps, widows, and physically abused spouses, 50–85% of the studies' participants reported that religion was helpful to them in coping with their difficult situations" (K.I. Pargament, 2007).

The carpet bag contained a mirror -- while some state that the "mirror always tells the truth", one should also note that sometimes it reflects a distorted view since there are so many internal and external factors which could impact our mirror view of the self. In other words, the experience of the body, together with the perception and evaluation of our body

whether in the mirror or not, influence the crafting of our self-beliefs. This assumption is largely shared.

Foundational analyses in this direction have been led by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, which emphasizes the body as a core site for self-experience, suggesting that "our self emerges through lived, perceptual interactions with our own body." (A. Tramacere and A. Kaufmann, 2025).

Mary Poppins' wardrobe blends the primness of 1910 Edwardian fashion with subtle touches of colour and whimsy. This duality mirrors her role as a bridge between the rigid adult world and the imaginative inner world of children.

It also reflects a deeper reality: every person begins life with the purity and authenticity of a child — unblemished by the world — yet healing becomes necessary when discipline within families is either overly rigid or entirely absent. Such incongruence can distort healthy development, leading to unbalanced parenting styles and a loss of the simple delight of being one's true self.

The film intentionally merges Edwardian aesthetics with modern, expressive colour palettes, symbolising the integration of discipline and delight—a central theme in relational healing. Dignity, self-respect, care of one's appearance and how we present ourselves externally can reflect and support our inner well-being.

For example: Shoes reflect our groundedness, our sense of purpose, and our ability to step into difficult emotional spaces with confidence. The familiar phrase "*walking a mile in someone else's shoes*" reminds us to remain compassionate as therapists—seeking to understand the challenges others face through empathy, presence, and attentive listening.

According to Clark (2000), one should adopt the stance of a learner—particularly in cross-cultural helping contexts, where helpers must cultivate empathy by approaching each interaction with openness and curiosity. By taking the position of a learner each time they listen, helpers are better able to hear and begin to understand an individual's unique personal and cultural frame of reference. This stance communicates respect and acknowledges the uniqueness of every person (S. Gair, 2008).

Conclusion

When Jesus enters a life, He does so with the Holy Spirit and with a depth of belief that begins real transformation. In this way, He becomes the true "carpet bag" — not a container of tricks or illusions, but a source of hope, renewal, and inner resources that we often do not realise we carry until He reveals them.

Jesus never judged people by their outward appearance or by the brokenness they carried. Instead, He looked beneath the surface, guiding with compassion, truth, and unwavering love.

Just as Mary Poppins drew out a lamp and a potted plant from her carpet bag — symbols of light and life — Jesus brings these realities into the human heart. The lamp mirrors His promise: "*I am the light of the world; whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life*" - John 8:12

(KJV). The potted plant reflects His desire to cultivate growth, healing, and new beginnings within us. Jesus does not only walk a mile in our shoes, but He literally walks each step with us and will carry us when we cannot walk anymore.

A painting speaks differently to every viewer: the artist sees intention, while the beholder discovers personal meaning. In the same way, Jesus — through the Holy Spirit and by the Father's grace — holds the chalk of our lives. He can soften harsh lines, restore faded colours, or redraw what life's storms have damaged.

As He brings light back into the canvas of our inner world, the **standard lamp** becomes a symbol of His gentle illumination: just enough warmth and glow to



help us see our struggles in a new way, without overwhelming us.

The **potted plant** reminds us that healing is a living process — slow, rooted, and dependent on daily nurturing. Growth happens when we allow God to tend the soil of our hearts, watering what is dry and pruning what is tangled.

The **shoes** speak of groundedness and readiness: the courage to step into difficult emotional spaces, to walk the journey of healing at our own pace, and to remain compassionate toward ourselves and others along the way.

Sometimes the frame of our inner painting becomes chipped, or the weather of life erases parts of the chalk drawing. Yet, God continually restores what has been worn down, bringing colour, clarity, and hope back into our emotional "carpet bag" — that sacred inner space holding memories, wounds, strengths, and longings.

