



*Restoring the Shattered Self:
A Christian Counselor's Guide
to Complex Trauma*

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Christian Psychologist Explores the Task of Healing Complex Trauma, Not Harming

In her groundbreaking new book, *Restoring the Shattered Self*, Heather Gingrich, an expert in dissociative identity disorder and an associate professor of counseling at Denver Seminary, explores the story behind complex traumatic stress disorder (CTSD), how victims can survive their experiences, and how and why Christian counselors can be particularly effective in this field.

The interest in CTSD counseling is growing, but most counselors have not been educated effectively in treating the victims of complex trauma. In particular, "Christian counselors . . . run the risk of unintentionally retraumatizing such clients. . . . Most [professional counselors] have not been adequately trained to work with a [CTSD] client . . . because graduate programs in counseling and psychology seldom provide specific training in trauma work," writes Gingrich. This text is meant to bridge the gap between counselor training and the reality of what professionals face when treating complex trauma.

However, there is hope for both the counselors and the counselees: according to Gingrich, Christian counselors are uniquely equipped to help their clients heal mentally and spiritually. "Christian counselors have resources not available to secular therapists: we can rely on the wisdom and discernment of the Holy Spirit to guide the therapeutic process, whether or not our complex trauma clients acknowledge Christ," writes Gingrich. And if their clients are also Christians, counselors have an exceptional ability to relate to and empathize with their clients' spiritual state of mind, as well as the ability to recognize what is healthy and unhealthy spiritually.

Throughout *Restoring the Shattered Self* Gingrich provides practitioners with practical advice and techniques needed for the sensitive task of treating CTSD. By using Judith Herman's classic three-phase model (safety and stabilization, processing of traumatic memories, consolidation and restoration), Gingrich provides readers with

- the theoretical framework and techniques for treating complex trauma
- a detailed guide for conducting counseling sessions with the sufferers of CTSD
- spiritual resources and issues in the treatment of complex trauma

By heeding Gingrich's advice surrounding this very delicate issue in counseling, churches and Christian counselors should be able to help sufferers avoid the painful reexperience of the traumatic event in a way that can further damage their personhood and alienate them from the church.

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Krista Carnet, broadcast publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kkcarnet@ivpress.com

Alisse Wissman, academic print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Adrianna Wright, online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or awright@ivpress.com

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