

Communication and Conflict

*Opportunities for
Connecting in Grace*



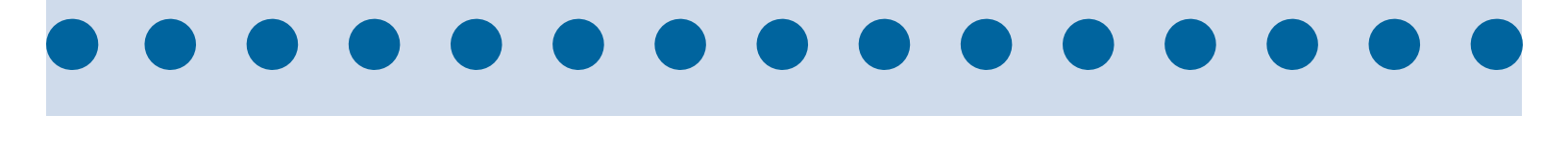


by Rev. James E. Otte

Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) is a collaborative effort of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Pastoral Education ministry and LCMS districts to help pastors and their wives in the transition from seminary to congregation. To learn more, visit *www.lcms.org/pals*.

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Communication and Conflict

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INTRODUCTION

Slide 1

“Communication and Conflict: Opportunities for Connecting in Grace”

**PALS Training Module
Jim Otte, M.Div., M.Ed. LPC
2012**

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Communication & Conflict

Segments Content

Segment 1: “Spiritual Functioning MAP®”

Segment 2: “ITs” Stress into *ME SURVIVE*

Segment 3: *WOUNDED ME* Conflicts

Segment 4: “Grace Heals” – Healing the Hurt

**Segment 5: “Grace Heals” – Problem-Solve
the “IT.”**

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Communication & Conflict

Instructor Introduction

- Rev. Jim Otte, Texas District, LCMS
- 1980 Graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- Messiah Lutheran Church, Plano, TX & Licensed Counseling Practice in Ft. Worth, TX
- Counselor/Coach for *Pastoral Leadership Institute*
- PALS Presenter/Trainer; C.A.R.E. Process, TX District
- Married with 1 adult daughter

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Communication & Conflict

A. Why This Course?

1. People underestimate the positive power of communication that "cherishes." Stress & conflict evoke "un-cherishing" reactions.
2. "Where two or three are gathered..." 
3. Goal: There is no "IT" we can't work through!

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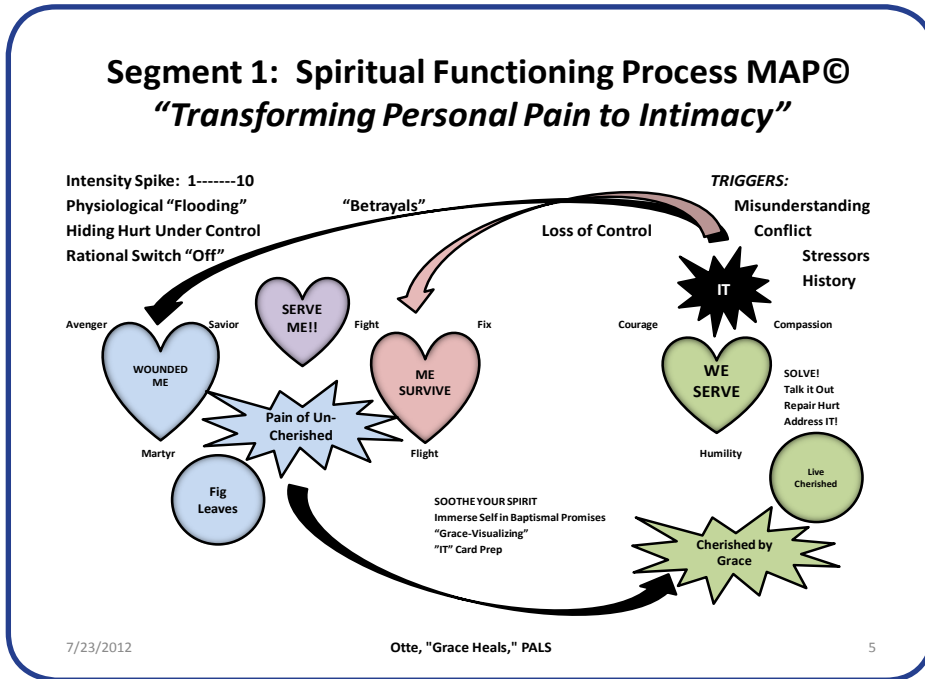
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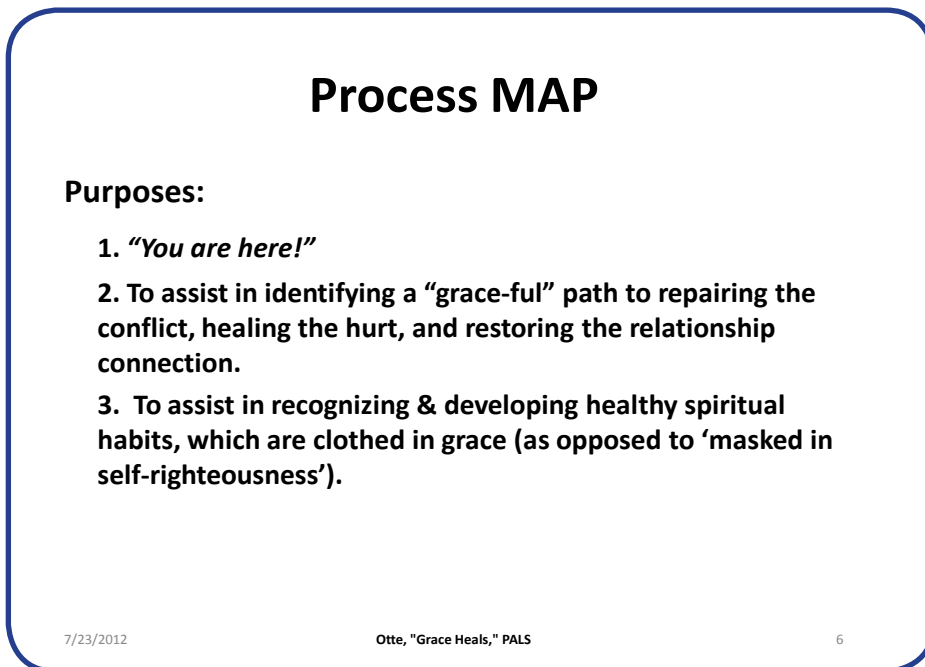