The therapist's role is to gently unfold this bag with the client, item by item, guided by empathy, attunement, and respect for the client's pace. Together they explore the unique textures, symbols, and stories within, allowing healing to emerge through presence, imagination, and the steady light of God's restoring grace.

When all seems lost, when the world feels dim or heavy, His light remains. He does not shame, reject,

or condemn; He illuminates, restores, and leads us toward life. His presence reminds us that what we carry inside — hope, resilience, courage, and the capacity for renewal — is often far greater than what our circumstances suggest. In this way, Jesus becomes the One who opens our “carpet bag” and reveals what we could not see: that even in our darkest moments, there is His Light, steady and unchanging, and where His Grace will guide us.

There will always be endless possibilities, for as the saying goes, *“in every job that must be done, there is an element of fun.”*

No matter the challenges we face, when we take it step by step and entrust the process to our Father through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, nothing is too big for Him to transform.

From a psychological perspective, one might echo the familiar phrase, *“a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down.”* In every client’s unique “life bag,” the “sugar” represents kindness, encouragement, and self-compassion, while the “medicine” reflects the responsibility, effort, and intentional change required for growth. Whatever the challenge, we hold both elements within us. With grace, perseverance, and the gentle guidance of the Holy Spirit, we learn to face difficulties without giving up, allowing healing to unfold one step at a time; this leads us to our complete cognitive map.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andriesa, M., Bursztynb, L., Chaneyc, T, Djourelvad, A. & Imase, A. (2026). In their Shoes: Empathy through Information. https://home.uchicago.edu/bursztyn/InTheirShoes_March2026.pdf

Cooper, C. (2014). The House as Symbol of the Self. University of California at Berkeley.

Gair, S. (2008). Walking a Mile in Another Person’s Shoes: Contemplating Limitations and Learning on the Road to Accurate Empathy. Department of Social Work and Community Welfare, James Cook University, Townsville. <https://scispace.com/pdf/walking-a-mile-in-another-person-s-shoes-contemplating-11x5o13rlc.pdf>

Pargament, K. I. (2007). Spiritually integrated psychotherapy: understanding and addressing the sacred. The Guilford Press: New York.

Tramacere, A., & Kaufmann, A., (2025). Perception in the mirror: the influence of self-beliefs. Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-025-10058-7>

Tomassoni, R., Galetta, G. & Treglia, E. (2015). Psychology of Light: how light influences the health and psyche. Published Online August 2015 in SciRes. <http://www.scirp.org/journal/psych>, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/psych.2015.610119> ■



Notes from the Admin Office

Dear ACRP CPSC affiliate

September is synonymous with Spring. And Spring at CPSC is synonymous with our annual CPSC Conference!

Have you registered yet?

In September we celebrate Heritage Day when citizens are encouraged to embrace their diverse cultural identities through traditional attire, community gatherings, and, of course, "braais".

September also offers a last chance to admire the wildflower takeover of the Western and Northern Cape provinces.



Spring has long been recognized as a season of renewal, growth, and fresh beginnings. Across many cultures and faith traditions, it symbolizes hope after hardship, life emerging from dormancy, and the promise of transformation.

For pastoral caregivers and counselling professionals, spring provides a meaningful framework for understanding emotional, spiritual, and psychological healing.

Pastoral care seeks to accompany individuals through life's challenges by addressing emotional, spiritual, relational, and existential concerns. Seasons of difficulty are not permanent. Just as nature awakens after winter, people can experience restoration following grief, trauma, disappointment, or spiritual drought.

Counselling frequently employs metaphors to help clients understand complex emotional experiences. Spring provides a rich therapeutic metaphor for several stages of personal growth:

▼Emerging from emotional winter.

Many clients experience seasons of emotional numbness, depression, grief, or burnout. Spring communicates that healing often begins gradually rather than all at once.

