

The Role of Faith in Trauma Survivors

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Trauma

A disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury (Merriam-Webster)

Psychologically effects the way we view life



Changes views
(schemas)



Disrupts processes



Affects the way we
internally associate



Survivors want to
find meaning

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Schema – building blocks for processing information

Assimilation

- Uses existing schema to deal with new objects
- Example

Accommodation

- Existing schemas do not work and need to be changed to deal with new objects or situations
- Example

“most common form of coping utilized by individuals in times of stress” (Falsetti, 392)

Religious Coping



Negative Religious Coping

- Negative concepts of God:
 - Punishment
 - Act of Satan
 - God should have protected
- Influenced by Toxic Theology
- Can lead to complicated grief



Conflict - religious belief vs. reality



Contains aspects of negative coping strategies



Complicates our process of grieving



Creates guilt

Complicated Grief



Disrupts normal grieving process



Normal Grieving includes

Denial

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance

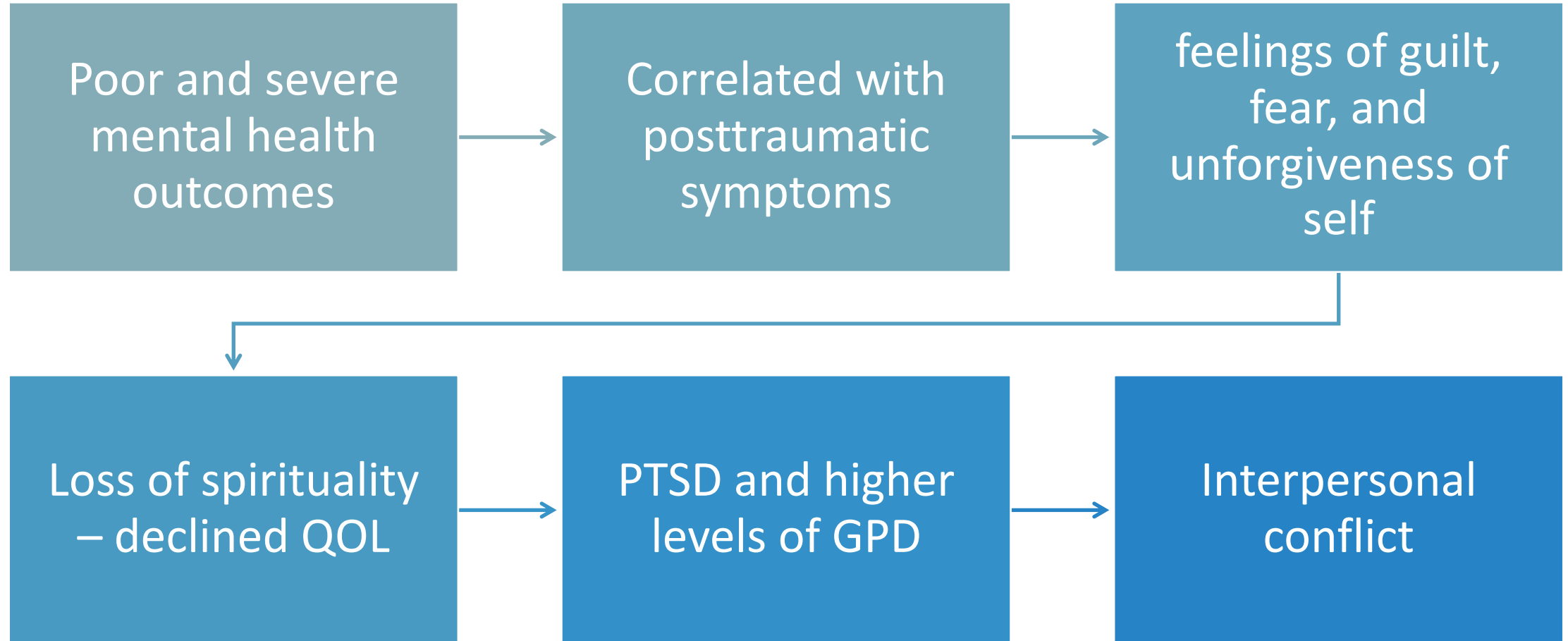


Complicated Grieving

exaggerated responses

PTSD


Outcomes





Positive Religious Coping

- Positive relationship with God
 - Spiritual support
 - Thanking God
 - Forgiving God
 - Direction/meaning
 - Use of community
- Effects:
 - Comfort and hope
 - Better mental health outcomes
 - Posttraumatic growth
 - Gives meaning to life