SEGMENT ONE

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Core of the MAP: The 'WE SERVE' Heart

2 Corinthians 4:1. *"Therefore, since through God's mercy, we have this ministry, we do not lose heart."*

God's Grace Creates/Sustains a WE SERVE Heart in His Children
Through Word & Sacrament!



"WE" = Relationship!

"SERVE" = Identity/Purpose

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Core of the MAP: WE SERVE

"WE" – Relationship of Faith Created at Baptism
Identity, Value = Foundation for "Cherished" Life!



Matthew 3:17

"You are My child
whom I love.
With you
I AM
well pleased."

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Service Traits of the WE SERVE Heart Reflect Christ-In-Us

"For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." 2 Corinthians 4:5

Courage
(Eph. 6:10-12)



Compassion
(Eph. 4:32)

Humility
(Eph. 5:21; Philippians 2:3)

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Behavioral Habits Within the Service Traits of Courage, Compassion, & Humility

| Courage ("Dragon") | Compassion ("Beaver") | Humility ("Turtle") |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Images:</i> Leader, Warrior, Apostle, Prophet | <i>Images:</i> Good Shepherd, Encourager, Healer | <i>Images:</i> Servant, Steward, Student, Disciple |
| Takes a "stand" on his vision in the Word. | Gentle, but firm, in restoring a brother. | Knows his own "planks" when helping his brother. |
| Inspires others to follow and trust his vision. | Hurting people are drawn to him; Has a "radar" for others' needs. | Surrenders the "outcomes" to God's will and timing. |
| Stays less anxious in the face of others' reactivity. | Is patient with others' shortcomings and flaws. | Is coachable; teachable; honors those before him |
| Is tenacious for the sake of the "mission" at hand. | Can disarm people with non-shaming approach. | Doesn't resent God's generosity to others. |
| Holds a conviction of "being sent." May "die" for his convictions. | Walks with people through their pain. May exhaust self with others' anxieties. | Works "behind the scenes" not caring who gets credit; small ego. |
| Suffers persecution for standing on his vision. | Goes "the extra mile" to help the hurting. | Helps others achieve their hopes and aspirations. |

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Behavioral Habits & Personality Styles

Courage: “Dragon”

1. “Natural” leaders; Often act before they *think*!
2. Sacrifice others’ feelings in favor of completing tasks.
3. Often decisive; Very sure of being ‘right.’
4. Have difficulty masking or controlling anger.
5. Quick temper arousal; quick to move on; doesn’t understand why others’ haven’t.
6. Take charge in stressful situations; prone to “lecturing” if verbal; can be intimidating if in *ME SURVIVE* or *WOUNDED* Hearts.

