Ministry With Victims of Post Abortion Trauma & Sexual Abuse

A Presentation of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries

www.RachelsVineyard.org

Summary of Presentation

• RV Outcome Study

• Personality Disorders: Borderline Personality Disorder

• Impact of Abortion & Sexual Abuse on Ministry Relationships

• Boundaries in Ministry Relationships

• Outcome Study Conclusion

Rachel's Vineyard

2004 Outcome Study

Part I
Part I

- A total of 241 representing 22 U.S. states and 22 RV retreat teams responded to the survey (231 women and 10 men)

Number of Abortions

- 60% reported one abortion
- 40% reported multiple abortions

Mental Health Treatment

- 70% required mental health treatment at some time after their abortion.
History of Suicide Attempts Following Abortion:

- **17%** report a suicide attempt

History of Suicidal Thoughts Following Abortion:

- **65%** experienced suicidal thoughts

History of Alcohol or Substance Abuse Following Abortion:

- **49%** involved in alcohol/substance abuse.
History of Self-Mutilation Following Abortion:

- 1 in 10 cutting or other self injury (others feel urge)
- Major Symptom of BPD
- Helpful to understand some P.A. / Sexually Abused persons

The Shroud of Turin

The Deepest Wound of Jesus
Psychology at the service of Jesus!

A Christian view of the human person

I am not defined by my dysfunction or wound!

Personality Disorders

Personality Traits
Traits become distorted/inflexible

Natural To Neurotic

Organized
Efficient
Prefer order

Neurotic Distortion?
Natural To Neurotic

- Sociable
- Creative
- Vivacious
- Charming

• Neurotic Distortion?

Natural To Neurotic

- Discerning
- Prudent

• Neurotic Distortion?

Natural To Neurotic

- Introspective
- Contemplative

• Neurotic Distortion?
What Causes Personality Disorders?

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychic wounds
- Trauma

- Family dynamics
- Intergenerational trauma/Heredity
- Relational styles
- Environmental stressors
Facts about Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)
A Disorder of Emotional Regulation & Relationship

Causes of BPD (NIMH)
- 50-70% childhood sexual abuse. (AAMFT Consumer Update)
- Heredity
- Trigger event (abortion)- Re enactment of Previous Abuse
- High Functioning/Low Functioning (RAFH Chapter 2)
BPD makes up at least 2% of the general population (6 million people in North America).

BPD affects 50% more people than Alzheimer’s disease and nearly as many as schizophrenia and bipolar combined.

BPD comprises 20% of the inpatient psychiatric population.
BPD makes up 11% of the outpatients in the mental health system.

An estimated 10% of BPD patients die by suicide.
BPD abusing drugs and alcohol-58% will die from suicide within five years.

Patients Abusing Drugs/Alcohol: 58% die from suicide within five years.
Diagnostic Criteria - BPD

1) Pattern of Instability
   In Relationships
   Self Image/Mood

2) Impulsivity-Spending/sex/drugs

4) Intensity In Relationships
   - Idealization
   - Devaluation
5) Emptiness
   Barrenness
   Shallowness

6) Intense Anger
   Episodes
   Rage - Inability to regulate intense emotion

Impulsive Self-Destructive

- Regulating emotional responses
  Modify Impulses

- Emptiness & Impulsive Addictive acting out

Impulsive Self-Destructive

- 23% Substance abuse
Self Mutilation

- Coping Mechanism for Emotional Pain
- Relationship to Dissociation and Abortion
- It's in the Bible!!!

Impulsive Self-Destructive

- Death from Impulsive Risky

Abandonment

- Childhood Or Later Neglect/Trauma/Abuse
- Rage – Acting In/Acting Out
- Isolation - Burning Alienation
**Splitting**

Idealization/Devaluation
- My Savior!
- You satan!

---

**Relationships / Self Image**

- Toleration of Ups and Downs/Ending
- Rush into Relationships With Idealized expectations
- Crisis and chaos
- Physically abusive
- Intimacy and Distance

---

**Relationships / Self Image**

- Re-creation of Abuse Themes
- Charming to outsiders – Nasty to you
- Feel in control by controlling you with their emotional outbursts and chaotic lives
- Acting In/Acting Out
Relationships / Self Image
- Lack of Responsibility For Victimization/Victimizing
- Feelings happen to me – I have no control over them

Relationships / Self Image
- Very Sensitive-
- Very Reactive!
- Email Bombs
- Keeping mouth shut-It’s not worth it!
- Twisting your words and using as later amo
- Feeling manipulated/controlled

Relationship With a BPD
- You can’t do anything right
- Feeling put down,demoted... fearful of social activities because of partners impulsive behavior
- Partner deals in polarizing absolutes
- It’s never enough
Splitting
Idealization/Devaluation

- A Pitfall For Those In Ministry
- Positive Control and Boundaries For Helper

Abortion

- Abortion Themes: Abandonment/Womb loss/Rage
- Dissociation From Core Wound/Loss

BPD and Abortion

- Source/Connector to Re-enactment of Previous Trauma
- Forbidden Grief
Taking the Bait

- Manipulating a Ministry Heart or an Effective Team Player – Idealization & Guilt
- Hypersensitivity as Manipulation—major drain of personal resources.
- When compassion is not compassionate

Price of Denial

- Authority of leader compromised as Dysfunctional Dynamics Spread
- Early Intervention Important
- Re Focusing Individual to Deeper Healing and less personally toxic ministry.

Effective Communication

- Direct and effective communication key

*Indirect or Dictatorial communication enables* dysfunction creating passive aggressive staff/team.
- Failure to lead results in division/dissension/dysfunction in team/parish/community/family and hurts service delivery.
- Church structures can be prone to secrecy/indirect communication.
**BPD and Abortion**

MHP’s Miss the Boat on the Abortion/BPD Connection

**Borderline Statistics**

- 20% of the Inpatient Psychiatric Population
- 11% of the Outpatients in Mental Health System

**Abuse Histories With Post Abortive Women**

- 24% Childhood Sexual Abuse (Elliot Institute)
- 21% Childhood Physical Abuse (Elliot Institute)
- Nearly One-Third of all Women report physical or sexual abuse during lifetime. (1998 Survey of Women’s Health – Commonwealth Fund)
The Core Wound: Identity Rooted In Abuse

- I am Defective
- Pervasive Shame Self-Contempt
- Isolated-Alone Empty/Shallow/Barren [Abortion Connection]

Surrounding Core wound: Protective Rage

Deep Hunger for Love Wholeness Safety and Security

Symptoms of BPD Self Mutilation "Acting In"

- Coping Mechanism for Intense-Overwhelming Emotional Pain
- Breaking through the Numbness
**Symptoms of BPD: Acting Out**

**Impulsivity: Drugs/Sex/Spending**

**Symptoms: Relational Dysfunction**

- Idealization
- In the Eye of the Storm
  - The Honeymoon Stage
- Devaluation
- Separation/Abandonment:
  - Internalizing love/connection when separated

**Relational Dysfunction**

- Very Sensitive/ Reactive
- *Controlling you to feel in Control*
- Lack Emotional & Relational Coping Skills
A Deadly Relational Pattern