▼Growth requires nurturing.



Just as gardens flourish through consistent care, emotional and spiritual growth requires intentional practices such as reflection, healthy relationships, prayer, self-care, and professional support.

▼Pruning encourages healthier growth.

In both gardening and personal development, removing unhealthy patterns creates space for healthier behaviours and relationships. Counselling can assist clients in identifying beliefs, habits, or unresolved wounds that hinder flourishing.

▼Hope develops through small changes.

Spring rarely arrives overnight. Likewise, therapeutic progress is often marked by incremental improvements rather than dramatic transformation.

Many counselling professionals incorporate nature into therapeutic work. Walking outdoors, observing seasonal changes, or holding counselling sessions in natural settings may reduce stress, encourage mindfulness, and facilitate reflective conversation.

For pastoral caregivers, creation itself becomes a reminder of renewal, divine creativity, and hope.

By embracing themes of hope, growth, resilience, and transformation, pastoral caregivers can accompany individuals with compassion, helping them navigate life's winters while preparing for the new possibilities that emerge with spring. In doing so, they affirm that healing is often a gradual journey, nurtured through professional competence, authentic relationships, and enduring hope.

I hope to see you at the 2026 CPSC Conference!

Warmest regards

Ilse Grünwald ■



2026 CPSC Spring Online Conference:

"Accountable and Anchored: Staying Grounded in a Complex World"

A full online conference built around the real challenges facing Christian counselors and ministers today.

Registrations: 🌸🌸🌸🌸

Register for our upcoming thought-provoking 2026 ACRP CPSC Spring Online Conference on Thursday, the 3rd of September 2026!

Registrations are open now, but only until the 31st of August 2026.

Google registration form link:

<https://forms.gle/TVpsscbYVV7iDBB98>

If you struggle to use Google forms to submit your registration, please contact Maria at maria.jansen@acrp.org.za or Ilse at ilse.grunewald@acrp.org.za so that we can provide you with the registration form in Word format.



Other information: 🌸🌸

MC:

Dr Candida Millar

Tech Support:

Dr Nadine Dunn

CPD points available:

8 (3E) for all ACRP affiliates

Cannot attend the online conference?

- * Watch the recordings
- * Complete the questionnaire
- * Earn the 8 CPD points

Please remember to:

- * switch your camera on
- * check that your microphone is off
- * join the breakout rooms (this is your chance to meet fellow ACRP affiliates!)

Recordings:

Recordings will be available after the event.

Fees: 🌸🌸🌸🌸🌸🌸

Please note that you will have to pay for the conference first before you will be able to complete your online registration.

ACRP Affiliates: R280

Non-affiliates: R560

Payment details:

Please deposit the exact required amount into the CPSC Nedbank bank account as this also indicates to the CPSC Finance Office that it is the registration payment for the 2026 CPSC Spring Conference.

Please use this reference:

SurnameInitialsCONF26

Account details:

NEDBANK

Account name: CPSC

Account Number: 1020501553

Branch Code: 136305

Please send your Proof of Payment to:

anita.snyders@acrp.org.za



PRESENTER:	TOPIC:
Wezet Botes	Scriptural Mandates, Legal Duties, and Safety Protocols: A Practical Guide to Handling Domestic and Gender-Based Violence in South African Church Counselling Services
Doctor Dlodla	From Spiritualisation to Safe Care: Rethinking Pastoral Responses to Suicide in Pentecostal Churches
Helena Heydenreich	Seeing beneath the Surface: An Iceberg Perspective on Human Behaviour
Sonya Hunt	Trust, Power and Vulnerability: Safeguarding against Spiritual Abuse
Michele Rossouw	Before we speak, we listen: Using the Bible responsibly in counselling
Marissa September	Scripture in Session: Ethical use of Scripture within counselling

TIME:	ACTIVITY:
08:30	Zoom link opens
08:45 to ±13:00	Welcome
	Opening
	Presenters 1 - 4
±13:00	Lunch break
±13:30	Presenters 5 & 6
±14:30	Roundtable discussion
±15:30	Closure