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Behavioral Habits & Personality Styles

Compassion: “Beaver”

1. Is drawn to cherishing people by caring for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.
2. Is energized by reaching out to lost, lonely, and needy people. Nesting instincts to rescue or keep the peace.
3. Will sacrifice own needs in favor of others’ needs.
4. Great capacity for empathy, but can take on too many hurts of others.
5. Genuinely care; will “give the shirt off their backs.”

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Behavioral Habits & Personality Styles

Humility: "Turtle"

1. Appear more on the 'introverted' side of the trait scale.
2. Happiest working 'behind the scenes;' can be exhausted from being "on."
3. "Think" before they act; can never get around to action; deliberate.
4. If prodded too much, can become "snapping turtles."
5. High sensitivity to atmospheric stress; will retreat into shells until things have calmed down.

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Relationship Goal of WE SERVE Heart

1. *"Love one another as I have love you."* John 13:34
2. Substitute "cherish" for "love."
 - "Chosen" (people)
 - "Called" (by name)
 - "Set Affection on" "Make His Face Shine Upon You"
 - Feeds "Faith, Hope, and Love"
 - Grace "Covering" for Doubt, Despair, and Hurt.
3. Emotional Outcome: Joyful Security/"Treasured"

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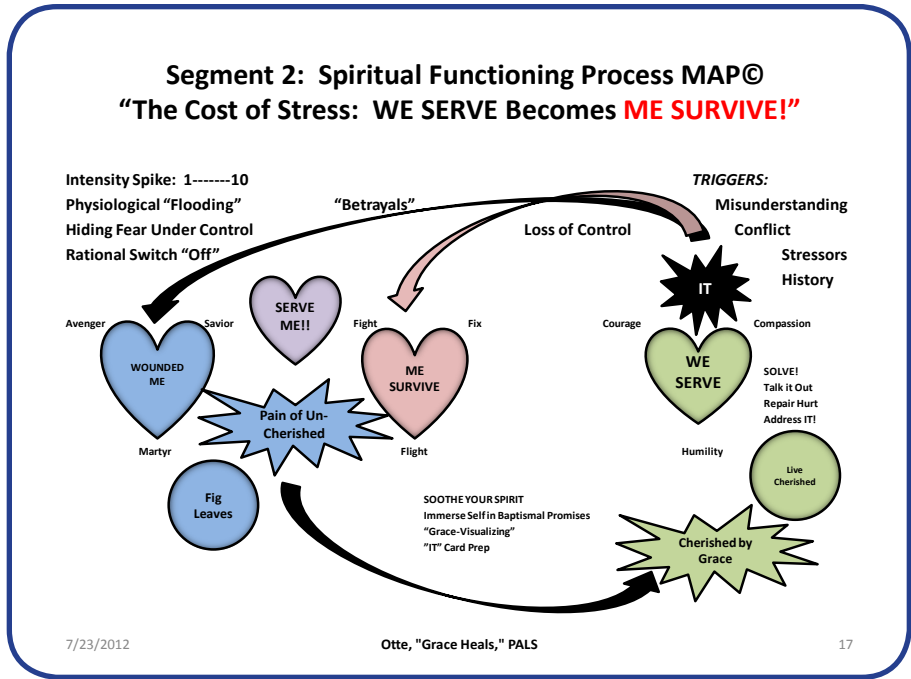
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SEGMENT TWO

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**“ITs” Stress the WE SERVE Heart:
 Communication & Conflict on Edge**

Know Your Red Zone “ITs”

1. Any situation triggering anxious feelings of ‘loss of control,’ ‘fish out of water,’ inadequacy, ‘in over your head,’ or out of your comfort zone.
2. Any situation involving a misunderstanding of intent, expectations, or manner in which it is handled.
3. “SITs” – Mostly solvable; limited in scope; little or no bad history (J. Gottman).
4. Trigger normal, survival-based reactions in people: fight, flight, fix.

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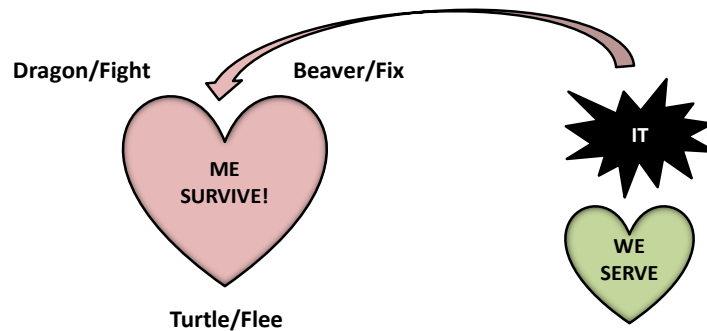
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“ITs” Stress the WE SERVE Heart

‘Loss of Control’ Triggers Autopilot Instinct to React for the Purpose of Regaining Control



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ME SURVIVE!

