

R.A.F.T. (restorative action  
following the troubles)

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Armagh.

- RAFT began its life two years ago, with a response to the need in the community for therapy and help to overcome the trauma of some thirty years of living with violence and depravation.
- Our therapists work in a psychodynamic way and are trained in working with traumatised people.

A serene background image featuring a clear blue sky with wispy white clouds at the top, transitioning into a calm blue ocean with gentle ripples at the bottom. The horizon line is visible in the middle of the frame.

How can trauma be transformed?



# Trauma overview and definitions.

Trauma arises when the person cannot give meaning to dangerous experiences in the presence of overwhelming arousal.

## Stress.

The tension, strain and pressure experienced when faced with a demand or expectation that gradually or suddenly challenges the ability to cope with or manage life.

# Trauma / Traumatic Stress



# Trauma.

- Continuous exposure to violence and terror creates a socially toxic environment for the next generation, and the next and the next and so on, if it is not treated, it gets transferred.



# Trauma

Those at high risk include: survivors of natural disasters, survivors of previous trauma such as combat, sexual assault, domestic violence, alcoholic homes, war, terrorist acts, torture, and forced evacuation from home. Also at risk are rescue workers, fire fighters and police and those who witness acts of violence, even from a distance.

# What determines who is traumatised?

The event itself.

How threatening, how long does it last, how often does it occur?

Threatening events that are intense and continuous present the greatest challenges. Severely threatening incidents that occur repeatedly (but with some reprieve) can be equally challenging.

War and childhood abuse are two of the most common examples of traumatising events that usually exceed an individual's survival resources.



The content of an individual or group's life at the time of the event.

- Support or lack of support by family, friends and community
- The way the community views the event
- Faith spiritual meaning, a political cause
- State of health and mind, ongoing stress, fatigue levels, nutritional state.
- How in touch the individual or group is with their natural selves and emotions.

# Individual physical and emotional characteristics

- Persons age
- Level of physiological development
- Resilience/learned capabilities
- A traumatic reaction is valid regardless of how the event that induced it appears to anyone else.



# The person or group's sense of capacity to meet danger

- Internal and external resources, or degree of stress hardiness which includes the individual or group reaction to a challenge, the sense of control, the commitment to personal and spiritual growth through the event and closeness to each other, and a sustaining faith. Societal leaders can help groups develop resilience and a sense of success in handling the events. Adults can do the same for children.
- History of success or failure. Feelings of confidence or ability to handle adversity come from previous events.



# R.A.F.T. Objectives.

- Trauma Healing Journey: Breaking the Cycles of Victimhood/Violence
- To explore the physiological psycho-social and spiritual dimensions of trauma
- To recognise and describe the links between trauma and victimhood/aggression and the manifestations of acting-out and acting-in behaviours in individuals, groups or societies.
- To relate the model to personal and group experiences of victimisation and examine responses.
- To locate trauma awareness and recovery work within the larger field of peace building.

# Trauma healing:

- Trauma healing is not one directional. It clearly is not linear. Like the grief stages, a person jumps around rather than follow a tidy progression from one stage to the next. Trauma healing, like trauma itself, is messy, confusing, intense and overwhelming. Persons often jump around, surviving the best they can. Some may even start on the healing journey only to find themselves back in the victim or offender circles again,



# Trauma healing is both a decision and a process.

- The initial choice involves the decision to move toward healing or stay in the react/revenge/get even cycle. Trauma healing is also a process, in that it entails my being patient with myself (and others if a whole community is traumatised) as I go through this journey.



# Quotes.

- "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them, but the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart." Aleksandr Solzhenisyn.
- "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each mans life a sorrow and a suffering enough to disarm all hostility" Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

# TRAUMA INTERVENTIONS

- Naming what happened (or is happening)
- Expressing and working through emotions
- Re-establishing a sense of personal integrity and control
- Forming meaningful relationships with others
- Tapping into our own personal spirituality
- Working for a justice that restores
- Seeking root causes of what caused (or causes) the trauma and working to alleviate them



# Holistic Trauma Interventions

- A holistic approach to trauma after conflict results in
- Resilience
- Empowerment
- A kinder, Safer country (Emotionally, Spiritually, Economically and Politically ) for us today and to pass on to the next generation.



- THE PLACE WHERE TRAUMA AND PREVENTION MEET IS PEACEBUILDING.

