

Bringing Life to Loss and Trauma

Supporting Ministries in Their Mission



My 9/11 Story

God's presence in suffering teaches us how to serve people who are traumatized and grieving.

No day shall
erase you from
the memory of
time. - Virgil





Christ at Gethsemane

The One who suffered through grief and trauma perfectly.

Matt. 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-34, Luke 22:39-46,
John 18:1-12



Christ at Gethsemane


- **32** They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." **33** He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. **34** "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."
- **35** Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. **36** "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."
- **37** Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? **38** Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."



Christ at Gethsemane

- "Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. **40** When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.
- **41** Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. **42** Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

My Story

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ryanedlind.org

Ryan Edlind Home Services & Directions Hours & Rates About Me FAQ Links & Resources

Counseling & Consultant

Grief Counselor, Trauma & Couple's Therapist

Welcome to My Site!



Ryan Edlind provides counseling services including teens and adults, couples, and families. He also provides consulting services and continuing education presentations. Ryan is passionate about the fields of individual counseling and couples therapy, grief, trauma, and adult ADHD. He has completed extensive training in counseling, social work, seminary, and EMDR. Ryan has professional experience as a Clinical Director, pastor, and also teaches at Case Western Reserve



Agenda

- Introduction
- Christ at Gethsemane
- Risks of Compassion Fatigue, Unprocessed Grief, & Burnout
- The Nature of Trauma
- Leadership Application: Trauma
- The Grief Process
- Leadership Application: Grief
- Trauma and Grief in the Spiritual Domain
- Leadership Application: Spiritual Domain
- The Power of Presence
- Cultural and Individual Diversity
- Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth



Introduction

- Presentation Title- Bringing Life to Loss and Trauma: Supporting Ministries in Their Mission
- Navigating Grief and Trauma: Advanced Concepts and Foundational Skills

The Nature of Suffering

- Suffering is not a question but a reality of life. - C.S. Lewis
- God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. - C.S. Lewis
- So take seriously the story that God has given you to live. It's time to read your own life, because your story is the one that could set us all ablaze. - Dr. Dan Allender



Risks of Compassion Fatigue, Unprocessed Grief, & Burnout





Impact of Trauma

- Effects of Trauma- Van der Kolk
 - Impacts brain function
 - Affects physical health
 - Influences relationships
 - Alters worldview and spiritual beliefs
- Post-Trauma Risk Factors
 - Lack of social support
 - Concurrent life stressors

Definition and Types of Trauma

- The Nature of Trauma- Judith Herman, M.D.
 - Definition: Emotional response to distressing event
 - Overwhelms ability to cope
- Types of Trauma
 - Acute Trauma
 - Single event (e.g., accident, assault)
 - Chronic Trauma
 - Repeated exposure (e.g., abuse, ongoing crisis)

Prevalence of Trauma

- National Co-morbidity Survey
 - Conducted by Kessler et al., 1995
 - Benchmark study with 5000 US adults
- Trauma Experience in Lifetime
 - 61% of men
 - 51% of women
- Multiple Traumas
 - More than 25% experience multiple traumas
 - Types of trauma: witness, accident, threat, natural disaster, physical attack, combat, abuse/neglect, molestation, rape



Ministry Application: Trauma

- Trauma-Informed Approach
 - Maintain a tone that is sensitive to trauma
 - Be present and use language that acknowledges trauma
- Understanding Trauma's Impact
 - Recognize how trauma can affect basic beliefs
 - Understand challenges to faith, hope, and trust

Scriptures on Trauma

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - God comforts us in all our troubles.
- Isaiah 41:10 - Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed.
- Philippians 4:6-7 - Do not be anxious about anything.
- Psalm 39:12-13, 126:1-6 Praying our tears



Understanding Grief

- Grief is normative and not linear
 - Kübler-Ross's five stages model (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) is well intended but outdated
 - Grief counselors no longer use this model
- Identifying a person's narrative to create meaning
 - Supported by recent research -Halam
 - Focus on choices, tasks, people, and things needed for a long journey
 - Researchers: Worden, Attig, and Wolfelt

Types of Grief

- Anticipatory Grief
 - Occurs before an impending loss
- Complicated or Prolonged Grief
 - Extends beyond the typical grieving period
- Disenfranchised Grief
 - Grief not socially acknowledged
- Collective Grief
 - Occurs after mass tragedy or community trauma

Ministry Application: Grief

- Grief vs. Mourning
 - Understanding the difference between grief and mourning
 - Grief is the internal experience of loss
 - Mourning is the external expression of grief
 - Choosing how to respond- Frankle
- Offer Presence Over Answers- Wolfelt
 - Importance of being present for those in need
 - Providing emotional support rather than solutions
 - Listening and empathizing with individuals

Scriptures on Grief

- Psalm 34:18 - The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.
- Matthew 5:4 - Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- Revelation 21:4 - He will wipe every tear from their eyes.