Notes from the ACRP Conference Office

Past event: 2026 CGMP Autumn Conference

For those who missed out on the **2026 CGMP Autumn Conference** that took place on the 16th of April 2026 with the theme: **The Church's Edge: Preaching, Leading, Caring, and Thriving in a Digital Age**, you may still register to receive the recordings and summary form.



registration, please contact **Andrea** at the **ACRP Office** Andrea.Leipoldt@acrp.org.za so that you can be provided with the registration form in *Word* format.

Once we have received your registration and POP and your payment reflects in the bank, you will be sent a link to the recordings, notes and Summary form. You must complete the summary form and send it back to maria.jansen@acrp.org.za to receive

your certificate and your 8(3E) ACRP CGMP CPD points. ACRP affiliates will have their points automatically recorded.

FEES:

All ACRP Affiliates (in good standing): R270

Non-Affiliates: R540

Please ensure that you use the correct banking details and beneficiary reference!

ACRP BANKING DETAILS:

Bank: **ABSA**
Account name: **ACRP**
Account number: **4085403421**
Branch code: **632005**
Account type: **Cheque**

Beneficiary Reference:

Please use your SurnameInitialsConf26 as reference for us to be able to allocate your payment!

The **Proof of Payment (POP)** must be sent to **Andrea** at Andrea.Leipoldt@acrp.org.za

IMPORTANT:

*Please use the following link to register for the **CGMP conference recordings**: [RecordingReg.CGMP Autumn Conf: 16 April 2026 – Fill out form](#)*

Remember to “submit” once you have completed the online form!

If you struggle to use Google forms to submit your

Upcoming event: CPSC Spring Conference

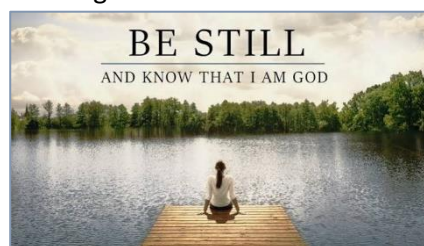
The following Conference is the **2026 CPSC Spring Conference** that will be held on Thursday 3rd September 2026. I hope to see you all again!!!

For all the detail, please see the full-page advertisement on page 33.

The theme for **2026 CPSC Spring Conference** is: **Accountable and Anchored: Staying Grounded in a Complex World**

We are again making use of Google forms for registrations. **Please note that you will have to pay for the conference first before you will be able to complete your online registration.**

Blessings from the ACRP Conference Office



☪️❤️☪️ “Be still and know I am God.” Psalm 46:10

Maria Jansen ■

■ ADMINISTRATION OFFICE: Ilse Grünewald Cell: 072 705 1183 (am) Email: ilse.grunewald@acrp.org.za Mon to Wed 09:00–17:00 Thur 09:00–15:00 ■ FINANCES OFFICE: Anita Snyders Cell: 066 345 6842 (am) Email: anita.snyders@acrp.org.za Working hours: Mon to Fri: 09:00–13:00	■ ACRP CONFERENCE & CPD OFFICE: Maria Jansen Email for ACRP (CPSC & CGMP) conference registrations, questionnaires, certificates, and CPD points: maria.jansen@acrp.org.za Working hours: Mon to Fri: 08:00–13:00	BANKING DETAILS CPSC (The Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors) Nedbank Branch: Woodlands Branch code: 136-305 Account no: 1020501553 <i>E-mail proof of payment to the Finance Office at anita.snyders@acrp.org.za. Please state your initials and last name as reference for any deposit made.</i>
Disclaimer While CPSC supports initiatives for equipping pastoral and spiritual counsellors, statements and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views and/or opinions of CPSC. CPSC does not make any warranty regarding the information supplied. CPSC shall in no event be liable for any decision or action taken in reliance on this information.		