- Desperately Seeking to Fill Void—but as relationships deepen...
- Unhealed Core wound symptoms intensify - Re enacting Relational Dramas of Rejection & Betrayal
- Cycle Reinforces Core Shame Self Hatred/Hopelessness

Ministry With Sexually Abused Women

- The Steps of Healing and Singular Support
- Sexualizing Relationships
- Patterned/Conditioned Response to Intimacy Kindness Caring of Clergy
Ministry With Sexually Abused Women

- Recreating Forbidden Secrets
- Redeeming Internal Shame Through Intimacy with the Divine
- Becoming the Temptress-Divine Rejection
- The Twisting of the Gift

Boundaries in Ministry

- Adult boundary violations

- Not just a Ministry Problem! *The Flirtatious Optometrist.*

- Survey of 1351 Protestant Clergy revealed 37% involved in inappropriate sexual behavior
  (Fuller Institute of Church Group. Jan. 1993. *Focus on the Family*)

Boundary Problems: Common Characteristics

- Lack of emotionally intimate relationships
- Emotional abandonment/abuse/exploitation in family of origin.
- Identity as Caregiver
Vulnerable to act out at time of loss, emotional pain/rejection.

- Absence of healthy intimacy with others...and with their own hearts.
- Lack of experience/process/roadmap to deal with repressed grief connects with developmental wound.

False sense of Entitlement

- False sense of entitlement rooted in perceived unique demands of ministry and hazard of burnt-out.

Resurrecting Our Vocations

- Education in Formation
- From Rationalization/Denial...to facing emotional pain & Moral failure
- Connecting & Healing past wounds and current acting out.
- Return to ministry – severity & frequency of offense
- Accountability Key
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trauma &amp; The Brain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional talk therapy with victims of trauma may well be ineffective and perhaps detrimental. (Daniel Sweeney, Ph.D.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Function Compromised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to create a Cohesive Narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speechless Terror</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trauma by definition involves speechless terror...unable to put what they feel into words...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are left with intense emotions...unable to articulate what is going on. (Trauma Specialist Bessel Van der Kolk, MD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk Therapy and Trauma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encountering feeling/experience/memory of trauma...the part of brain controlling speech and executive function shuts down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client feels stuck in symptoms and struggles to progress in healing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client may withdrawal from counseling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Multidisciplinary Approach

- Group therapies
- Cognitive Behavioral therapy
- Psycho educational groups
- Assessment for Medication

Clergy on the Front Lines
Be Not Afraid!

- Majority of ministry relationships will be healthy.
- You can avoid the dysfunctional Relational Dramas & guide the wounded soul to Healing!

The Honeymoon Period
Idealization

- Projection: The Priest As Perfect Father/Counselor
- Recognize warning signs
The Honeymoon Is Over
- Problem Internalizing Love of Others - Desperation & Rejection
- Lack of Boundaries
- Obsession - Worst Case Scenario...Restraining orders

Relational Withdrawal
- Rejection by “God”
- Same Tragic Ending
  Reenactment
  Reinforces Shame & Contempt
- Rage

A Community Healing Model: Key to Healing Victims of Trauma
- Don’t Journey Alone into the Heart of this Wound
- Avoid the Role of Singular Confidant & Counselor
Creating Safety for Priest & Wounded Person

- You are part of a Healing Team
- Positive Control

The Healing Team

- Post Abortion Lay Ministers
- Trauma Sensitive Group Process
- Counselor
- Physician/Psychiatrist

The Healing Process

- Trauma Sensitive Group Process
  Bringing the Light Of Christ Into Core Wound
- Medical & Psych Assessment for Meds
The Healing Team

- Therapist Referral
- Carefully monitored psycho-pharmacology for symptom reduction

Treatment

- Cognitive behavioral therapy including psycho-education and skills training
- A RV Retreat will complement and empower other treatment strategies—Foundational Healing

Gently Guiding the Wounded Soul to Healing

- Use and build upon the initial 'good feelings' and trust
- You are part of a Healing Team: Boundaries and warmth and compassion
- Ongoing Meetings Contingent Upon... Follow Through With Referrals
Get the Spouse Involved

- Work to Engage the Spouse as a Partner in the Healing Journey
- Couples and RV Retreat

The Confessional Encounter

- It is very important to understand that many women and men will continue to confess the sin over and over again because they interpret their continued post abortion symptoms as a sign that the sacrament “didn’t take or that God did not forgive them.”

Repeat Confessions

- A way to stay connected to the aborted child
- Finding healthy ways to grieve the loss and reconnect with the aborted child – this requires a process of healing.
The Confessional Encounter

- Assure her of the love and mercy of Christ and the good news that the Church welcomes her back with love and compassion.

- It is common for individuals to still experience feelings of shame, guilt and struggles with self forgiveness. This is normal and not a sign that the sacrament has not been efficacious.

- However it is often important to build upon the grace of the Sacrament, and go through a process of emotional and spiritual healing. You can share a small card or pamphlet on Rachel’s Vineyard/Project Rachel.

Confession

- Encourage them that the Rachel’s Vineyard retreat is very effective at treating the symptoms of shame, guilt, depression and anxiety associated with post abortion suffering.

- The message is one of encouragement, hope and empowerment by supplying resources for ongoing healing.
The Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat

- 59% completed survey more than one year after their retreat
- Average 3 years post-retreat.

Helpful or Harmful?

- Question #10 Survey “Did Retreat Hurt or Help You?” using the scale
- –5 Harmful
- 0 Neutral
- +5 Very Helpful
RV Retreat: Helpful or Harmful?

- 83% answered 5 Very Helpful
- The average rating was 4.75.
- There were no negative ratings

The RV Retreat

- An Effective Healing experience Years after Weekend
- Effective with a population reporting significant mental health concerns after their abortion

Repeat Confessions

- Confession can become a ritual of grieving, an unhealthy way to memorialize the child.
Ministry With Victims of Post Abortion Trauma & Sexual Abuse

A Presentation of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries

www.RachelsVineyard.org
Summary of Presentation

- RV Outcome Study

- Personality Disorders: Borderline Personality Disorder

- Impact of Abortion & Sexual Abuse on Ministry Relationships

- Boundaries in Ministry Relationships

- Outcome Study Conclusion
Rachel’s Vineyard

2004 Outcome Study

Part I
Part I

- A total of 241 Representing 22 U.S. states and 22 RV retreat teams responded to the survey (231 women and 10 men)
Number of Abortions

- 60% reported one abortion
- 40% reported multiple abortions
Mental Health Treatment

- **70%** required mental health treatment at some time after their abortion.
History of Suicide Attempts Following Abortion:

- **17%** report a suicide attempt
History of Suicidal Thoughts

Following Abortion:

- 65% experienced suicidal thoughts
History of Alcohol or Substance Abuse Following Abortion:

- 49% involved in alcohol/substance abuse.
History of Self-Mutilation Following Abortion:

- 1 in 10 cutting or other self injury (others feel urge)
- Major Symptom of BPD
- Helpful to understand some P.A. / Sexually Abused persons
The Shroud of Turin

The Deepest Wound of Jesus
The abyss of human suffering—the emptiness/isolation/emotional-physical deprivation/abandonment from which the false or distorted sense of self arises as an attempt to cover up or cope with this acute spiritual and emotional pain.
Psychology at the service of Jesus!

