

What church offers:

Hope
Health
Happiness
Comfort
Relationships
Love
Support
Prayer
Family
Community
Safety
Acceptance

Sponsored by the Sisters Health Foundation



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What Churches Need to Know About Trauma Pamphlet Series

Pamphlet #1 – Why Church Is Important

*Come to me, all you
that are weary and
are carrying heavy
burdens, and I will
give you rest.”
Matthew 11:28*

Trauma decreases our
ability to live,
laugh, and love.

Church increases our
ability to live,
laugh, and love.

Why Church Is Important

Churchgoers often tell people that church is important and sometimes the response is to ask why church is important. There is now science that supports the claim that regularly attending church has health benefits. In the May 16 issue of *Jama Internal Medicine*, a study was published by a Professor VanderWeele at Harvard that gave the results of a 20-year study. During this 20-year period, more than 75,000 women, ages 46-71, were studied. The women who attended church regularly lived longer than those who did not regularly attend. Women who attended were more likely to have healthy lifestyles.

A study done by Duke University showed that people actively involved in a religious activity had lower blood pressure and less mental illness. According to the *Southern Medical Journal* people who attend church are less likely to be hospitalized.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) are events that occur in childhood that are particularly stressful or traumatic. These events include abuse and neglect, witnessing domestic violence, having family members who struggle with substance abuse or mental illness, parental separation or divorce, and having a family member who is incarcerated. The CDC along with Kaiser Permanente conducted a study from 1995-1997 with 17,000 people to determine how an ACE score impacted the lives of adults. The study concluded that the ACE score an individual has the more likely they are to experience health problems, substance abuse problems, financial problems and other life altering conditions.

Putting it Together

Imagine being a child living with any of the above conditions and someone from the local church begins to take you to church with them. We know from the studies listed that church positively impacts lives and health. One of the best ways to intervene for persons with high ACE scores or those living the realities that will result in high ACE scores is to surround them with all the positive characteristics of church: support, hope, love, relationship, family, help, and so much more.

Individuals can discover their own
ACE score at www.acestoohigh.com

Trauma Narratives in the Bible

All that we experience in life today that can result in trauma is present in the Bible: abuse, slavery, war, natural disasters, accidents, famine, disease, and other stressful events. This lets us know that God understands the human life and all that we deal with on a day to day basis. There is much to learn in the Bible about how God responds to trauma (Pamphlet #4 – How God Helps).

Trauma and Faith

When we more fully understand trauma, we are better able to use our faith to help us deal with the effects. Too often, we can fall into the trap of believing that the ONLY action we need to take is prayer or that we simply are not being a good Christian or that our faith is not strong enough. Sometimes action IN ADDITION to prayer needs to be taken (these are discussed in Pamphlet #3 – Caring for Trauma). It is okay to seek help from professionals even as we pray for God's healing. It is okay to take medication when prescribed by a doctor when the need for medicinal help has been determined by a doctor.

Pamphlet #2

An Understanding of Trauma

- *Signs and symptoms*
- *How the body is affected*
- *How intervention helps*