

Healing in Community: Faith-Informed Practices for Group Settings

Presenters

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About us

- 3rd Year Graduate Students
- Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs, CACREP
- Christian Institutions
- Currently in practicum/internship

Objectives of Faith Integration and Trauma-Informed Care

1

Faith, Safety &
Connection

2

Support Growth

3

Faith-Aligned
Activities

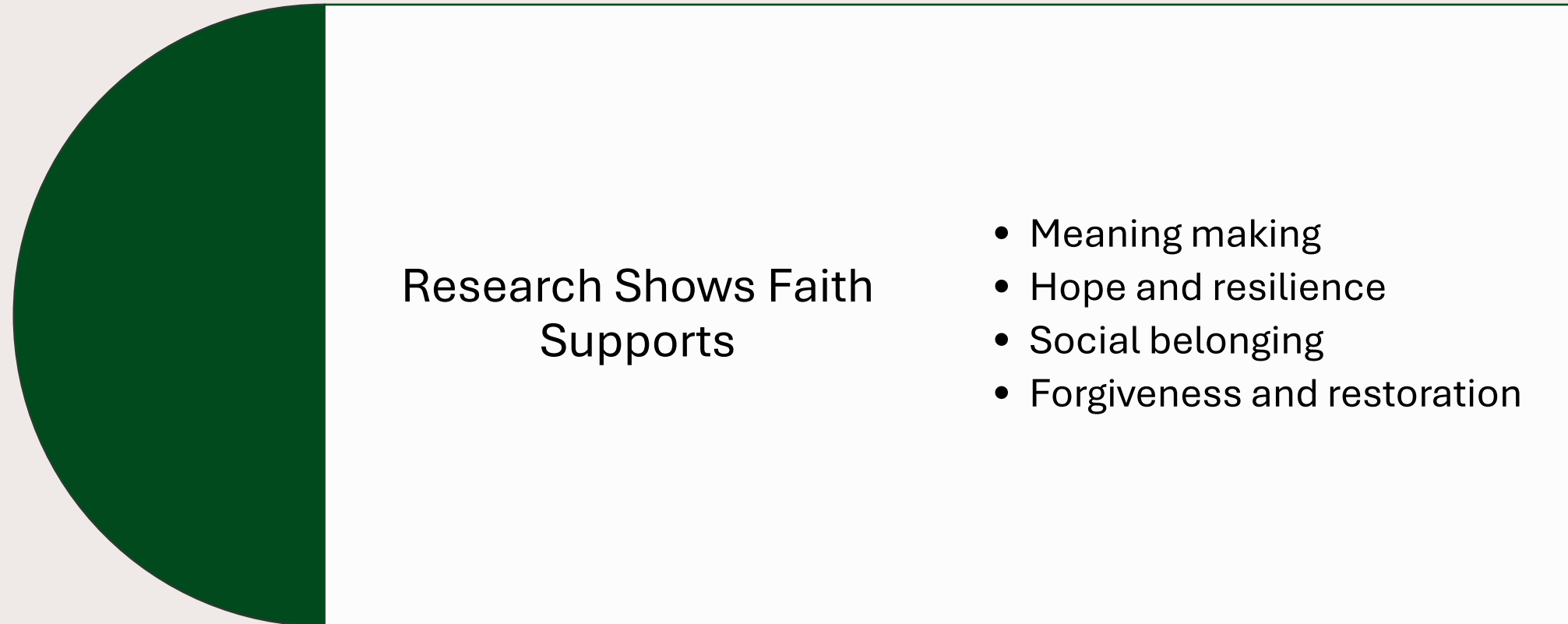


1

Faith, Safety, & Connection

Faith can strengthen these processes

Faith Matters in Trauma Recovery



Key: Faith often functions as an existing coping and meaning-making resource

Evidence for Trauma-Informed and Faith-Integrated Care

Group Trauma Therapy

- Reduced trauma symptoms
- Builds connection
- Instills hope

Faith-Integration

- Supports meaning-making
- Improves coping
- Enhances well-being

Key: Both approaches are supported by research

Reconstructing Meaning After Trauma

- Trauma disrupts

- Safety
- Meaning and purpose
- Identity

Facilitative Questions

What about your faith helps you feel grounded and secure right now?