A Christian view of the human person

I am not defined by my dysfunction or wound!

We are redeemed by the Blood of Christ.
Professional gifts at the service of the kingdom.
Personality Disorders

- Personality Traits
- Traits become distorted/inflexible

Stable and enduring patterns that influence a person’s perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions. When Healthy and adaptive—*personality styles*. When rigid, maladaptive and negatively impact others—*Personality Disorders*. 
Ob sessive Compulsive. Unhealthy perfectionism and obsession with Order. Can be very successful prone to workaholism but lack depth in relationships and deep down are dissatisfied with their lives despite their achievements. Lower functioning OCD will have trouble completing tasks, getting back to people, making deadlines or decisions as they will obsess over details to the point of being paralyzed...so expect lots of delays and dead ends. Some cases feature overly scrupulous behavior—handwashing, checking door is locked, obsession with minor faults and sins sometimes obsessively confessed.
**Natural To Neurotic**

Sociable  
Creative  
Vivacious  
Charming

• Neurotic Distortion?

**Histrionic:** Attention craving/Shallow/Flirtatious/Exaggerated emotional displays
Natural To Neurotic

Discerning
Prudent

• Neurotic Distortion?

Paranoid: Suspicious/Jealous/mistrustful/Unforgiving/Threatened/Others Out to get him all without any reality base.
Introspective
Contemplative

• Neurotic Distortion?

**Schizoid**: Pervasive pattern of detachment from social relationships. Emotionally cold/detached/flat affect.
Intuitive
Sensitive
Empathic
Mystical

• Neurotic Distortion?

Schizotypal: Magical Thinking/Clairvoyance/Thought reading/sixth sense. Strange speech/odd eccentric behavior/isolated and mistrustful in relationship
Natural To Neurotic

Natural Leader
Confident/Goal oriented
Motivate & Inspire
Competitive
Successful

Neurotic Distortion?

Narcissistic: Manipulate & Use others to advance their agenda without any empathy. Ruthless/Grandiose/Exhibitionistic. Domination/Control. Focused on their personal needs/personal power and control and surround themselves with sycophants who will do their bidding and reflect back to them their distorted overblown false self and affirm their grandiose (but unrealistic) ambitions. They are special/Set apart-distorted sense of vocation and calling. Their ambitions are based on a distorted vision of reality that is designed to fill the vacuum that exists beneath the bravado. False mysticism with this disorder reinforces this sense of being special and chosen and feeds the false self. The purpose of The ministry/liturgy/event for the Narcisist to shine light on the great one who makes it all possible-himself. They will blame/attack others when they fail.
Natural To Neurotic
Passionate
Intense
Sensitive
Feels Things Strongly

• Neurotic Distortion?
What Causes Personality Disorders?
Physical Abuse
Emotional Abuse
Sexual Abuse
Psychic wounds
Trauma
How was emotion expressed. Expectations of parents. Emotional and physical presence of parents. How we are wired both genetically and by environment.
Facts about Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)
Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

A Disorder of Emotional Regulation & Relationship
Causes of BPD (NIMH)

- 50-70% childhood sexual abuse. (AAMFT Consumer Update)

- Heredity

- Trigger event (abortion)- Re enactment of Previous Abuse

- High Functioning/Low Functioning (RAFH Chapter 2)
BPD makes up at least 2% of the general population (6 million people in North America)
BPD affects 50% more people than Alzheimer’s disease and nearly as many as schizophrenia and bipolar combined.
BPD comprises 20% of the inpatient psychiatric population
BPD makes up 11% of the outpatients in the mental health system.
An estimated 10% of BPD patients die by suicide

BPD abusing drugs and alcohol-58% will die from suicide within five years.
Patients Abusing Drugs/Alcohol: 58% die from suicide within five years.
Diagnostic Criteria-
BPD

Effects 2% if adults. 20% of MH Hospitalizations. Half report Sexual abuse. NIMH Research-Abuse/Heredity/”Series of Events That Trigger onset of illness in young adults. Abortion as Trigger-Abortion as Causative Event.
1) Pattern of Instability In Relationships
   ——— Self-Image/Mood ———

2) Impulsivity-Spending/sex/drugs
Splitting
Idealization/Devaluation

- My Savior!
- You satan!
Splitting
Idealization/Devaluation

- A Pitfall For Those In Ministry

- Positive Control and Boundaries For Helper
5) Emptiness
Barrenness
Shallowness

6) Intense Anger Episodes
Rage - Inability to regulate intense emotion
Symptoms of BPD
Self Mutilation “Acting In”

- Coping Mechanism for Intense-Overwhelming Emotional Pain
- Breaking through the Numbness
Impulsive Self-Destructive

- 23% Substance abuse
Self Mutilation

- Coping Mechanism for Emotional Pain
- Relationship to Dissociation and Abortion
- It’s in the Bible!!!
Impulsive Self-Destructive

- Death from Impulsive Risk
Abortion

- Abortion Themes: Abandonment/Womb loss/Rage

- Dissociation From Core Wound/Loss

Abandonment at time of abortion/Shallow Barren theme-womb loss/Rage in relationships/impulsive self punishing behaviors rooted in constriction of and acting out traumatic themes.
BPD and Abortion

- Source/Connector to Re-enactment of Previous Trauma
BPD and Abortion

- Missing the Abortion/BPD Connection
Abuse Histories With Post Abortive Women

- 24% Childhood Sexual Abuse (Elliot Institute)
- 21% Childhood Physical Abuse (Elliot Institute)
- Nearly One-Third of all Women report physical or sexual abuse during lifetime. (1998 Survey of Women’s Health – Commonwealth Fund)
The Core Wound: Identity Rooted In Abuse

- I am Defective
- Pervasive Shame Self-Contempt
- Isolated-Alone Empty/Shallow/Barren [Abortion Connection]
Surrounding Core wound:  
Protective Rage

Deep Hunger for Love Wholeness
Safety and Security
A Deadly Relational Pattern

- Desperately Seeking to Fill Void—but as relationships deepen...

- Unhealed Core wound symptoms intensify - Re enacting Relational Dramas of Rejection & Betrayal

- Cycle Reinforces Core Shame Self Hatred/Hopelessness
Relationships / Self Image

- Toleration of Ups and Downs / Ending
- Rush into Relationships With Idealized expectations
- Crisis and chaos
- Physically abusive
- Intimacy and Distance
Relationships / Self Image

- Re-creation of Abuse Themes
- Charming to outsiders – Nasty to you
- Feel in control by *controlling you* with their emotional outbursts and chaotic lives
- Acting In/Acting Out
Relationships / Self Image

- Lack of Responsibility For Victimization/Victimizing

Feelings happen to me – I have no control over them
Relationships / Self Image

- Very Sensitive
- Email Bombs
- It’s not worth it!
- Twisting your words and using as later amo
- Feeling manipulated/controlled

Email bombs.
Intimate Relationship With a BPD

- You can’t do anything right
- Feeling put down, denigrated... fearful of social activities because of partners impulsive behavior
- Partner deals in polarizing absolutes
- It’s never enough

Email bombs.
BPD and RV Ministry

- Manipulating a Ministry Heart or an Effective Team Player – Idealization & Guilt

- Hypersensitivity as Manipulation—major drain of personal resources.