Dragons on Autopilot: Courage → Fight

1. Added anger/intensity with sense of urgency.
2. Testosterone + Adrenaline = High Arousal.
3. ‘Fight’ Instinct: intimidating; asserting self without listening; assessing blame; criticizing; looking for “whose fault,” hurt feelings expressed as anger-out.
4. Black/White instinct in conflict: Who’s “Right/Wrong,” “Faithful/Unfaithful,” “Win/Lose.”
5. More likely to *tell* people what to do before listening.

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ME SURVIVE!

Beavers on Autopilot: Compassion —————> Fix/Rescue

1. "Fix" instinct to listen for the "IT," problem-solve IT, and move on. Fix often misunderstood as being "demeaning."
2. Heightened sensitivity "radar" for others' needs or discomfort – relieving others' stress is de-stressing for them!
3. Can stunt the maturing process in dependents if rescue too often, i.e. reduce incentive to learn problem-solving.
4. High work-stamina: can burnout; prone to resenting others for not helping; fall in the "20%" doing the "80%."
5. Tends to over-function; takes on emotional hurts of others.

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ME SURVIVE!

Turtles on Autopilot: Humility —————> Flee/Avoidance

1. "Flee" instinct to wait before acting; create space in order to de-stress and think choices through.
2. Prone to avoiding or expediting the process of dealing with "ITs." This can trigger abandonment feelings in Dragons and Beavers!
3. Take a 'back seat' in stressful situations; makes self invisible; likely to function in the 'silent majority.'
4. May seek to placate in order to keep the peace.
5. Often 'stonewall,' beat around the bush, or give vague answers to direct questioning.

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Discussion Break

Describe situations, which have triggered your **RED ZONE** stress reactions:

1. Which “autopilot” reactions you gravitate toward.
2. The ways in which your reactivity collides or colludes with others’ reactions.
3. Situations in which **RED ZONE** “ITs” have made their way into your ministry settings.

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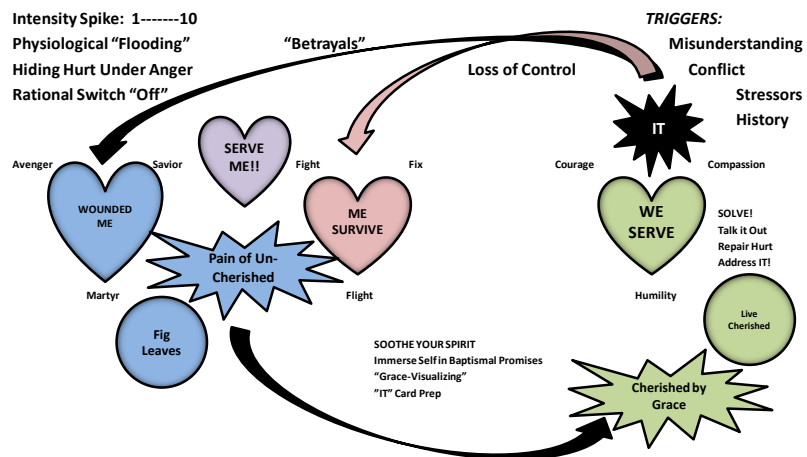
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SEGMENT THREE

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Segment 3: Spiritual Functioning Process MAP© “The Cost of Betrayal: WE SERVE Becomes **WOUNDED ME!**”

