KAIROS PATHWAYS

Trauma-Aware Group Study Resource Kit

The Participant's Experience

Welcome. If you're carrying deep pain of your own, this group exists for you. You belong here.

This study will touch on things that are hard to face: abuse, rage, shame, despair, and the long winding path toward healing. Some of you'll read those pages and recognize your own story. Some of you'll think of someone you love. Both of those responses are welcome here.

1. Understanding the Weight of This Study

Because this study moves on a weekly basis, there is no shame in finding certain weeks difficult. That difficulty is often a sign that something important is being touched in your life.

Even though the study covers a certain number of chapters, the group may spend two or more weeks on a single chapter when the material calls for it. There's no rush. Healing does not run on a schedule, and this group won't either.

2. You Were Not Made to Carry This Alone

One of the cruelest things about deep pain — especially pain rooted in abuse or trauma — is that it tends to isolate. It whispers that no one will understand, that your story is too much, that you are too broken, that sharing will only make things worse. Those whispers are lies. They exist to keep you from the healing that God wants for you.

It is important to hear this clearly: God wants to heal you more than you want to be healed. He wants you to know true and utter freedom.

Human beings were not designed to heal in isolation. We were made for community, for witness, for the experience of being known and not rejected. This group exists to offer you exactly that. When you allow others into your pain, you deprive shame of one of its most powerful weapons: secrecy.

3. Opening Up Is Hard, But Well Worth It

You're not required to share anything you're not ready to share. There'll never be pressure, and you always have the right to pass. But when you feel the door opening inside you, even a little, consider walking through it. The freedom on the other side of that door will prove to be better than you can imagine.

You don't have to tell your whole story at once. You don't have to have the right words. You don't even have to fully understand what you are feeling. You can simply say, "I'm struggling with something," and this group will meet you there.

"You're only as sick as your secrets." — This is an old saying in healing communities, and it holds profound truth. The things we hide have power over us. The moment we begin to speak them — even imperfectly, even with a trembling voice — that power begins to break and its grip on you starts to shatter.

4. What to Expect When You Share

This group has made commitments to you. Every person in this room has signed a Group Confidentiality Agreement. What you share here won't leave this room. The group has agreed not to judge you, not to compare your pain to someone else's, not to offer unsolicited advice, and not to pressure you. They've agreed to listen.

You may feel vulnerable after sharing. That's normal and expected. Vulnerability isn't weakness; it's the beginning of healing. You'll likely find, as so many others have before you, that the thing you're most afraid to say is the very thing that sets you free.

If you want the group to respond to what you have shared, let them know. If you need advice, ask for it. If you need silence, that is available to you as well. You'll be amazed at the love you'll receive from the people in this room.

5. This Group Isn't a Replacement for Professional Care

The love and support of this group is real and significant, but it has limits — and those limits aren't a failure. If your pain's deep enough that you feel you need more than this group can offer, please say so. The leaders of this group will help you find professional Christian counselling or pastoral care. Asking for more help isn't a sign that you have failed; it's wisdom, and it'll be honored.

6. Taking Care of Yourself

Healing's hard work, and some weeks may leave you feeling rawer than you expected. Be gentle with yourself. Stay connected to your sources of strength — your faith, trusted relationships, a counsellor or pastor. You don't have to push through your story alone between sessions.

Whatever brought you to this group, you're in the right place. Healing is possible, and community makes it more possible. God, who's the author of every story of redemption, isn't finished with you yet.