- When compassion is not compassionate

Personality disordered persons you encounter in ministry will first attempt to disarm your discernment/manipulate your weakness/exploit your compassion or bully you if you exhibit passive communication and fear of conflict.
Price of Denial

- Authority of leader compromised as Dysfunctional Dynamics Spread
- Early Intervention Important
- Re Focusing Individual to Deeper Healing and less personally toxic ministry.
Ministry With Trauma Victims

- The Steps of Healing and Singular Support

- Sexualizing Relationships

- Patterned/Conditioned Response to Intimacy Kindness Caring of Clergy
Ministry With Trauma Victims

- Recreating Forbidden Secrets

- Redeeming Internal Shame Through Intimacy with the Divine

- Becoming the Temptress-Divine Rejection

- The Twisting of the Gift
Boundaries in Ministry

- Adult boundary violations

- Not just a Ministry Problem! *The Flirtatious Optometrist.*

- Survey of 1351 Protestant Clergy revealed 37% involved in inappropriate sexual behavior
  
  (Fuller Institute of Church Group. Jan. 1993. Focus on the Family)
Boundary Problems: Common Characteristics

- Lack of emotionally intimate relationships

- Emotional abandonment/abuse/exploitation in family of origin.

- Identity as Caregiver
Vulnerable to act out at time of loss, emotional pain/rejection.

- Absence of healthy intimacy with others...and with their own hearts.

- Lack of experience/process/roadmap to deal with repressed grief connects with developmental wound.

False sense of Entitlement

- False sense of entitlement rooted in perceived unique demands of ministry and hazard of burnt-out.
Resurrecting Our Vocations

- Education in Formation

- From Rationalization/Denial...to facing emotional pain & Moral failure

- Connecting & Healing past wounds and current acting out.

- Return to ministry – severity & frequency of offense

- Accountability Key
Trauma & The Brain

- Traditional talk therapy with victims of trauma may well be ineffective and perhaps detrimental. (Daniel Sweeney, Ph.D.)

- Executive Function Compromised

- Unable to create a Cohesive Narrative
Speechless Terror

- Trauma by definition involves speechless terror...unable to put what they feel into words...

They are left with intense emotions...unable to articulate what is going on. (Trauma Specialist Bessel Van der Kolk, MD)
Talk Therapy and Trauma

- Encountering feeling/experience/memory of trauma...the part of brain controlling speech and executive function shuts down

- Client feels stuck in symptoms and struggles to progress in healing process

- Client may withdrawal from counseling
When the person’s gifts are maximized and celebrated.

The goal is not just restoration of former self, but integration & spiritualization

With the proper boundaries and some foreknowledge, the priest can be an important front line person that can guide the wounded soul to both spiritual and psychological/emotional healing.
Clergy on the Front Lines
Be Not Afraid!

■ Fr Tom & Susan

When the person’s gifts are maximized and celebrated.

The goal is not just restoration of former self, but integration & spiritualization

With the proper boundaries and some foreknowledge, the priest can be an important front line person that can guide the wounded soul to both spiritual and psychological/emotional healing.
The Honeymoon Period
Idealization

- Projection: The Priest As Perfect Father/Counselor
- Recognize warning signs

When the person’s gifts are maximized and celebrated.

The goal is not just restoration of former self, but integration & spiritualization

With the proper boundaries and some foreknowledge, the priest can be an important front line person that can guide the wounded soul to both spiritual and psychological/emotional healing.
The Honeymoon Is Over

- Problem Internalizing Love of Others-
  Desperation & Rejection
- Lack of Boundaries
- Obsession-Worst Case Scenario...Restraining orders

It can be difficult if the patient can rationalize their reactions.

Becoming angry at someone as if they were a parent is a good sign that there is a transference reaction.

Termination of treatment pre-maturely is another sign of transference - unless the therapist is just doing a bad job.
Relational Withdrawal

- Rejection by “God”
- Same Tragic Ending
  Re enactment
  Reinforces Shame & Contempt
- Rage

Actions interpreted as ‘rejection’ towards the post-abortive woman can re-enact prior abandonment.

An indication that the priest does not have time for her can be experienced as a new abandonment, echoing earlier abandonment's around the abortion.

Stopping her from talking about
A Community Healing Model: Key to Healing Victims of Trauma

- Don’t Journey Alone into the Heart of this Wound

- Avoid the Role of **Singular** Confidant & Counselor

Giving positive control to the client and boundaries on their own powerful needs and emotions.

Relationship is not open ended but time limited

This will grow into a broader healing journey involving other persons and ministries.

Deeply wounded persons (trauma victims in general), are better served in the context of a “care giving community” where the priest/Minister/Counselor is an essential participant, but not the singular helper.
Creating Safety for Priest & Wounded Person

- You are part of a Healing Team
- Positive Control

Set the parameters of your relationship from the get-go. This will protect you and those you serve.

Establishing boundaries does not mean we have to be cold, aloof or uncaring in order to protect ourselves.

Let them know the parameters of your helping relationship from the outset:
“We will meet for X number of sessions. I will be putting you in touch with a local post abortion resource Rachel’s Vineyard - here is their contact information and website. ”

You may also offer counselor or medical referral if the presenting symptoms indicate this would be helpful.

This can be done with charity, warmth, and caring.

We avoid getting pulled into another traumatic reenactment passion play and give us the perspective needed to offer the best ministry.
The Healing Team

- Post Abortion Lay Ministers
- *Trauma Sensitive*
  Group Process
- Counselor
- Physician/
  Psychiatrist

Giving positive control to the client and boundaries on their own powerful needs and emotions.

Relationship is not open ended but time limited

This will grow into a broader healing journey involving other persons and ministries.

Deeply wounded persons (trauma victims in general), are better served in the context of a “care giving community” where the priest/Minister/Counselor is an essential participant, but not the singular helper.
The Healing Process

- Trauma Sensitive Group Process
  Bringing the Light Of Christ Into Core Wound

- Medical & Psych Assessment for Meds

When we break bread together, we create community;

When we allow our hearts to be broken together, we create intimacy and community on a deeper level
The Healing Team

- Therapist Referral

- Carefully monitored psycho-pharmacology for symptom reduction

When we break bread together, we create community;

When we allow our hearts to be broken together, we create intimacy and community on a deeper level
Treatment

- Cognitive behavioral therapy including psycho-education and skills training

- A RV Retreat will complement and empower other treatment strategies- Foundational Healing
Gently Guiding the Wounded Soul to Healing

- Use and build upon the initial 'good feelings' and trust

- You are part of a Healing Team: Boundaries and warmth and compassion

- Ongoing Meetings Contingent Upon... Follow Through With Referrals

When we break bread together, we create community;

When we allow our hearts to be broken together, we create intimacy and community on a deeper level
Get the Spouse Involved

- Work to Engage the Spouse as a Partner in the Healing Journey

- Couples and RV Retreat

- Lazarus

Get the spouse involved ASAP. The husband has been effected by the relationship whether or not he is the father of her aborted child(ren).