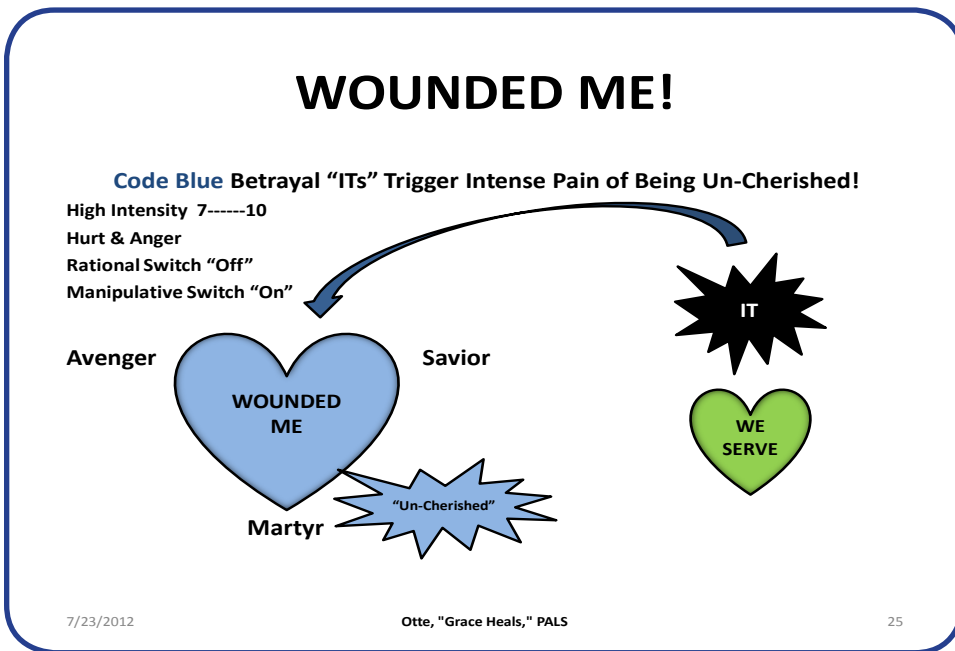


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WOUNDED ME!

Know Your 'Code Blue' Betrayal Hurts: Triggers for Feeling "Un-Cherished"

| Pain of "Un-Cherished" | Pain of "Un-Cherished" |
|--|---|
| Feeling "Alone" in Whatever... | Invisible to, Disrespected, Diagnosed or Analyzed |
| Accused, Condemned, Criticized with Contempt | Given No Benefit of the Doubt |
| Powerless, Vulnerable | Rejected, Betrayal of Trust |
| Abandoned, Unsalvageable; Not Listened To | Never Enough or Measuring Up; "Loser!" |

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WOUNDED ME!

Doubt, Despair, and Hurt – Drive Us into Emotional Isolation/Loneliness – Increase Vulnerability to Addictive Self-Medicating (“*Fig Leaves*” – Gen. 3:7)



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Discussion Break

Describe situations, which have triggered **CODE BLUE** reactions in your life:

1. In your marriage and family life.
2. In your ministry settings.
3. Have you experienced feeling “stuck?”
4. What tendencies do you have toward self-medicating with “*fig leaves*?”

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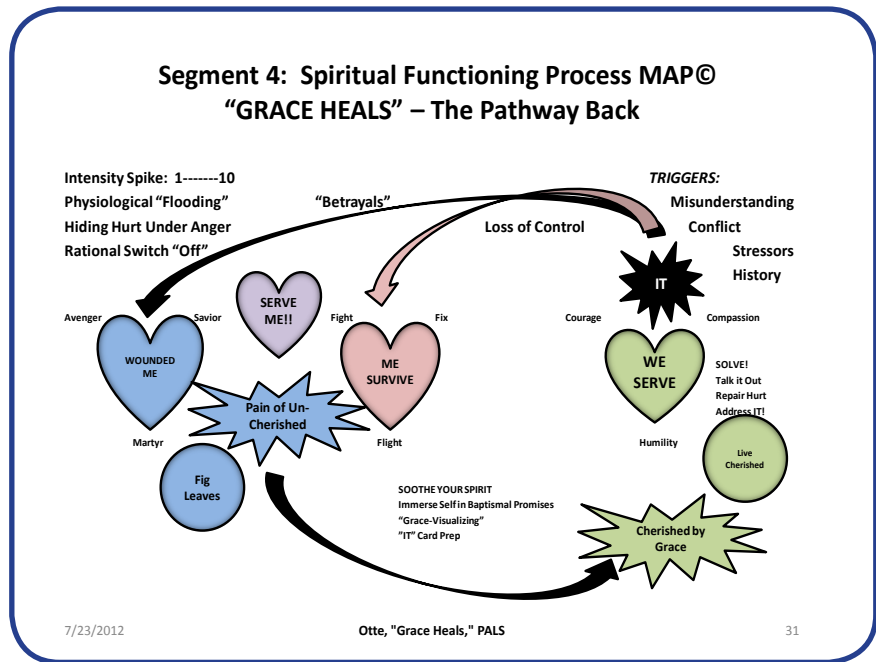
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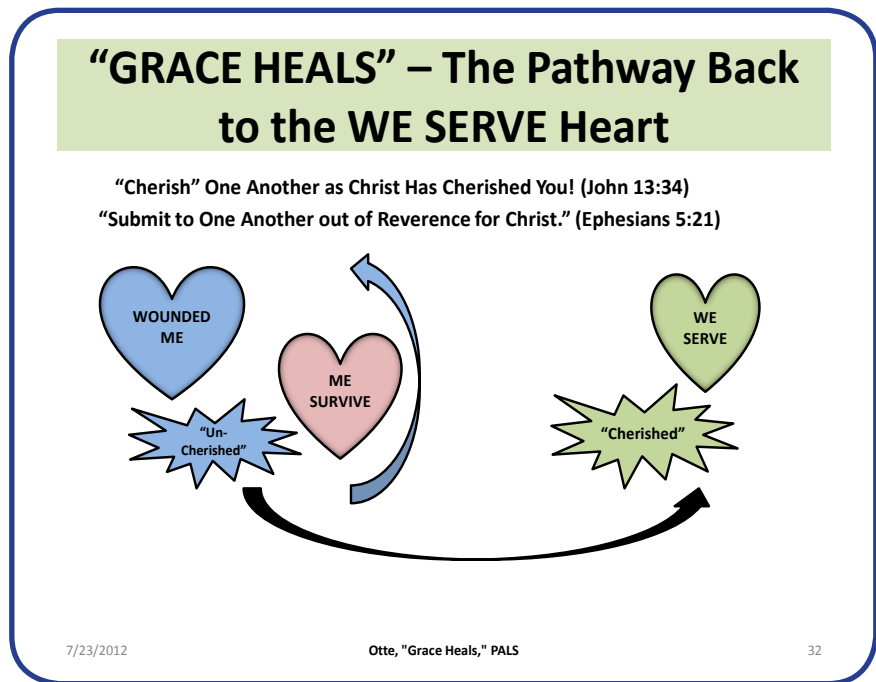