Finding Strength in Grief

- Grief is the price we pay for love. - Queen Elizabeth II
- In our suffering, we find God's presence more than in our joys. - Henri Nouwen
- There's no higher dream than experiencing God as He moves through every circumstance of life to an eternal encounter with Himself where transformed people will enjoy perfectly loving community around Jesus Christ, the source of Perfect Love.- Larry Crabb



Spiritual Distress from Trauma

- Spiritual Distress from Trauma
 - Questioning God's presence and power
 - Seeking reasons and accountability for the trauma
 - Feeling punished and questioning self-worth



Spiritual Impact of Grief

- Loss of meaning or purpose
 - Grief can cause individuals to feel that their life lacks direction
- Questioning previously held beliefs
 - Grief may lead to doubts about one's faith or values
- Feeling spiritually abandoned
 - Individuals may feel disconnected from their spiritual beliefs



Ministry Application: Spiritual Domain

- Reframe Spiritual Story
 - Utilize cognitive restructuring
 - Apply frames of compassion
 - Use strengths-based perspective
- Comfort with Theological Uncertainty
 - Ability to sit with uncertainty
 - Handle lament
 - Seek connection over relief



The Power of Presence



Ministry of Presence

Non-anxious
support
Compassionate
and silent



Avoid Rushing

Do not rush to
fix
Do not rush to
explain

Cultural and Individual Diversity

- Factors Shaping Grief and Trauma Responses
 - Culture and ethnicity
 - Gender and age
 - Previous losses and mental health
 - Perceived support system
- Importance of Cultural Awareness
 - Rituals and taboos
 - Cultural mourning practices





Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth

- Positive Changes from Trauma and Grief
 - Trauma and grief can lead to deeper meaning
 - Purpose and stronger faith can emerge from adversity

Compassion Fatigue vs. Burnout

- Definitions and Differences
 - Compassion fatigue: Emotional and physical exhaustion from prolonged exposure to others' suffering
 - Also known as "secondary traumatic stress"
 - Burnout: General workplace stress
 - Related to feeling overworked, undervalued, or disconnected from one's work



Developing Personal Resilience & Sustainable Self-Care Practices

- Learning emotional and biblical renewal techniques
 - Self-regulation and co-regulation
 - Distress tolerance and DBT
 - Ceremonies for losses & growth
 - Writing but not sending unedited letters to self & others
 - Decophage and art
 - EMDR





Making Peace with Our Past

- Definition of Countertransference
 - Emotional reactions of counselors towards clients
 - Influenced by counselor's own past experiences
- Identifying Triggers
 - Events that evoke strong emotions
 - People who remind counselors of someone from their past
- Impact on Counseling
 - Can affect objectivity and effectiveness
 - Important to recognize and manage

“...the greatest and most important problems of life are all fundamentally insoluble...They can never be solved, but only outgrown...What on a lower level had led to the wildest conflicts and to emotions full of panic, viewed from the higher-level of the personality now seemed like a storm in a valley seen from a high mountain top. This does not mean that the thunderstorm is robbed of its reality; it means that, instead of being in it, one is now above it.” (Carl Jung)



Purpose and Materials

- Purpose of the Timeline
 - Visually represents the journey through grief and trauma
 - Tracks the intensity of feelings over time
 - Shows the emergence of growth or coping strategies
- Materials Needed
 - Large piece of paper or a digital canvas
 - Markers or drawing tools