Some women will want to keep the husband behind the scenes and want an exclusive relationship with caregiver.
The Confessional Encounter

- It is very important to understand that many women and men will continue to confess the sin over and over again because they interpret their continued post abortion symptoms as a sign that the sacrament “didn’t take or that God did not forgive them.”
Repeat Confessions

- Confession can become a ritual of grieving, an unhealthy way to memorialize the child.

Confession may become a ritual of grieving where one revisits feelings of shame, grief, guilt as a means to remain connected to the aborted child.

Developing a healthy relationship with the unborn child in the broader healing process is needed to allow her to heal of the abortion loss and embrace the fullness of the sacrament.

Confession is not enough to detoxify the wound. If this is the only intervention it may lead to repeat confession patterns - women who confess the sin over 150 times to different priests.

Confession can become a way to memorialize the aborted child.
Repeat Confessions

- A way to stay connected to the aborted child

- Finding healthy ways to grieve the loss and reconnect with the aborted child – this requires a process of healing.
The Confessional Encounter

- Assure her of the love and mercy of Christ and the good news that the Church welcomes her back with love and compassion.

- It is common for individuals to still experience feelings of shame, guilt and struggles with self forgiveness. This is normal and not a sign that the sacrament has not been efficacious.
The Confessional Encounter

- However it is often important to build upon the grace of the Sacrament, and go through a process of emotional and spiritual healing. You can share a small card or pamphlet on Rachel’s Vineyard/Project Rachel.
Confession

- Encourage them that the Rachel’s Vineyard retreat is very effective at treating the symptoms of shame, guilt, depression and anxiety associated with post abortion suffering.

- The message is one of encouragement, hope and empowerment by supplying resources for ongoing healing.
Rachel’s Vineyard

2004 Outcome Study

Part II
The Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat

- 59% completed survey more than one year after their retreat
- Average 3 years post-retreat.
Helpful or Harmful?

Question #10 Survey “Did Retreat Hurt or Help You?” using the scale

-5 Harmful
0 Neutral
+5 Very Helpful
RV Retreat: Helpful or Harmful?

- 83% answered 5 Very Helpful
- The average rating was 4.75.
- There were no negative ratings
The RV Retreat

- An Effective Healing experience Years after Weekend

- Effective with a population reporting significant mental health concerns after their abortion
Fetal Abnormality

- Complicated Grief
- www.perinatalhospice.org
We’re Different

“If we were given a normal child, we would not have been put in this situation. We are different from others who have aborted because we wanted this child. God put us in this impossible situation, forcing us to make these painful decisions. We are left without our child, and with powerful feelings of confusion, resentment anger and grief.”
Marriage Prep

- We had a couple attend the retreat that truly touched everyone who attended and served on the team. The girl had an abortion before she met her fiancée. On their engaged encounter weekend she felt a strong desire to share this with him.
The priest gently invited them to consider attending our Rachel’s Vineyard retreat before they got married the following month, and they immediately signed up.
Marriage Prep

It was so beautiful to see how supportive this young man was of her throughout the weekend. But it was also touching to hear some of his own story. They will have such a beautiful and holy marriage because it is rooted in the love and spirituality that they now share together.
Preaching About Abortion

- Alternatives
- Forgiveness and Healing
- See Through the Slogans
Ministry With Victims of Post Abortion Trauma & Sexual Abuse

A Presentation of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries

www.RachelsVineyard.org

Summary of Presentation

- RV Outcome Study
- Personality Disorders: Borderline Personality Disorder
- Impact of Abortion & Sexual Abuse on Ministry Relationships
- Boundaries in Ministry Relationships
- Outcome Study Conclusion

Rachel's Vineyard

2004 Outcome Study

Part I
Part I

A total of 241 representing 22 U.S. states and 22 RV retreat teams responded to the survey (231 women and 10 men).

Number of Abortions

- 60% reported one abortion
- 40% reported multiple abortions

Mental Health Treatment

- 70% required mental health treatment at some time after their abortion.
History of Suicide Attempts Following Abortion:

- 17% report a suicide attempt

History of Suicidal Thoughts Following Abortion:

- 65% experienced suicidal thoughts

History of Alcohol or Substance Abuse Following Abortion:

- 49% involved in alcohol/substance abuse.
**History of Self-Mutilation Following Abortion:**

- 1 in 10 cutting or other self injury (others feel urge)
- Major Symptom of BPD
- Helpful to understand some P.A. / Sexually Abused persons

**The Shroud of Turin**

*The Deepest Wound of Jesus*
Psychology at the service of Jesus!

A Christian view of the human person

I am not defined by my dysfunction or wound!

Personality Disorders

- Personality Traits
- Traits become distorted/inflexible

Natural To Neurotic

- Organized
- Efficient
- Prefer order

- Neurotic Distortion?
What Causes Personality Disorders?

Physical Abuse
Emotional Abuse
Sexual Abuse
Psychic wounds
Trauma

Family dynamics
Intergenerational trauma/Heredity
Relational styles
Environmental stressors
Facts about Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)
A Disorder of Emotional Regulation & Relationship

Causes of BPD (NIMH)
- 50-70% childhood sexual abuse (AAMFT Consumer Update)
- Heredity
- Trigger event (abortion)- Re enactment of Previous Abuse
- High Functioning/Low Functioning (RAFH Chapter 2)
BPD makes up at least 2% of the general population (6 million people in North America).

BPD affects 50% more people than Alzheimer’s disease and nearly as many as schizophrenia and bipolar combined.

BPD comprises 20% of the inpatient psychiatric population.
BPD makes up 11% of the outpatients in the mental health system.

An estimated 10% of BPD patients die by suicide.

BPD abusing drugs and alcohol—58% will die from suicide within five years.

Patients Abusing Drugs/Alcohol: 58% die from suicide within five years.
Diagnostic Criteria - BPD

1) Pattern of Instability
   In Relationships
   Self Image/Mood

2) Impulsivity-Spending/sex/drugs

Splitting
Idealization/Devaluation

- My Savior!
- You satan!
Splitting
Idealization/Devaluation

- A Pitfall For Those In Ministry
- Positive Control and Boundaries For Helper

5) Emptiness
   Barrenness
   Shallowness

6) Intense Anger Episodes
   Rage - Inability to regulate intense emotion

Symptoms of BPD
Self Mutilation “Acting In”

- Coping Mechanism for Intense-Overwhelming Emotional Pain
- Breaking through the Numbness
Impulsive Self-Destructive

- 23% Substance abuse

Self Mutilation

- Coping Mechanism for Emotional Pain
- Relationship to Dissociation and Abortion
- It’s in the Bible!!!