SEGMENT FOUR

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“GRACE HEALS”

Repair the “IT!” Restore the Heart!

1. **Assess** your own emotional intensity level:
1-----5-----6-----7—8—9—10
2. **Goal:** Lower your own emotional intensity BEFORE you talk, listen, interpret, intervene, or engage in the repair process. Lower emotional intensity = 5 or below!
3. **Commit to the Repair the “IT” Process:**
 - a. Part One: Heal the Hurt
 - b. Part Two: Problem-Solve the “IT.”

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Segment 4: “GRACE HEALS” – Heal the Hurt

Steps for Part One: Heal the Hurt

Step One: Prepare for the “IT” Conversation

- a. Describe the “IT” (using the “IT” Card)
- b. Describe the IMPACT the “IT” has had on you, including how you feel, what you think, etc. Limit your IMPACT statements to the effect on you – not others!
- c. Prepare your heart for the work ahead, reminding yourself of God’s gift of healing grace for you in Jesus Christ.
- d. Deeply breathe to lower your emotional intensity.

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“GRACE HEALS”

Heal the Hurt

*Step Four: Acknowledge the Other Person’s Good Heart
(Gracefully Give the Benefit of Doubt)*

- a. This step keeps you in an emotionally, calmer state.
- b. This also reduces the likelihood of defensiveness on the part of the other person.
- c. People often defend their “ITs” on the basis of their “Heart,” even when they know the IMPACT was hurtful!

“I know you meant well.”

“I think you’re a good _____ (fill in with a role).”

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“GRACE HEALS”

Heal the Hurt

Step Five: Transition to Giving Feedback

“I just want to let you know how this impacted me...”

“I needed to let you know how what you did/said affected me...”

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“GRACE HEALS”

Heal the Hurt

Step Six (Continued): Describe the IMPACT

- c. The Listener responds with “Yes,” or “No.”
- d. The Listener paraphrases in own words what he/she heard was said. This indicates whether the Listener is tracking. Listening is a powerful way to “Cherish!”
- e. The Listener asks, “*Did I get it? Is there more you want to say?*” Genuinely inviting more feedback multiplies good feelings of being “Cherished.”
- f. Primary Goal of Step Six: Mutual Understanding of the Each Person’s View of the “IT.” Remember: Understanding does not equal Agreement!

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“GRACE HEALS”

Heal the Hurt

Step Six (Continued): Describe the IMPACT

- g. When the Speaker feels his/her perspective on the “IT” is more understood, he/she invites the other person to share the other point of view. The roles are reversed.

“I’d like to hear your perspective on this situation...”

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“GRACE HEALS”

Heal the Hurt

Step Seven: Determine if Any Hurt was Caused by the “IT” or by How the “IT” was Handled by Either Person.

- a. It does not matter if the INTENT was NOT to hurt! Hurt is hurt; it cannot be ignored. Hurt must be repaired!
- b. If Hurt is/was felt, proceed to Steps Eight & Nine.
- c. If hurt is/was not caused, skip Step Eight & Nine, and move to Part Two: Problem-Solving the “IT.”

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“GRACE HEALS”

Heal the Hurt

Step Eight: Listeners – Genuinely Repent of the Hurt You Caused (Even if You Didn’t Mean to!) and Ask for Forgiveness

- a. Offer no explanations, excuses, “Buts,” disclaimers, or proclamations of your own goodness or reasons.