Event Descriptions

- Phase 1: Negative and Positive Life Events (5 min.)
 - Highlight with a number +/- 1-10 intensity, based on here and now, using timeline
 - Give it 1 or 2 word description
 - Take deep breath before and after each exercise
- Phase 2: Ask to hear their life story birth to present (30 min.)
 - Listen with compassion, curiosity, & acceptance
 - Only listen, relax your body, & don't probe or clarify
 - Authentically honor their courage to share
- Phase 3: Select a mid level negative event, not worst (5 min.)
 - Highlight with a perceived threat and then survival
- Phase 4: Draw 6 box picture of this event (5 min.)
 - Draw the first and last box as beginning and ending

Timeline Example: By Eric Gentry

As many negative life experiences (based here and now) -1 to -10
As many positive life experiences +1 to +10

Birth

Present



Phase 1: List Negative and Positive Events

+10



Marriage

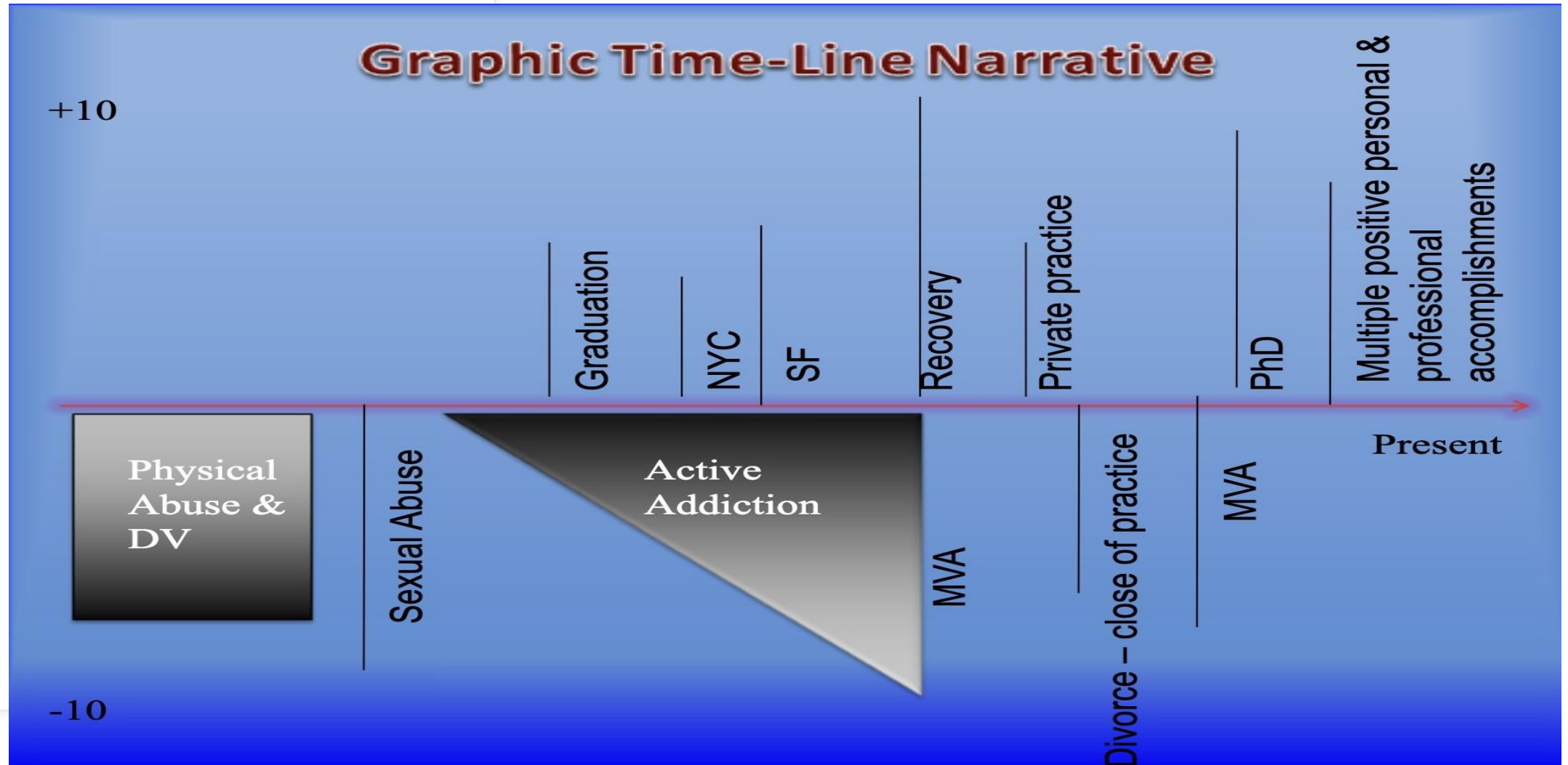
Kids

Abuse

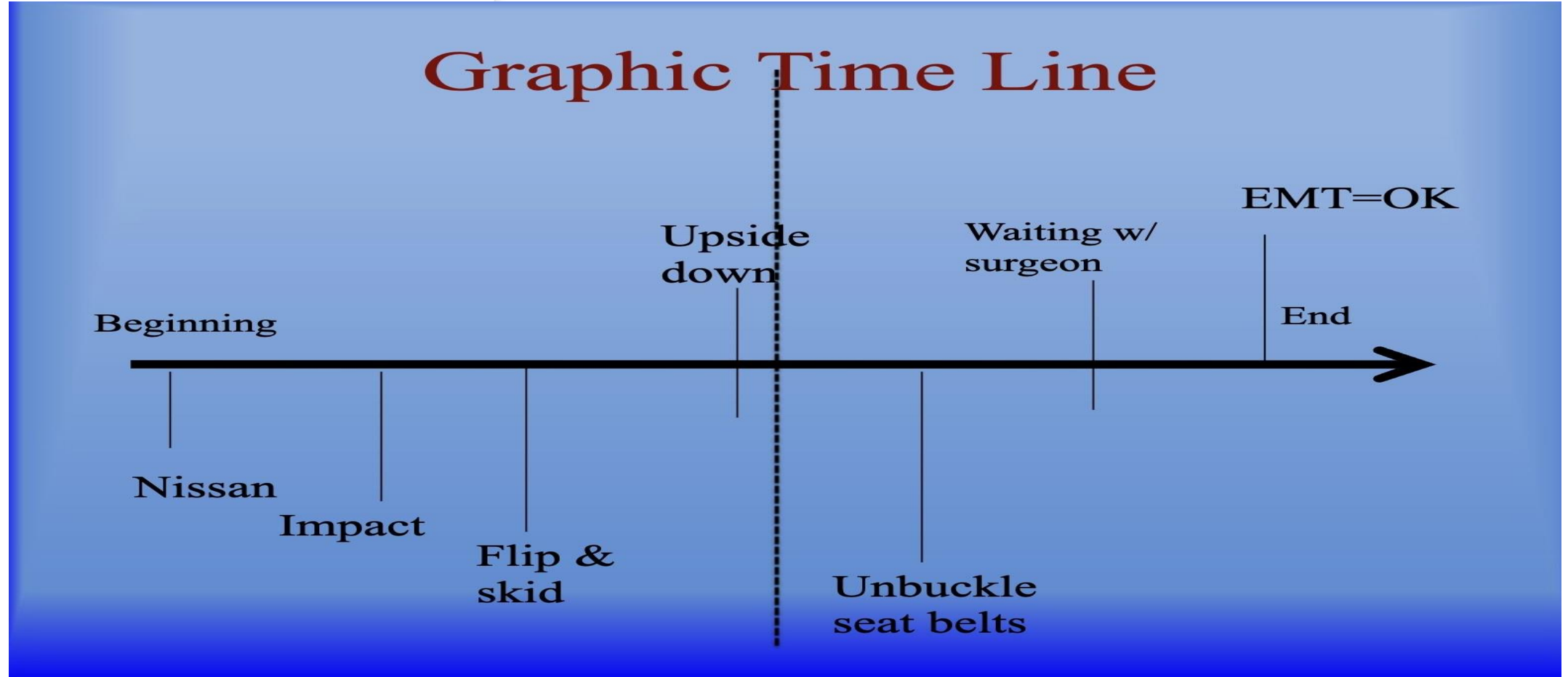


-10

Phase 2: Listen to Their Life Story



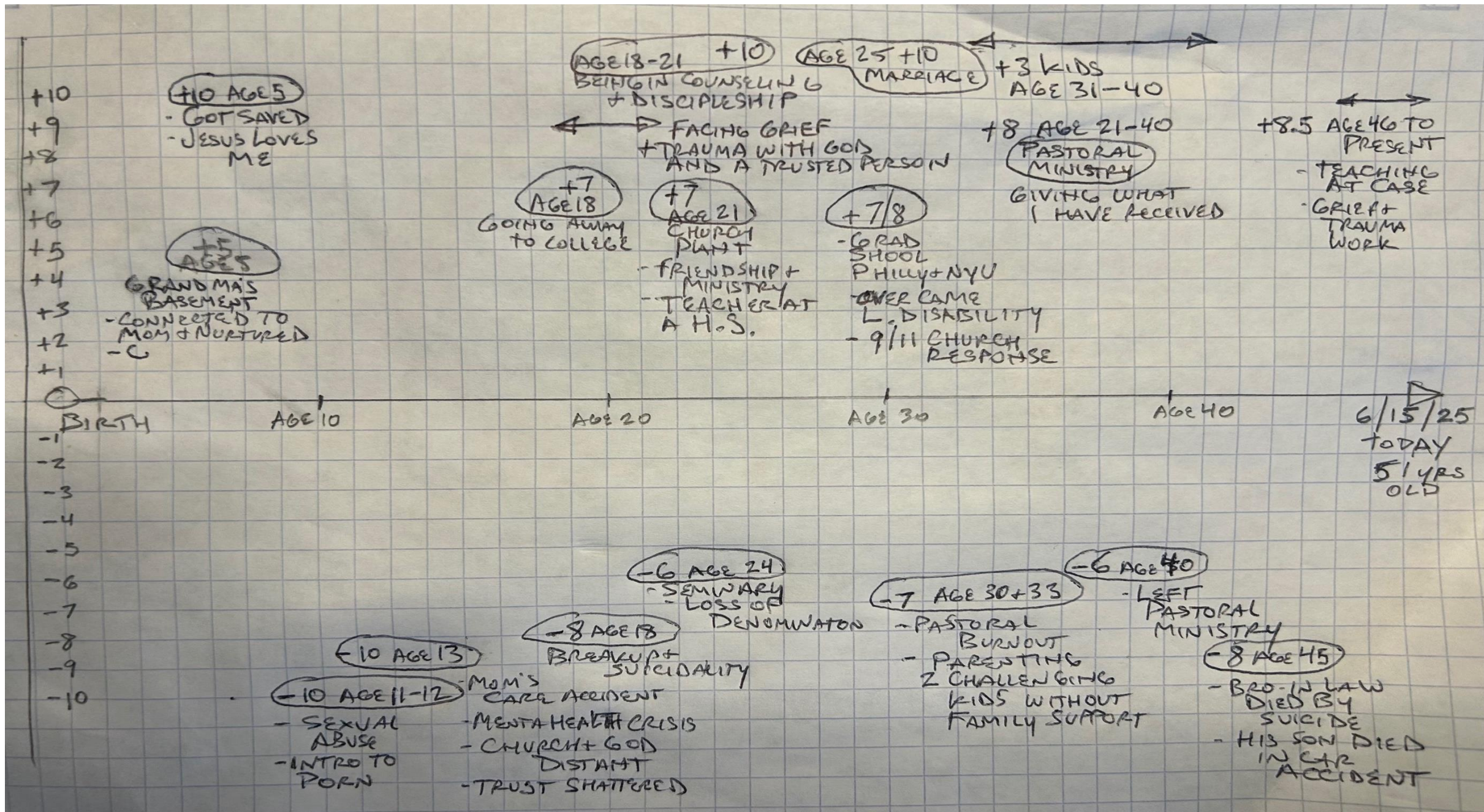
Phase 3: Timeline mid-level negative event



Phase 4: Drawing out single event

Pictorial Narrative





NEGATIVE

- Sexual ABUSE AGE 10
- MOM'S ACCIDENT AGE 12
- 1st HOSPITALIZATION AGE 14
- ^{summary} SCHOOL → HIGH SCHOOL - 18
- Break up SUICIDALITY - 18
- MISSIONARY APPRENTICE - 21
- SEMINARY - LOSS - 25
- of DENUNCIATION
- PASTORAL BURNOUT 30
- 2 ^{big} KIDS - 33 - TODAY
- TURBULENCE
- LEAVING CHURCH - 40

POSITIVE

- GRANDMA'S BASEMENT 5
- ^{GRADE} SCHOOL → ~~STAY~~ 18-21
- COUNSELING/DISCIPLINE 18-21
- CHURCH PLANT 21
- TEACHER H.S. 21-23
- GRAD SCHOOL 21-23
- MARRIAGE (3 KIDS) 31-40
- NYU - 26-28
- CALVARY/CVC - 30