How do you understand what you're going through in light of your faith?

How does your faith shape how you see yourself in this circumstance?

Key: Trauma disrupts meaning, recovery requires intentionally rebuilding each

Meaning-Making in Groups

- Groups support meaning through
 - Shared storytelling
 - Reflection
 - Dialogue
 - Exploration of values and beliefs



Key: Meaning is reconstructed through shared dialogue

Exercise: Where Was the Sacred Reflection

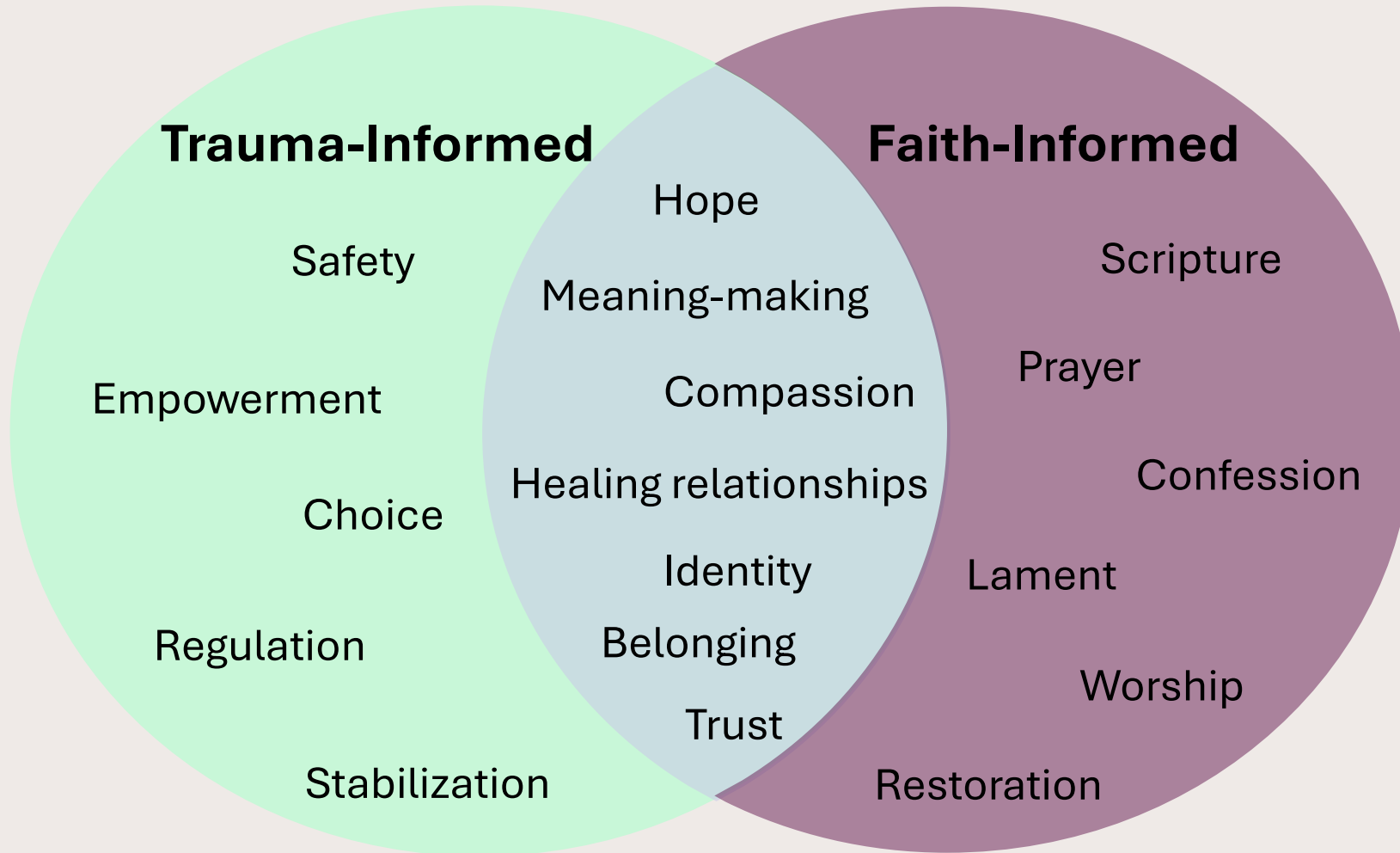
Recall a moderately challenging experience (3-5 intensity)

What did you notice in your thoughts and body?

