

Damaged: Ministering to the Abused

Laura N. Farrar, Author/Speaker, *Dancing In The Rain Foundation*

the damage... CPYU (Center for Parent/Youth Understanding) estimates that:

- **1 in 3 girls** and **1 in 5 boys** will have been sexually abused by age 18
- 25% of abuse cases are reported
- 10% of victims ever take initiative to tell on their own
- it's happening every day in families, churches and schools
- causes: depression and mood disorders, anxiety disorders, sleep disorders, physical illness, PTSD, OCD, addiction, eating disorders, extreme mood swings, etc.

silence...

- 80% of victims initially **deny** that they were abused
- Some girls tend to adopt avoidant, shy passivity
- silence is a result of fear and breeds shame
- victims often feel invisible and unlovable
- silence equals bondage!

“The whole point of not talking about it, of silencing the memory, is to make it go away. It won't. I'll need brain surgery to cut it out of my head.”
–Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak* p. 82

“I couldn't tell her. I couldn't tell anyone. As long as I didn't say it aloud, it wasn't real”

–Sarah Dessen, *Dreamland* p. 171

coping...

- internal: negative self-talk, self-injury, low self-esteem, dissociation, social withdrawal
- external: violence and aggression, promiscuous behavior, addiction, eating disorders

Self-Injury...

Close to 60% of those who self-injure have endured abuse

SI is an impulse control disorder used to temporarily calm out of control emotions and anxiety

SI frequently comes naturally to victims who feel dirty, damaged and in need of punishment

It is not just about creating pain, but managing it; feeling better is the goal, but not the actual result

There are reported differences in the brain between healthy individuals and those who struggle with SI, depression and anxiety

prevention...

- talk about it—to leaders, elders, students, parents
- encourage students to speak up for themselves and if they are victims—break their silence
- establish policies: screen volunteers, interviews, background checks, accountability
- develop a plan for dealing with revealed abuse

out in the open...

- responding sensitively
- reporting responsibly
- using reinforcements (licensed counselors: EMDR, cognitive behavioral therapy)
- ongoing support and treatment

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what they feel...

- anger: at God, others and self
- bitterness: at abuser, parents, authority figures
- shame, guilt
- trapped, hopeless, damaged

what they need...

- to be heard
- to be loved unconditionally
- to be given availability and support

healing messages...

- abuse does not define you (Isaiah 61:7)
- it's not your fault
- pain is not from God: He wants to bring healing and wholeness (Isaiah 61:3, Psalm 147:3)
- you are not alone

forgiveness...

•"Forgiveness means releasing the task of executing justice and allowing God to fight on your behalf", Nancy Alcorn, *Violated* p.20

victim vs. survivor...

- pain for purpose
- resilience and choosing love

support groups...

- Life Hurts, God Heals (www.lifehurtsgodheals.com)
- make your own

For more resources and discussion visit

www.laurafarrar.com

www.dancingintherainfoundation.org



SELF-INJURY

- **Inside A Cutter's Mind* by Jerusha Clark
- **Cut* by Nancy Alcorn
- **Scars That Wound, Scars That Heal* by Jan Kern
- **Hope & Healing for Kids Who Cut* by Marv Penner
- *"Cut" written and recorded by Plumb

Fiction...

Blade Silver by Melody Carlson
Cut by Patricia McCormick

ABUSE

- Stolen Tomorrows: Understanding and Treating Women's Childhood Sexual Abuse* by Steven Levenkron
- A Safe Place: A Guide for Living Beyond Sexual Abuse (for teens)* by Jan Morrison
- The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse* by Dr. Dan Allender
- Violated* by Nancy Alcorn
- "Nice Nieve and Beautiful" written and recorded by Plumb
- "Damaged" written and recorded by Plumb

Fiction...

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson
Dreamland by Sarah Dessen

COUNSELING

- Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide, 3rd Ed.* by Gary Collins, Ph.D