Impulsive Self-Destructive

- Death from Impulsive Risk
Abortion

- Abortion Themes: Abandonment/Womb loss/Rage
- Dissociation From Core Wound/Loss

BPD and Abortion

- Source/Connector to Re-enactment of Previous Trauma

BPD and Abortion

- Missing the Abortion/BPD Connection
Abuse Histories With Post Abortive Women

- 24% Childhood Sexual Abuse (Elliot Institute)
- 21% Childhood Physical Abuse (Elliot Institute)
- Nearly One-Third of all Women report physical or sexual abuse during lifetime. (1998 Survey of Women’s Health – Commonwealth Fund)

The Core Wound: Identity Rooted In Abuse

- I am Defective
- Pervasive Shame Self-Contempt
- Isolated-Alone Empty/Shallow/Barren [Abortion Connection]

Surrounding Core wound: Protective Rage

Deep Hunger for Love Wholeness Safety and Security
A Deadly Relational Pattern

- Desperately Seeking to Fill Void—but as relationships deepen...
- Unhealed Core wound symptoms intensify - Re enacting Relational Dramas of Rejection & Betrayal
- Cycle Reinforces Core Shame
  Self Hatred/Hopelessness

Relationships / Self Image

- Tolerance of Ups and Downs/ Ending
- Rush into Relationships With Idealized expectations
- Crisis and chaos
- Physically abusive
- Intimacy and Distance

Relationships / Self Image

- Re-creation of Abuse Themes
- Charming to outsiders – Nasty to you
- Feel in control by *controlling you* with their emotional outbursts and chaotic lives
- Acting In/Acting Out
Relationships / Self Image

- Lack of Responsibility For Victimization/Victimizing
  Feelings happen to me – I have no control over them

- Very Sensitive
- Email Bombs
- It’s not worth it!
- Twisting your words and using as later amo
- Feeling manipulated/controlled

Intimate Relationship With a BPD

- You can’t do anything right
- Feeling put down, denigrated...
  fearful of social activities because of partners impulsive behavior
- Partner deals in polarizing absolutes
- It’s never enough
BPD and RV Ministry

- Manipulating a Ministry Heart or an Effective Team Player – Idealization & Guilt
- Hypersensitivity as Manipulation—major drain of personal resources.
- When compassion is not compassionate

Price of Denial

- Authority of leader compromised as Dysfunctional Dynamics Spread
- Early Intervention Important
- Re Focusing Individual to Deeper Healing and less personally toxic ministry.

Stop Walking on Eggshells

Taking Your Life Back When Someone You Care About Has Borderline Personality Disorder

Paul T. Wajon, M.D. Karen Harper
Ministry With Trauma Victims

- The Steps of Healing and Singular Support
- Sexualizing Relationships
- Patterned/Conditioned Response to Intimacy Kindness Caring of Clergy

Ministry With Trauma Victims

- Recreating Forbidden Secrets
- Redeeming Internal Shame Through Intimacy with the Divine
- Becoming the Temptress-Divine Rejection
- The Twisting of the Gift

Boundaries in Ministry

- Adult boundary violations
- Not just a Ministry Problem! *The Flirtatious Optometrist.*
- Survey of 1351 Protestant Clergy revealed 37% involved in inappropriate sexual behavior
  (Fuller Institute of Church Group. Jan. 1993. Focus on the Family)
Boundary Problems: Common Characteristics

- Lack of emotionally intimate relationships
- Emotional abandonment/abuse/exploitation in family of origin.
- Identity as Caregiver

Vulnerable to act out at time of loss, emotional pain/rejection.

- Absence of healthy intimacy with others...and with their own hearts.
- Lack of experience/process/roadmap to deal with repressed grief connects with developmental wound.

False sense of Entitlement

- False sense of entitlement rooted in perceived unique demands of ministry and hazard of burnt-out.
## Resurrecting Our Vocations

- Education in Formation
- From Rationalization/Denial...to facing emotional pain & Moral failure
- Connecting & Healing past wounds and current acting out.
- Return to ministry – severity & frequency of offense
- Accountability Key

## Trauma & The Brain

- Traditional talk therapy with victims of trauma may well be Ineffective and perhaps detrimental. (Daniel Sweeney, Ph.D.)
- Executive Function Compromised
- Unable to create a Cohesive Narrative

## Speechless Terror

- Trauma by definition involves speechless terror...unable to put what they feel into words...

They are left with intense emotions...unable to articulate what is going on. (Trauma Specialist Bessel Van der Kolk, MD)
Talk Therapy and Trauma

- Encountering feeling/experience/memory of trauma...the part of brain controlling speech and executive function shuts down
- Client feels stuck in symptoms and struggles to progress in healing process
- Client may withdrawal from counseling

Clergy on the Front Lines
Be Not Afraid!

- Majority of ministry relationships will be healthy.
- You can avoid the dysfunctional Relational Dramas & guide the wounded soul to Healing!

Clergy on the Front Lines
Be Not Afraid!

- Fr Tom & Susan
The Honeymoon Period

Idealization

- Projection: The Priest As Perfect Father/Counselor
- Recognize warning signs

The Honeymoon Is Over

- Problem Internalizing
- Love of Others-
- Desperation & Rejection
- Lack of Boundaries
- Obsession-Worst Case Scenario...Restraining orders

Relational Withdrawal

- Rejection by “God”
- Same Tragic Ending
- Re enactment
- Reinforces Shame & Contempt
- Rage
A Community Healing Model: Key to Healing Victims of Trauma

- Don’t Journey Alone into the Heart of this Wound
- Avoid the Role of Singular Confidant & Counselor

Creating Safety for Priest & Wounded Person

- You are part of a Healing Team
- Positive Control

The Healing Team

- Post Abortion Lay Ministers
- Trauma Sensitive Group Process
- Counselor
- Physician/Psychiatrist
The Healing Process

- Trauma Sensitive Group Process
  Bringing the Light Of Christ Into Core Wound

- Medical & Psych Assessment for Meds

The Healing Team

- Therapist Referral

  Carefully monitored psycho-pharmacology for symptom reduction

Treatment

- Cognitive behavioral therapy including psycho-education and skills training

- A RV Retreat will complement and empower other treatment strategies - Foundational Healing
Gently Guiding the Wounded Soul to Healing

- Use and build upon the initial 'good feelings' and trust
- You are part of a Healing Team: Boundaries and warmth and compassion
- Ongoing Meetings Contingent Upon... Follow Through With Referrals

Get the Spouse Involved

- Work to Engage the Spouse as a Partner in the Healing Journey
- Couples and RV Retreat
- Lazarus

The Confessional Encounter

- It is very important to understand that many women and men will continue to confess the sin over and over again because they interpret their continued post abortion symptoms as a sign that the sacrament "didn't take or that God did not forgive them."
Repeat Confessions
- Confession can become a ritual of grieving, an unhealthy way to memorialize the child.

Repeat Confessions
- A way to stay connected to the aborted child
- Finding healthy ways to grieve the loss and reconnect with the aborted child – this requires a process of healing.

The Confessional Encounter
- Assure her of the love and mercy of Christ and the good news that the Church welcomes her back with love and compassion.
- It is common for individuals to still experience feelings of shame, guilt and struggles with self forgiveness. This is normal and not a sign that the sacrament has not been efficacious.
The Confessional Encounter

- However it is often important to build upon the grace of the Sacrament, and go through a process of emotional and spiritual healing. You can share a small card or pamphlet on Rachel’s Vineyard/Project Rachel.

Confession

- Encourage them that the Rachel’s Vineyard retreat is very effective at treating the symptoms of shame, guilt, depression and anxiety associated with post abortion suffering.

- The message is one of encouragement, hope and empowerment by supplying resources for ongoing healing.
The Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat

- 59% completed survey more than one year after their retreat
- Average 3 years post-retreat.