“Thanks for telling me how you felt. I feel really bad for hurting you. Will you forgive me (or work toward forgiving me?)”

“After talking this through, I realize how much I over-reacted. In doing that, I really hurt you. Will you forgive me?”

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“GRACE HEALS”

Heal the Hurt

Step Nine: Speakers – Genuinely Offer Words of Forgiveness or a Promise to Work Toward Forgiving the Hurt

- a. Some “ITs” take longer to forgive.
- b. Remember: The ‘forgiver’ bears some of the hurt, even though he/she forgives.
- c. Let the hurt go and graciously give it to Jesus.
- d. Christians are compelled to forgive, in response to God’s gift of forgiveness through Christ. Forgiveness is the ultimate act of “Cherishing.”

“I forgive you.”

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Discussion Break: Grace Heals

Discuss Steps 1-9 of “Heal the Hurt.”

1. In what ways might this approach be used in family settings with children or extended family?
2. How might this approach work in congregational conflict?
3. What obstacles do you see in implementing an approach such as this?

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SEGMENT FIVE

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Segment 5: “GRACE HEALS” – Problem-Solve the “IT”

Part Two: Problem-Solve the “IT”

Step One: Restate the “IT” As Likely to Repeat Itself

- a. Solvable “ITs” may happen again.
- b. “Perpetual” (J. Gottman) “ITs” will always happen again and with great frequency!
- c. Forgiveness does not fully repair the “IT.” Unwillingness to forgive is usually a trust issue, not a hurt issue!

“If this situation was to happen again, let’s figure out how we can handle it better.”

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“GRACE HEALS”

Problem-Solve the “IT”

Step Two: Brainstorm Ways to Address the “IT”

- a. Get creative!
- b. Throw ideas out on the table.
- c. Cherish each other by taking turns, listening, and treating each other’s ideas with equal regard.
- d. Use “cherishing” language:

“How would it work for you, if we tried this...?”

“Let’s try this idea... How does that sit with you?”

- e. Differentiate your “negotiables” from your “non-negotiables.”

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“GRACE HEALS”

Know the Difference: Where Can You Compromise?

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“GRACE HEALS”

Problem-Solve the “IT”

Step Three: Settle on an Agreed Upon “Plan-on-Paper” (POP) & Shoot Holes in It.

- a. Plans-on-Paper haven’t yet been exposed to reality.
- b. Find the “holes” and plug them **PRIOR** to implementing the POP to reduce likelihood of failure.
- c. Don’t allow this Step to trigger a **WOUNDED ME** reaction! Take a break if you trigger an “IT.”
- d. **Wounded** Dragons, Turtles, and Beavers don’t function well in this Step.

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“GRACE HEALS”

Problem-Solve the “IT”

Step Five: Thank Each Other for the Commitment & the Effort

- a. Regularly recall and compliment each other on working together as a team.
- b. Think of each other as “cherished” by God & “cherished” by the other.
- c. Tell other people about your joy in being “cherished” this way.

Step Six: Get Ready for the Next “IT!!!”



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Discussion Break: “GRACE HEALS”

Discuss Steps 1-5 of “Problem-Solve the ‘IT’”

1. What situations have you encountered, where it was relatively easy to ‘forgive,’ but difficult to ‘trust?’ In what ways may Steps 1-5 address that?
2. How aware are you of the “Negotiables” vs. “Non-Negotiables” you operate by in your life? Are they in sync with other people in your ministry settings?
3. Most people fail to include a “tweak date” in their POP implementation. Suggest some effective ways to include it and remember it!

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“GRACE HEALS”

Summary

1. God’s grace, through Christ, saves us eternally and empowers us temporally.
2. God initiates cherishing action toward us, so we can initiate cherishing of each other.
3. Cherishing heals!
4. Not cherishing wounds.
5. “ITs” are a part of life.
6. Families and congregations (even synods) can commit to working through their “ITs” in cherishing ways!

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Resources

Center for Creative Leadership, “Benchmarks 360”, www.ccl.org

Gottman, John M. The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work, Three Rivers Press: 1999.

Hirsch, John M. The Process of Reconciliation, Xulon Press: 2012.

Ludwig, David J. The Power of We: God’s Gift to Marriage. Family Films: 1997.

Otte, James E. *“No One Walks Alone: The Vulnerability to Addictions in Congregations, Clergy, and Their Families – a Lutheran Theological and Psychological Approach,”* (PLI, Texas District, COP Presentation Materials) 2005-2012.