Where did you notice presence, guidance, or strength beyond yourself?

Key: Meaning can emerge by noticing a higher presence within experiences

Where Trauma-Informed Care and Faith Overlap



Key: Both frameworks share core pathways to healing

Building Safe and Spiritually Sensitive Groups

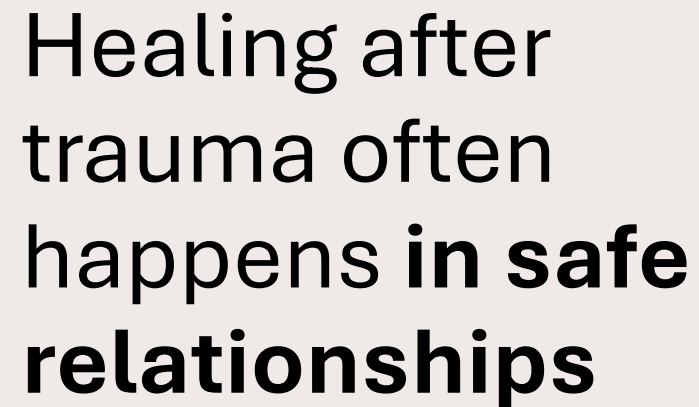
- Trauma-informed groups prioritize
 - Emotional safety
 - Predictable structure
 - Boundaries
 - Choice
- Faith integration supports safety when
 - Client-led
 - Optional
 - Non-coercive
 - Culturally and spiritually sensitive



Key: Safety is created through structure, clarity, and choice

Trauma-Informed Groups Foster Safety and Connection

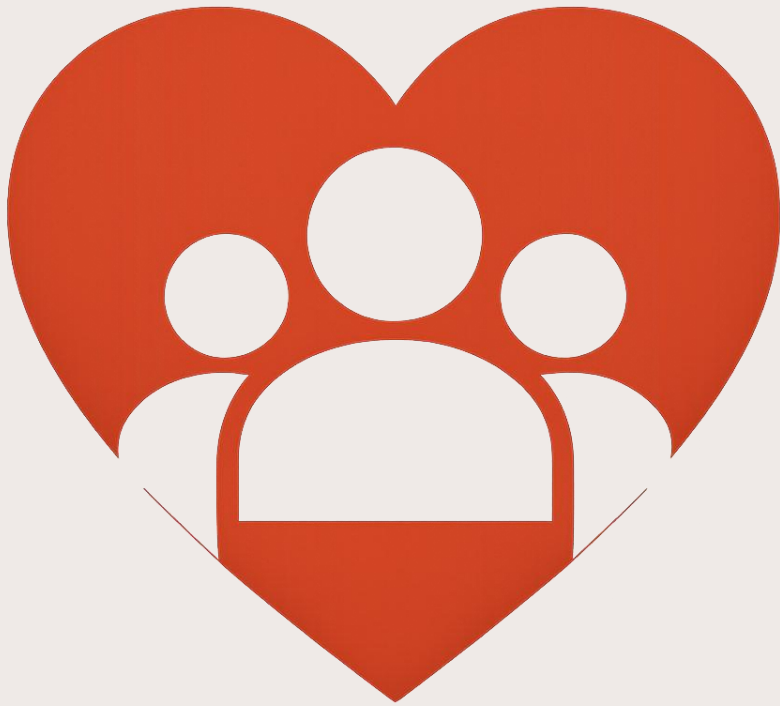
- Groups restore connection
 - Shared experiences
 - Peer validation
 - Reduced isolation
 - Relational support



Healing after
trauma often
happens **in safe
relationships**

Key: Connection helps repair the relational impact of trauma

Faith Can Deepen Connection



- Groups provide
 - Shared values
 - Hope narratives
 - Compassion
 - Encouragement
 - Practices of reflection
- Faith can
 - Reinforce belonging
 - Normalize struggle and growth
 - Promote empathy and mutual care

