



Presentation Notes #1
The Emotional Weight of Trauma-How It Affects Heart Health
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Introduction

- Recognize how trauma impacts the entire body, especially the cardiovascular system.
- Understand why the heart is particularly vulnerable to emotional wounds caused by trauma.
- Describe the structure and role of the heart's "mini brain" (Intrinsic Cardiac Nervous System).
- Explore scientific and spiritual implications of the heart-brain connection.
- Compare the mental and physical effects of trauma on heart function and brain activity.

Scripture Foundation *Philippians 4:7 (KJV)*: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Seen Trauma: Hospital Trauma Unit

- Treats life-threatening injuries (accidents, violence, falls)

Unseen Trauma: Emotional Trauma

- Deeply distressing experiences (abuse, neglect, violence, loss)
- Impacts emotions, relationships, and physical health
- Defined by the APA as emotional responses to terrible events

Cause – Response – Effect

- Unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, physical symptoms

Traditional-Cultural Responses to Trauma

- Offer water, olive oil, splash of water
- To encourage steady breathing
- Activate parasympathetic nervous system (sense of safety)



Immediate Trauma Responses (Minutes to Hours)

- *Psychological*: Acute Stress Reaction (ASR), derealization, depersonalization
- *Physiological*: Fight-Flight-Freeze
- *Neurological*: Amygdala (fear), Hippocampus (memory), Prefrontal Cortex (logic)

Short-Term Trauma Responses (Days to Weeks)

- Acute Stress Disorder (ASD): sleep issues, emotional eating, irritability
- Risk of substance abuse, re-traumatization

Types of Emotional Trauma

- Acute: sudden events (e.g., assault)
- Chronic: ongoing exposure (e.g., abuse)
- Complex: multiple exposures

Major Organs Connected to the Vagus Nerve

- Brain: Mood, stress
- Larynx/Pharynx: Speech, swallowing
- Lungs: Breathing
- Heart: Heart rate, blood pressure
- Stomach: Digestion
- Liver: Blood sugar, detox
- Pancreas: Insulin, enzymes
- Spleen: Immune response
- Kidneys: Blood pressure
- Intestines: Nutrient absorption

The Heart-Brain Connection

- The heart sends more info to the brain than any other organ (HeartMath Institute)
- ICNS (Intrinsic Cardiac Nervous System):
 - 40,000+ neurons, communicates via vagus nerve
 - Regulates heartbeat, emotions, and resilience

Scientific Insight



Emotional stress causes heart strain: fight/flight, hypertension, dysfunction

- PTSD increases cardiovascular risk (Edmondson & von Känel, 2017)
 - Women and veterans with trauma = higher heart disease risk
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Scripture Insights

- *Jeremiah 17:9*: “The heart is deceitful above all things...”
 - *Proverbs 15:13*: “...by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.”
 - *Psalms 13:2*: “...sorrow in my heart daily...”
 - *Proverbs 4:23*: “Keep thy heart with all diligence...”
 - *Psalms 19:14*: “Let the meditation of my heart be acceptable...”
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Things that can wrong with our hearts... Six major categories.

Warning Signs of Heart Overload

- Rapid heartbeat
 - Chest tightness
 - Fatigue
 - Emotional detachment
 - Numbing
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Heart Health = Brain Health

- Trauma floods the body with stress hormones
- Prolonged exposure impairs reasoning and regulation
- Quick intervention is key

Scientific and Spiritual Harmony

- Emotional support doubles survival after heart attack (Proof Positive)
 - Anger doubles risk of heart attack in those with existing disease
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HEART health is also BRAIN Health

Response and intervene QUICKLY!!!



"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." (Psalm 19:14)

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