Helpful or Harmful?

- Question #10 Survey “Did Retreat Hurt or Help You?” using the scale

  - 5 Harmful
  - 0 Neutral
  - +5 Very Helpful

RV Retreat: Helpful or Harmful?

- 83% answered 5 Very Helpful
- The average rating was 4.75.
- There were no negative ratings
The RV Retreat

- An Effective Healing experience Years after Weekend
- Effective with a population reporting significant mental health concerns after their abortion

Fetal Abnormality

- Complicated Grief
  - www.perinatalhospice.org

We’re Different

- “If we were given a normal child, we would not have been put in this situation. We are different from others who have aborted because we wanted this child. God put us in this impossible situation, forcing us to make these painful decisions. We are left without our child, and with powerful feelings of confusion, resentment, anger and grief.”
Marriage Prep

- We had a couple attend the retreat that truly touched everyone who attended and served on the team. The girl had an abortion before she met her fiancée. On their engaged encounter weekend she felt a strong desire to share this with him.

Marriage Prep

- The priest gently invited them to consider attending our Rachel’s Vineyard retreat before they got married the following month, and they immediately signed up.

Marriage Prep

- It was so beautiful to see how supportive this young man was of her throughout the weekend. But it was also touching to hear some of his own story. They will have such a beautiful and holy marriage because it is rooted in the love and spirituality that they now share together.
Preaching About Abortion

- Alternatives
- Forgiveness and Healing
- See Through the Slogans
Ministry With Victims of Post Abortion Trauma & Sexual Abuse

A Presentation of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries

www.RachelsVineyard.org
Summary of Presentation

- RV Outcome Study

- Personality Disorders: Borderline Personality Disorder

- Impact of Abortion & Sexual Abuse on Ministry Relationships

- Boundaries in Ministry Relationships

- Outcome Study Conclusion
Rachel’s Vineyard

2004 Outcome Study

Part I
A total of 241 representing 22 U.S. states and 22 RV retreat teams responded to the survey (231 women and 10 men)
Number of Abortions

- 60% reported one abortion
- 40% reported multiple abortions
Mental Health Treatment

- 70% required mental health treatment at some time after their abortion.
History of Suicide Attempts Following Abortion:

- 17% report a suicide attempt
History of Suicidal Thoughts
Following Abortion:

- 65% experienced suicidal thoughts
History of Alcohol or Substance Abuse Following Abortion:

- 49% involved in alcohol/substance abuse.
History of Self-Mutilation Following Abortion:

- 1 in 10 cutting
- Symptom of BPD
- RFH- Borderline Symptoms
The Shroud of Turin

The Deepest Wound of Jesus
Psychology at the service of Jesus!

A Christian view of the human person

I am not defined by my dysfunction or wound!
Personality Disorders

- Personality Traits
- Traits become distorted/inflexible
Natural To Neurotic

Organized
Efficient
Prefer order

■ Neurotic Distortion ?
Natural To Neurotic

Sociable
Creative
Vivacious
Charming

• Neurotic Distortion ?
Natural To Neurotic

Discerning
Prudent

• Neurotic Distortion?
Natural To Neurotic

Introspective
Contemplative

• Neurotic Distortion?
Natural To Neurotic

Intuitive
Sensitive
Empathic
Mystical

• Neurotic Distortion?
Natural To Neurotic

Natural Leader
Confident/Goal oriented
Motivate & Inspire
Competitive
Successful

Neurotic Distortion?
Passionate
Intense
Sensitive
Feels Things Strongly

• Neurotic Distortion?
What Causes Personality Disorders?
Physical Abuse
Emotional Abuse
Sexual Abuse
Psychic wounds
Trauma
Family dynamics
Intergenerational trauma/Heredity
Relational styles
Environmental stressors
Facts about Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)
Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

A Disorder of Emotional Regulation & Relationship
Causes of BPD (NIMH)

- 50-70% childhood sexual abuse. (AAMFT Consumer Update)

- Heredity

- Trigger event

- High Functioning/Low Functioning
BPD makes up at least 2% of the general population (6 million people in North America)
BPD affects 50% more people than Alzheimer’s disease and nearly as many as schizophrenia and bipolar combined.
BPD comprises 20% of the inpatient psychiatric population
BPD makes up 11% of the outpatients in the mental health system.
An estimated 10% of BPD patients die by suicide

BPD abusing drugs and alcohol—58% will die from suicide within five years.
Patients Abusing Drugs/Alcohol: 58% die from suicide within five years.
Diagnostic Criteria-
BPD
1) Pattern of Instability in Relationships Self Image/Mood

2) Impulsivity-Spending/sex/drugs
Splitting
Idealization/Devaluation

- My Savior!
- You satan!
Splitting
Idealization/Devaluation

A Pitfall For Those In Ministry
5) Emptiness
Barrenness
Shallowness

6) Intense Anger
Episodes
Rage - Inability to regulate intense emotion
Symptoms of BPD
Self Mutilation “Acting In”

- Coping Mechanism for Intense-Overwhelming Emotional Pain
- Breaking through the Numbness
Self Mutilation

- Coping Mechanism for Emotional Pain

- It’s in the Bible!!!
Impulsive Self-Destructive

- Death from Impulsive Risk
Impulsive Self-Destructive

- 23% Substance abuse
I Don’t Deserve to be a Mother
Abortion

- Abortion Themes: Abandonment/Womb loss/Rage

- Dissociation From Core Wound/Loss
BPD and Abortion

- Source/Connector to Re-enactment of Previous Trauma
BPD and Abortion

- Missing the Abortion/BPD Connection
Abuse Histories With Post Abortive Women

- 24% Childhood Sexual Abuse (Elliot Institute)

- 21% Childhood Physical Abuse (Elliot Institute)

- Nearly One-Third of all Women report physical or sexual abuse during lifetime. (1998 Survey of Women’s Health – Commonwealth Fund)
The Core Wound:
Identity Rooted In Abuse

- I am Defective
- Pervasive Shame
- Self-Contempt
- Isolated-Alone
  Empty/Shallow/Barren
  [Abortion Connection]
Surrounding Core wound: Protective Rage

Deep Hunger for Love Wholeness Safety and Security
A Deadly Relational Pattern

- Desperately Seeking to Fill Void—but as relationships deepen...

- Unhealed Core wound symptoms intensify - Re enacting Relational Dramas of Rejection & Betrayal

- Cycle Reinforces Core Shame Self Hatred/Hopelessness
Relationships / Self Image

- Toleration of Ups and Downs/ Ending
- Rush into Relationships With Idealized expectations
- Crisis and chaos
- Physically abusive
- Intimacy and Distance
Relationships / Self Image

- Re-creation of Abuse Themes
- Charming to outsiders – Nasty to you
- Feel in control by controlling you with their emotional outbursts and chaotic lives
- Acting In/Acting Out
Relationships / Self Image

- Lack of Responsibility For Victimization/Victimizing

Feelings happen to me – I have no control over them
Intimate Relationship With a BPD

■ You can’t do anything right

■ Feeling put down, denigrated... fearful of social activities because of partners impulsive behavior

■ Partner deals in polarizing absolutes

■ It’s never enough
BPD and RV Ministry

- Manipulating a Ministry Heart or an Effective Team Player – Idealization & Guilt

- Hypersensitivity as Manipulation—major drain of personal resources.