Key: Faith themes can strengthen group cohesion



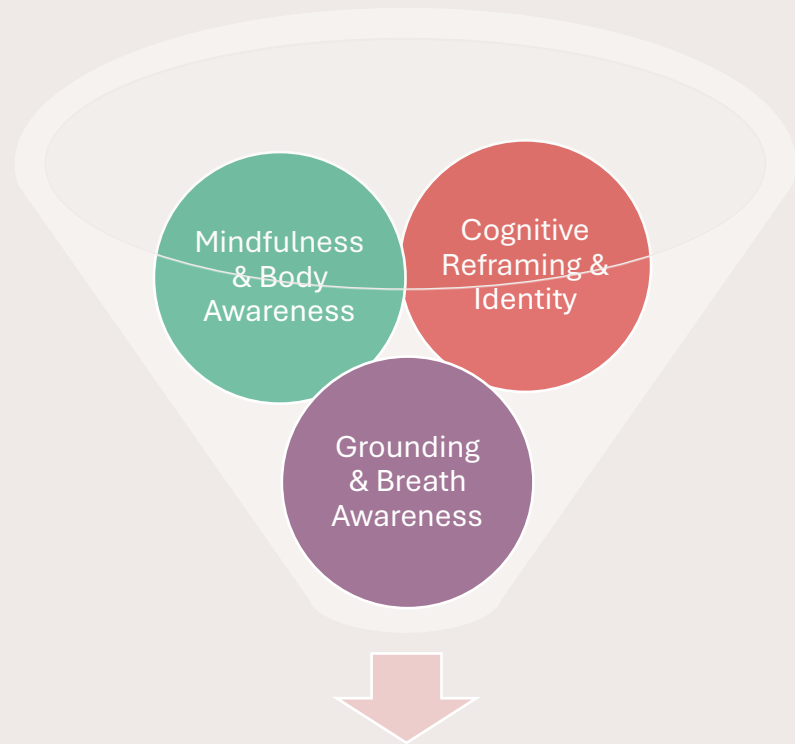
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Support Growth

Growth requires safety and skill development



Emotional Regulation



Nervous System Regulation

- Grounding breath prayer
- Mindfulness with Scripture
- Faith-based cognitive reframing
- Biblically-based identity

Inhale: Be still...
Exhale: ... and know that I am
God (Psalm 46:10)

There is now no
condemnation (Romans 8)

I am fearfully and
wonderfully made
(Psalm 139)

Key: Regulation skills enable safe emotional engagement

Spiritual Wounding and Faith Sensitivity

- Not all faith experiences are healing
- Some clients carry
 - Spiritual shame
 - Religious trauma
 - Experiences of exclusion or judgment
 - Misuse of scripture in past relationships
 - Shame or fear
 - Distrust
- Trauma-informed response
 - Curiosity over assumption
 - Validation of experience
 - Permission to question