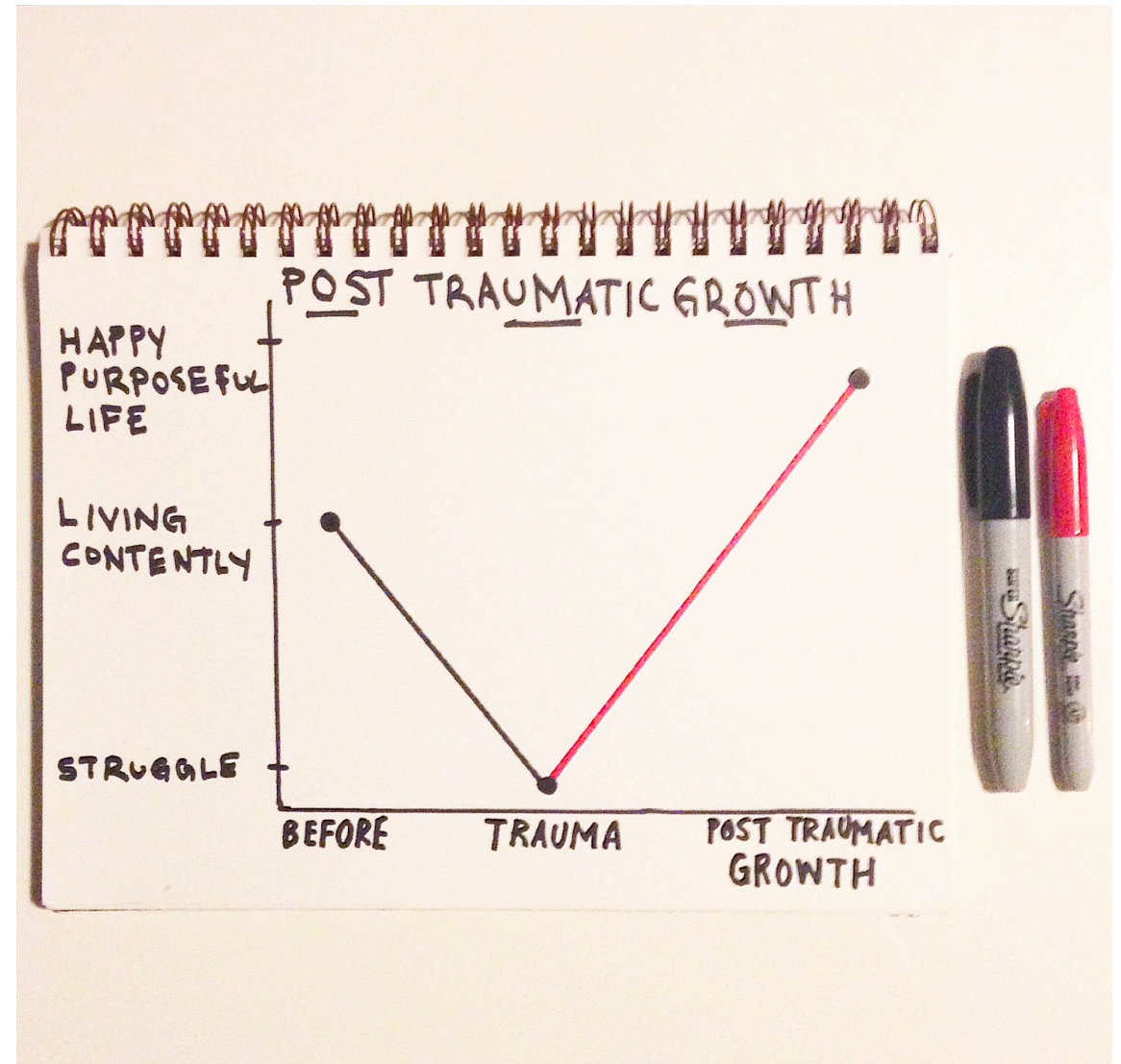
A silhouette of a woman's head in profile, facing right. The interior of the head is filled with a vibrant sunset scene over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water's surface. The sky is a mix of orange and light blue. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Spirituality vs. Religion

- Spiritual (SBNR)
 - Meaning
 - No God that rewards/punishes
 - A “good person” is good enough
- Religion
 - Teachings, doctrines, institutions
 - Community
 - Encourages spirituality
- Spirituality
 - Better health outcomes
 - Ability to buffering against distress
 - Forgiving
 - Predictor of PTG

Posttraumatic Growth

- Falsetti study
 - 8% less religious – 19% more religious
 - Was religious coping helpful?
 - 56% yes – 24% no – 20% did not use
 - PTSD or Trauma?
- Encouraged through religious community
- Positive religious coping strategies, religious comfort, and prayer



Our image of God

Important to view God in all forms – good and bad

- Similarity in going through stages of grief
- Acknowledge all the characteristics of God

“until the evil Gods can be addressed, significant parts of the traumatized self will be left out of the [healing] process” - Cataldo

Negative image = poorer mental health

Positive image = ability to reduce psychological issues

Improve or harm mental and overall health

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