LIFE

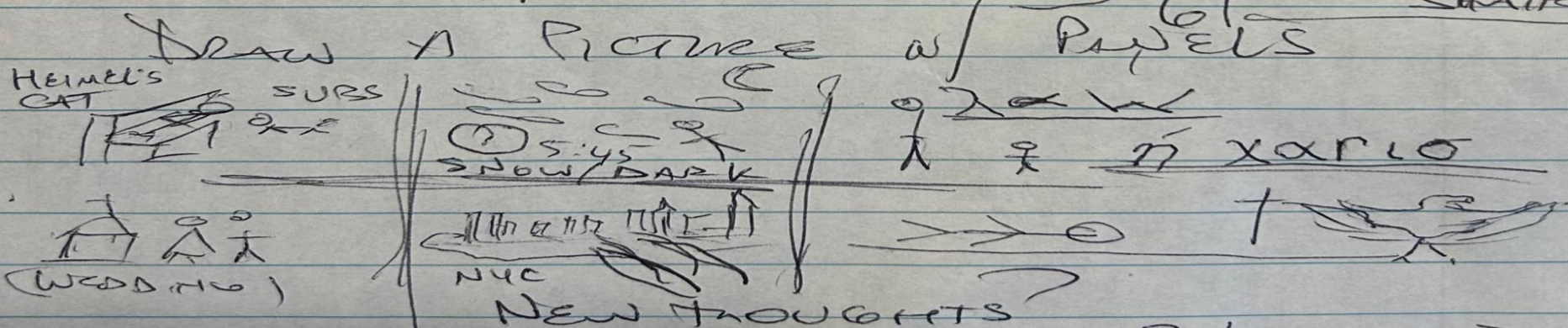
- +9 - TEACHING @ SOUTH SHORE
- +5 - PASTORING / MENTORED BY CROMPTON
- +8 - LEARNED ^{HOWE} GREEK
- +10 - MET JENN - LAW SCHOOL IN NYC
- +9 - PB, U & GPA 3.7
- +9 - PAUL BELL - ROOMMATE / BEST FRIEND
- +4 - HOME LIFE IMPROVED
- +5 - FOUND S.W / CALVARY
- +8 - ELDER POLE & HOLY SPIRIT SPOKE.
PRAYED + WROTE LETTER TO PROF.

DEATH

- 8 - D + F IN GREEK, LOW GPA
- 9 - LEARNING DISABILITY
(Prof. SAID - SHOULDN'T BE IN GRAD SCHOOL)
- 7 - NOT A FIT - BAPTIST? NOT THAT KIND.
- 3 - DEBT - \$15,000 + QUIT
- 3 - NO JOBS IN NYC
- 5 FOSTER CARE. ~~SUB~~ -5
- 6 POVERTY, VIOLENCE, MENTAL ILLNESS
ADDICTION, HOMELASS
(IM PRIVILEGED) PROJECTS
* WHITE HOPE SHATTERED.

Phase 4

DEATH.



FEELINGS? BODY EXPERIENCES? LEARNED?

(MORE GOOD, LONG TERM, THAN BAD - SHORT TERM) (PREPARED)

- * I WAS NOT ALONE - THERE FEELING ALONE - FEELING ABANDONED
- * I FAILED, BUT NOT A FAILURE
- * LEARNED RELATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
- NOT A QUITTER - CHOSE TO LEAVE - GOD CALLED ME TO NYC

Embracing Change

- Tragedy always moves our story forward in a way shalom could never accomplish.

- Dan Allender



Strengthening Relationships and Support Systems

- Fostering Biblical Community
 - Encouragement through faith-based connections through story-telling.
 - Building a supportive environment
- Support Systems
 - Creating networks for mutual support
 - Providing ongoing assistance
- Peer Networks
 - Developing strong peer relationships
 - Sharing experiences and advice





Integrating a Sustainable Model of Care

- Trauma and Grief Informed Care Principles
 - Understanding the impact of trauma and grief on individuals
 - Implementing strategies to support those affected
- Creating a Personal Self-Care Plan
 - Identifying personal needs and stressors
 - Developing a plan to address and manage these effectively
- Integrating Sustainable Practices
 - Ensuring long-term support and care
 - Promoting resilience and well-being

