



TRAUMA

Surfside Condo Collapse, Pandemic Year, Have Taken Toll On South Florida Mental Health

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MIAMI | CBSMiami - The horrific collapse of a condo tower in Surfside, and the pandemic year, has taken a mental toll on residents across South Florida.

- Experience your thoughts and feelings – you have a right to whatever you feel.
- Talk about your thoughts and feelings – find someone safe with whom you can share how this has affected you.
- Take care of yourself – eat, exercise, don't self-medicate.
- Take time – don't rush yourself, be patient (including with you).
- Have empathy – including for yourself.
- Moderate your news intake – you may need a break.

- Seek support – you are not in this alone. We are in this together.
- Like the pandemic, this trauma is both corporate and personal.
- Like the pandemic, this all takes a toll on each of us and all of us together.
- Like the pandemic, religious platitudes can often be the opposite of helpful.

- ***Since Thursday morning, what has this been like for you?***
- ***What has this arisen in you personally?***
- ***What has it done in your church community?***
- ***How do you frame this with your faith?***

COMMENTS:

- It felt like 911 again. Even though I didn't know anyone at Surfside it brought back those thoughts.
- Difficult to put into words.
- I was reminded of the earthquake. It made my heart race.
- Emotionally I can't put my finger on it – It felt almost war like. I have tried to deny it happened so I didn't have to deal with it.
- I thank God that (most) went instantly.
- Thankful that Sunday's lectionary was David's lament. This catastrophe opened old wounds.
- I want to shout out to Daris in gratefulness for his immediate encouragement and support.
- Reminder to take 40 year inspections seriously, engage the Presbyery in the process.
- Cherish your loved ones verbally, because life is so uncertain.
- Stuff happens, but God is with every single one of us.
- God breathes in us.
- Be always ready because you don't know when death will come. "Is your house in order?"
- William Slone Coffin – "The first tears shed were God's."
- We don't choose how we die, but we can choose how to live.
- Our staff is doing a card writing campaign to send to the community of Surfside.
- I'm devastated. I wish there was something that I could do.
- Right now financial donations are best. They seem to have sufficient supplies and volunteers. Prayers, of course.
- I wanted to stay under the covers and self-medicate with chocolate.
- Book Resource: *The Water Will Come* – Talks about the rising waters of South Florida.
- Everyone is fatigued and should watch out for themselves, and others.
- Our emotional reservoirs are depleting.
- Instead of pointing the finger. Let us pray for those that don't understand. Share compassion. Also lead by example by praying and listening.
- Big and small traumas are always at play. Be gentle and kind to yourselves.
- We are tested everyday. I don't blame God for the bad, because I trust that the reason is meant to help me go forward. With my PTSD, I have learned to trust in God, and help those who are hurting around me.
- I'm struck by the family stories. I think that's where I see God.
- Take mini vacations – take naps. Find some way to create beauty. These are healing practices.

- Mr. Rogers' mother telling him – “When you are looking for God in a disaster, look for the helpers.”
- Continue with your efforts. God uses everything.



- PCUSA through PDA, FLAPDAN, and the Presbytery all have resources on trauma.
- There are learning opportunities we can undertake corporately.
- The Board of Pensions continues to offer the Employee Assistance Plan as part of coverage, people are available 24/7.

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- *What resources could help you?*
 - *How might continued engagement help us all?*

COMMENTS:

- Jim Kirk (PDA) shared webinar information: <https://pda.pcusa.org/page/esc-webinar/>
 - Trauma Pastor Care Series: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/4088444>
- Kathy Broyard (FLAPDAN) share about the Florida VOAD – an interfaith response group; as well as FEMA resources.
- Barbara Hassall is also getting frequent updates from certain organizations in Miami-Dade.

ALONG THE WAY...

1. Breathe deep.
2. Walk at dawn or dusk.
3. Watch the sodium.
4. Ask: Where do I see God in all this?

Let's all keep talking –
Every Tuesday at 10am and 3pm
www.vibrantpresbytery.org

the idea behind a kaleidoscope is that it's a structure that's filled with broken bits and pieces, and somehow if you can look through them, you still see something beautiful. and i feel like we are all that way a little bit.

— sara bareilles (via @m_eye_nd)