Key: Spiritual experiences can be both supportive and harmful

Preventing Spiritual Bypassing

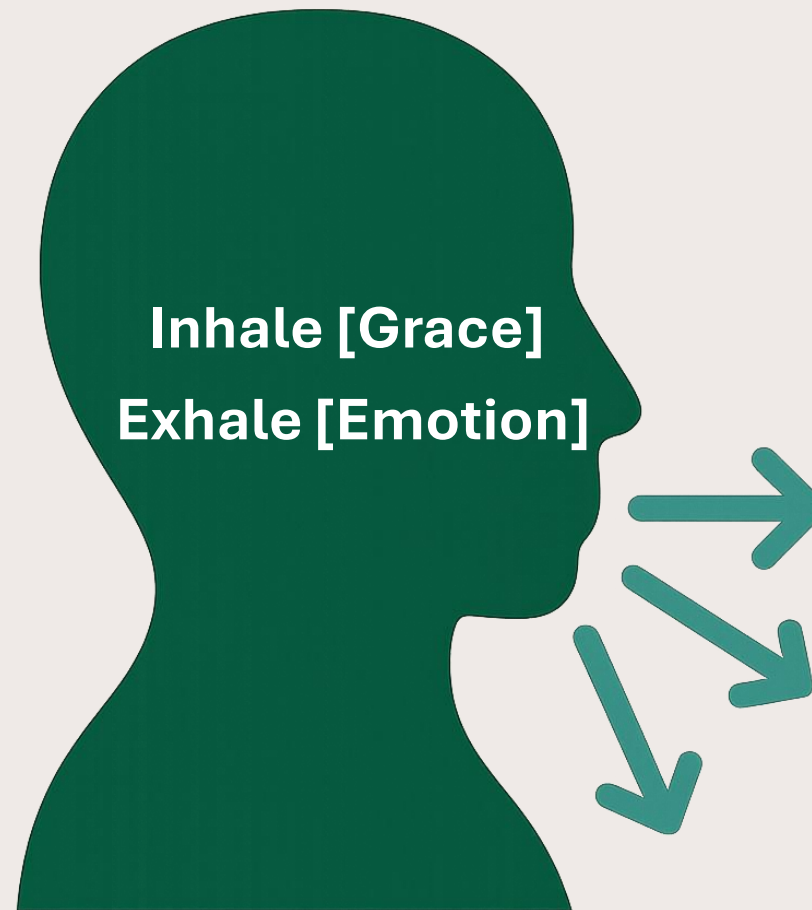
- Faith language used to
 - Avoid emotional processing
 - Minimize pain
 - Skip processing
- Informed response
 - Validate emotion
 - Encourage honest reflection
 - Integrate faith with emotional awareness

You just need more faith
You should forgive and forget
It's all in God's plan
God won't give you more than you can handle

That hurt makes sense. God sees you in it.
Your feelings are valid. Let's explore what they're telling you.
That sounds heavy. You're not alone, God is near.
You can bring this to God, no filter needed.

Key: Healing requires emotional processing, not avoidance

Exercise: Emotional Regulation in Practice



Key: Quick emotional reset and spiritual grounding that can be used anywhere



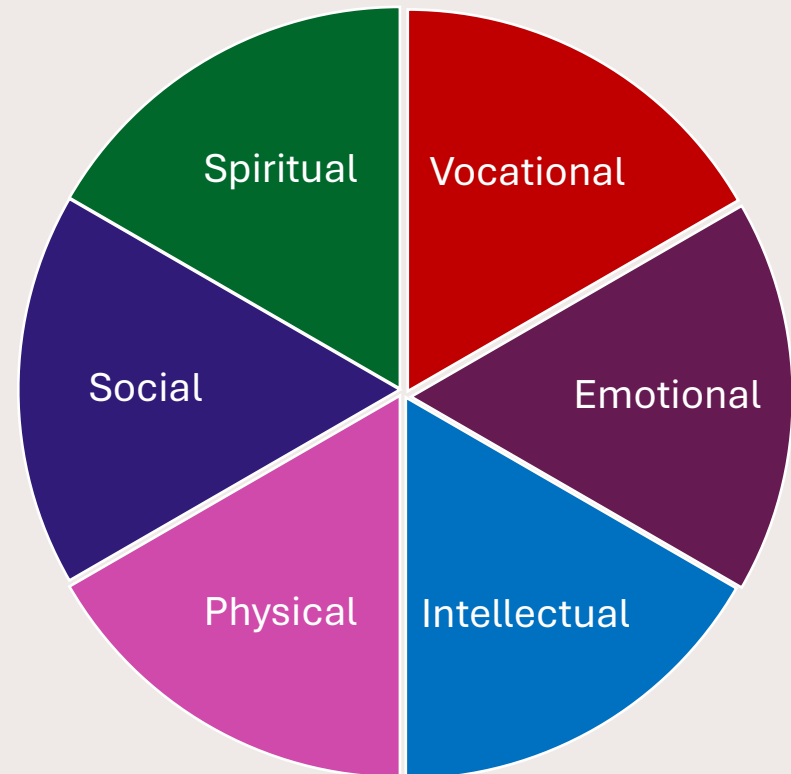
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Faith-Aligned Activities

Application bridges insight and change

Whole-Person Healing

- Trauma affects multiple dimensions of life
 - Vocational
 - Emotional
 - Intellectual
 - Physical
 - Social
 - Spiritual
- Healing involves restoring balance across all areas



