

Spiritual Trauma & First Aid

Spiritual trauma is often overlooked, because it is not always about religion or God, though it certainly can be. Spiritual trauma occurs when the faith in things you believe has been shaken – including your faith in other people and yourself.

Loss of faith is traumatic. Spiritual trauma is about losing your faith in anything: systems, humanity, authority, love, kindness, yourself, and more. It is one of the most devastating types of trauma and often occurs in tandem with others, but it is vastly overlooked. Spiritual trauma is about losing the hope in – and safety of – the things you always thought you could rely on.

5 key elements of spiritual first aid:

- Helping people with clarity; *one bad apple does not spoil the whole bunch*
- Helping regain a sense of safety; *remember the things that have not changed*
- Helping people regain a sense of agency; *remember we have power here*
- Fostering faith in self and others; *remember things that restore faith and hope*
- Fostering hope for restoring lost faith; *trauma can be healed & pain will fade*

People who have sustained spiritual trauma need to be validated and heard, as well as gently reminded that all is not lost. We do this best by being an example of the things they need to see. Our actions will speak louder than words. When we have sustained our own spiritual trauma, being an example of the things we need to see is even more important. We have agency upon the world. We can be the change we need to see.

When we have lost our faith in humanity, we need to be the example of the kind of person we wish everyone could be. When we have lost our faith in a system, we need to be the example of the kind of person we wish the system were populated with, or hold good examples up when we find them. When we have lost faith in ourselves, regaining that faith is about continuing to be the kind of person we want to be, no matter what.