Identifying Risk Factors

- Secondary Trauma
 - Exposure to others' suffering
- Moral Injury
 - Witnessing or being part of morally conflicting situations
- Chronic Grief
 - Recurring loss in ministry communities
- Burnout
 - High operational tempo
 - Isolation
 - Limited resources






Self-Reflection Journal

- Assessing Current Warning Signs
 - Emotional signs indicating stress or discomfort
 - Physical signs such as fatigue or illness
 - Spiritual signs reflecting inner turmoil
- Identifying Recent Losses or Traumas
 - Recognizing emotional impacts of recent events
 - Understanding physical consequences of trauma
 - Reflect & chart intensity using emotions wheel
- Evaluating Coping Mechanisms
 - Determining if numbing behaviors are present
 - Identifying avoidance tactics
 - Recognizing over-functioning tendencies

Spiritual Self-Care

- Regular Sabbath/Rest Day
 - Importance of taking a rest day, regardless of the specific day
- Stay Connected to a Spiritual Mentor
 - Engage with a spiritual mentor, chaplain supervisor, or spiritual director
- Permission to Lament and Express Emotions
 - Allowing oneself to express doubt or anger before God
- Daily Spiritual Practices
 - Incorporate repentance, prayer, meditation, and reading Scriptures into daily routine





Emotional & Mental Self-Care

- Routine debriefing after trauma exposure
 - Regularly discuss experiences to process emotions
- Develop healthy outlets
 - Engage in journaling to express thoughts
 - Seek therapy for professional guidance
 - Participate in peer discussions for support
- Attend grief workshops or moral injury trainings
 - Learn coping mechanisms for grief
 - Understand and address moral injuries
- Avoid “mission-only identity”
 - Reconnect with your core self
 - Engage in activities outside of work

Physical Self-Care



- Prioritize Basic Needs
 - Ensure adequate sleep and hydration
 - Maintain regular exercise routines
- Health Management
 - Schedule regular health check-ups
 - Address chronic pain promptly
- Adrenaline Management
 - Use breathwork techniques
 - Incorporate movement to manage spikes
- Sensory Grounding Tools
 - Listen to calming music
 - Practice deep breathing



Relational Self-Care

- Stay connected to family and friends
 - Schedule virtual check-ins
- Foster peer support
 - Connect with other chaplains or officers
- Have a “battle buddy”
 - Emotional accountability
- Limit toxic interactions
 - Be mindful of isolation

Red Flag Protocol

- Identify Personal Warning Signs
 - Numbness
 - Irritability
 - Insomnia
- Pre-determined Support Plan
 - Who to call
 - What is needed
- Commit to Seeking Help
 - Before reaching the breaking point



Grief Rituals and Practices


- Attend memorials with presence
 - Be fully present, not just out of duty
- Use rituals for grieving
 - Candle lighting to honor the deceased
 - Writing letters to express feelings
 - Reading scriptures for comfort

Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually
Sabbath rest	Peer consultation	Retreat or spiritual renewal day	Extended leave / reintegration break
1 hour of silence	Debrief with mentor	Reset goals / boundaries	Attend training / conference
Movement & prayer	Check emotional load	Reflect on calling	Reconnect with non-ministry community

Future Training & Consultation

rwe25@case.edu
440-429-2618

Sept. 2025- 3 Hour Online Event

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ryanedlind.org

Finish update


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Resources for Continued Growth

- Organizations
 - AACCC, CCEF, ADEC, NACG, Eluna Network, CoH
- Readings
 - Secular- Van der Kolk, Herman, Frankle, Wolfelt, & Attig
 - Christian- Langberg, Allender, Crabb, & CS Lewis
- Online Materials
 - Tools- ACES, PCL5, VA.PTSD.GOV, PGD Columbia



Video Resources for Continued Growth

- Grief and Trauma YouTube Videos:
 - [Van der Kolk Trauma Introduction](#), [Gentry Trauma Timeline](#)
 - [4 Ultimate Concerns: Existential Counseling](#)
 - [DBT: Self Regulation & Coping Techniques](#)
 - Grief and Trauma Sermons by Keller: [Praying our Tears](#), [Don't Waste your Sorrows](#), [9/11 Sermon \(transcribed\)](#)