- When compassion is not compassionate
Price of Denial

- Authority of leader compromised as Dysfunctional Dynamics Spread
- Boundary Problems with Retreatants
- Early Intervention Important
- Re Focusing Individual to Deeper Healing and less personally toxic ministry.
Ministry With Trauma Victims

- The Steps of Healing and Singular Support
- Sexualizing Relationships
- Patterned/Conditioned Response to Intimacy Kindness Caring of Clergy
Ministry With Trauma Victims

- Recreating Forbidden Secrets
- Redeeming Internal Shame Through Intimacy with the Divine
- Becoming the Temptress-Divine Rejection
- The Twisting of the Gift
Boundaries in Ministry

- Adult boundary violations

- Not just a Ministry Problem! *The Flirtatious Optometrist.*

- Survey of 1351 Protestant Clergy revealed 37% involved in inappropriate sexual behavior

  (Fuller Institute of Church Group. Jan. 1993. Focus on the Family)
Boundary Problems: Common Characteristics

- Lack of emotionally intimate relationships
- Emotional abandonment/abuse/exploitation in family of origin.
- Identity as Caregiver
Vulnerable to act out at time of loss, emotional pain/rejection.

- Hunger for
  Intimacy/connection/healing

- Sexualizing grief/loss reinforces Shame/Self Contempt. Case example.
False sense of Entitlement

- False sense of entitlement rooted in perceived unique demands of ministry and hazard of burnt-out.
Resurrecting Our Vocations

- Education in Formation
- From Rationalization/Denial...to facing emotional pain & Moral failure
- Connecting & Healing past wounds and current acting out.
- Return to ministry – severity & frequency of offense
- Accountability Key
Trauma & The Brain

- Traditional talk therapy with victims of trauma may well be Ineffective and perhaps detrimental. (Daniel Sweeney, Ph.D.)

- Executive Function Compromised

- Unable to create a Cohesive Narrative
Speechless Terror

- Trauma by definition involves speechless terror...unable to put what they feel into words...

They are left with intense emotions...unable to articulate what is going on. (Trauma Specialist Bessel Van der Kolk, MD)
Talk Therapy and Trauma

- Encountering feeling/experience/memory of trauma...the part of brain controlling speech and executive function shuts down

- Client feels stuck in symptoms and struggles to progress in healing process

- Client may withdraw from counseling
Clergy on the Front Lines
Be Not Afraid!

- Majority of ministry relationships will be healthy.
- You can avoid the dysfunctional Relational Dramas & guide the wounded soul to Healing!
Clergy on the Front Lines
Be Not Afraid!

Fr Tom & Susan
The Honeymoon Period

Idealization

- Projection: The Priest As Perfect Father/Counselor
- Recognize warning signs
The Honeymoon Is Over

- Problem Internalizing Love of Others - Desperation & Rejection
- Lack of Boundaries
- Obsession - Worst Case Scenario... Restraining orders
Relational Withdrawal

- Rejection by “God”
- Same Tragic Ending
  Reenactment
  Reinforces Shame & Contempt
- Rage
A Community Healing Model: Key to Healing Victims of Trauma

- Don’t Journey Alone into the Heart of this Wound

- Avoid the Role of Singular Confidant & Counselor
Creating Safety for Priest & Wounded Person

- You are part of a Healing Team
- Positive Control
The Healing Team

- Post Abortion Lay Ministers

- *Trauma Sensitive* Group Process

- Counselor

- Physician/ Psychiatrist
The Healing Process

- Trauma Sensitive Group Process
- Bringing the Light Of Christ Into Core Wound
- Medical & Psych Assessment for Meds

©Silverander, ChrismanPhoto
The Healing Team

- Therapist Referral

- Carefully monitored psycho-pharmacology for symptom reduction
Treatment

- Cognitive behavioral therapy including psycho-education and skills training

- A RV Retreat will complement and empower other treatment strategies-Foundational Healing
Gently Guiding the Wounded Soul to Healing

- Use and build upon the initial ‘good feelings’ and trust

- You are part of a Healing Team: Boundaries and warmth and compassion

- Ongoing Meetings Contingent Upon... Follow Through With Referrals
Get the Spouse Involved

- Work to Engage the Spouse as a Partner in the Healing Journey
- Couples and RV Retreat
- Lazarus
The Confessional Encounter

- It is very important to understand that many women and men will continue to confess the sin over and over again because they interpret their continued post abortion symptoms as a sign that the sacrament “didn’t take or that God did not forgive them.”
Repeat Confessions

- Confession can become a ritual of grieving, an unhealthy way to memorialize the child.
Repeat Confessions

- A way to stay connected to the aborted child

- Finding healthy ways to grieve the loss and reconnect with the aborted child – this requires a process of healing.
The Confessional Encounter

- Assure her of the love and mercy of Christ and the good news that the Church welcomes her back with love and compassion.

- It is common for individuals to still experience feelings of shame, guilt and struggles with self forgiveness. This is normal and not a sign that the sacrament “didn’t take.”
The Confessional Encounter

- However it is often important to build upon the grace of the Sacrament, and go through a process of emotional and spiritual healing. You can share a small card or pamphlet on Rachel’s Vineyard/Project Rachel.
Confession

- Encourage them that the Rachel’s Vineyard retreat is very effective at treating the symptoms of shame, guilt, depression and anxiety associated with post abortion suffering.

- The message is one of encouragement, hope and empowerment by supplying resources for ongoing healing.
Rachel’s Vineyard
2004 Outcome Study
Part II
The Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat

- 59% completed survey more than one year after their retreat

- Average 3 years post-retreat.
Helpful or Harmful?

Question #10 Survey “Did Retreat Hurt or Help You?” using the scale

- 5 Harmful
- 0 Neutral
+5 Very Helpful
RV Retreat: Helpful or Harmful?

- 83% answered 5
  *Very Helpful*

- The average rating was 4.75.

- There were no negative ratings
The RV Retreat

- An Effective Healing experience Years after Weekend

- Effective with a population reporting significant mental health concerns after their abortion
Fetal Abnormality

- Complicated Grief

- www.perinatalhospice.org
“If we were given a normal child, we would not have been put in this situation. We are different from others who have aborted because we wanted this child. God put us in this impossible situation, forcing us to make these painful decisions. We are left without our child, and with powerful feelings of confusion, resentment anger and grief.”
Marriage Prep

- *We had a couple attend the retreat that truly touched everyone who attended and served on the team. The girl had an abortion before she met her fiancée. On their engaged encounter weekend she felt a strong desire to share this with him.*
Marriage Prep

The priest gently invited them to consider attending our Rachel’s Vineyard retreat before they got married the following month, and they immediately signed up.
Marriage Prep

It was so beautiful to see how supportive this young man was of her throughout the weekend. But it was also touching to hear some of his own story. They will have such a beautiful and holy marriage because it is rooted in the love and spirituality that they now share together.
Preaching About Abortion

- Alternatives
- Forgiveness and Healing
- See Through the Slogans