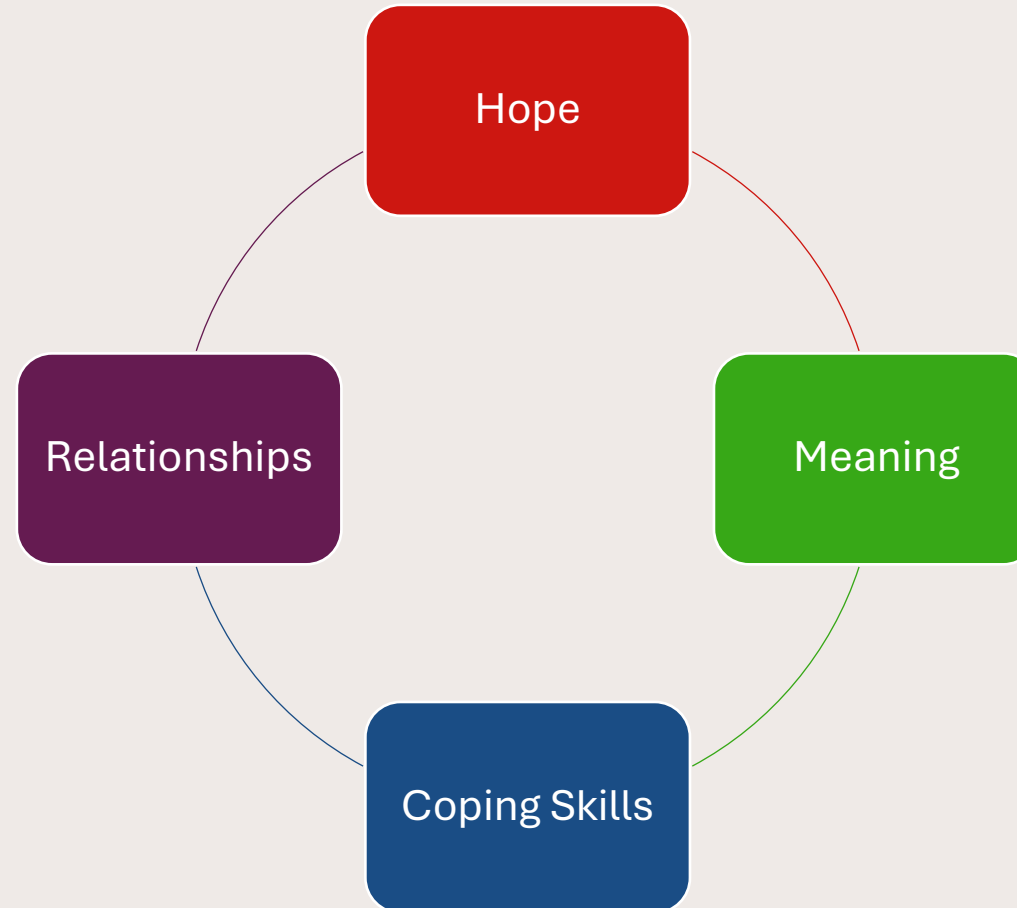
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Key: Healing must address the whole person

Encouraging Resilience and Hope Through Faith



Key: Resilience grows through connection and meaning

Faith Practices

- Provide
 - Hope-centered narratives
 - Prayer or reflective practices
 - Supportive community relationships
 - Language for suffering and restoration
- Support
 - Emotional regulation
 - Meaning-making
 - Connection and belonging
 - Long-term resilience

Key: Faith-based practices can strengthen resilience

Practical Activities for Faith-Informed Groups

- Activities
 - Reflection exercises
 - Group discussion
 - Strength identification
 - Regulation practices
- Principles
 - Safety first
 - Client autonomy
 - Structure
 - Honesty

Key: Activities turn insight into lived experience

Practical Group Structure



Key: Faith can be meaningfully woven into each phase

Key Takeaways



Safety and connection drive healing



Growth requires regulation



Groups foster belonging



Support meaning and resilience

Key: Integrating faith into group work fosters deeper, more enduring healing

Resources for Integrating Faith

Organizations

- American Association of Christian Counselors (AACCC)
- Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC)
- Association of Biblical Counselors (ABC)
- Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACB)
- Christian Counseling and Education Foundation (CCEF)



Q&A



Thank You