Stosny, Steven. Love Without Hurt: Turn Your Resentful, Angry, or Emotionally Abusive Relationship into a Compassionate, Loving One. Persus Book Group: 2006

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360° CHERISHING TARGETS

“Cherish one another, as I have cherished you.” John 13:34 (author’s translation)

Directions:

Ask the three “cherishing target” questions of each person in your ministry context. Create ways to keep the answers on your personal and professional “radar” screen. Periodically, update them.

1. What am I doing, which helps you feel “cherished,” and I can do more of?

2. What am I doing, which triggers your feeling “un-cherished,” and I can do less of?

3. When there is something you are doing which frustrates me, how would you like for me to bring it to your attention (in a “cherishing” way)?

A. Ask at Home

a. Your spouse

b. Each of your children

B. Ask in the Congregation You Serve

a. Your staff

b. Your lay leadership

c. Your congregational membership

C. Ask in the District and Synod You Serve

a. Your brother pastors

b. Your district president

c. Your Synod president

D. Ask in the Community You Live and Work

a. Your neighbors

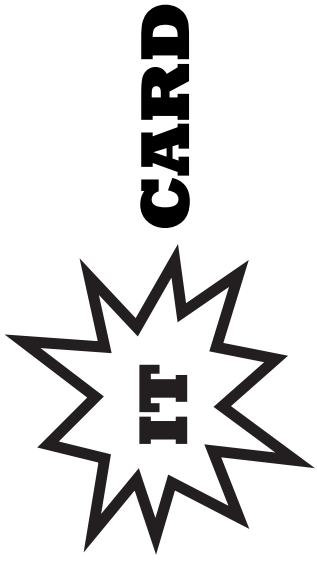
b. Your community leaders

c. Your children’s teachers

d. Your law enforcement professionals

e. Other

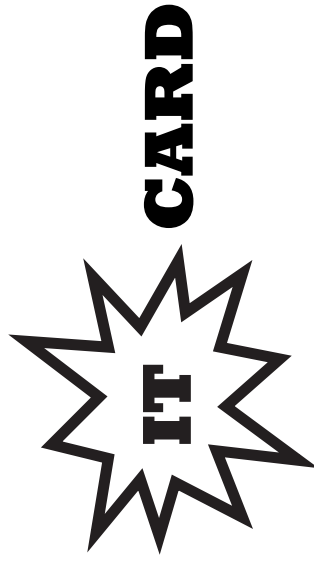




cribe the "IT":

cribe "ITs" impact on you:

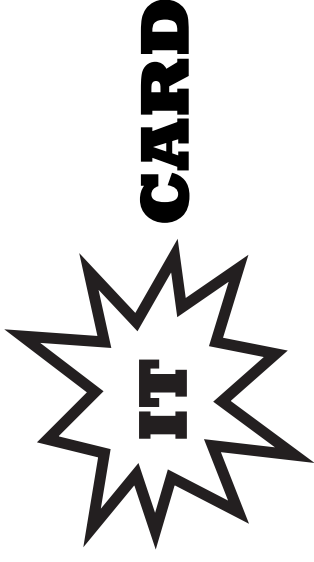
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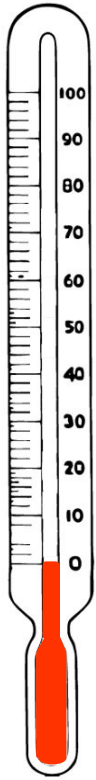
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Describe the "IT":

Describe "ITs" impact on you:

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Hurts Worst

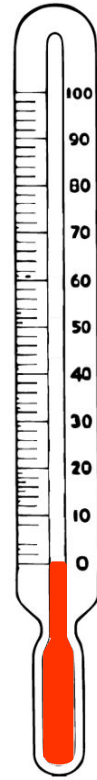
Hurts Whole Lot

Hurts Even More

Hurts Little More

Hurts Little Bit

No Hurt



Hurts Worst

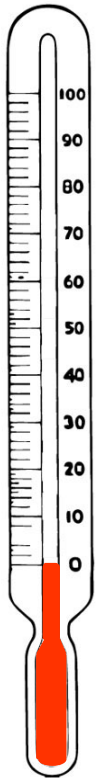
Hurts Whole Lot

Hurts Even More

Hurts Little More

Hurts Little Bit

No Hurt



Hurts Worst

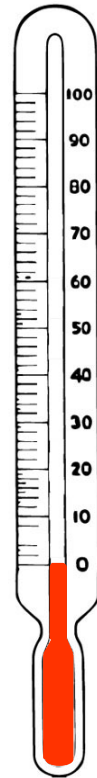
Hurts Whole Lot

Hurts Even More

Hurts Little More

Hurts Little Bit

No Hurt



Hurts Worst

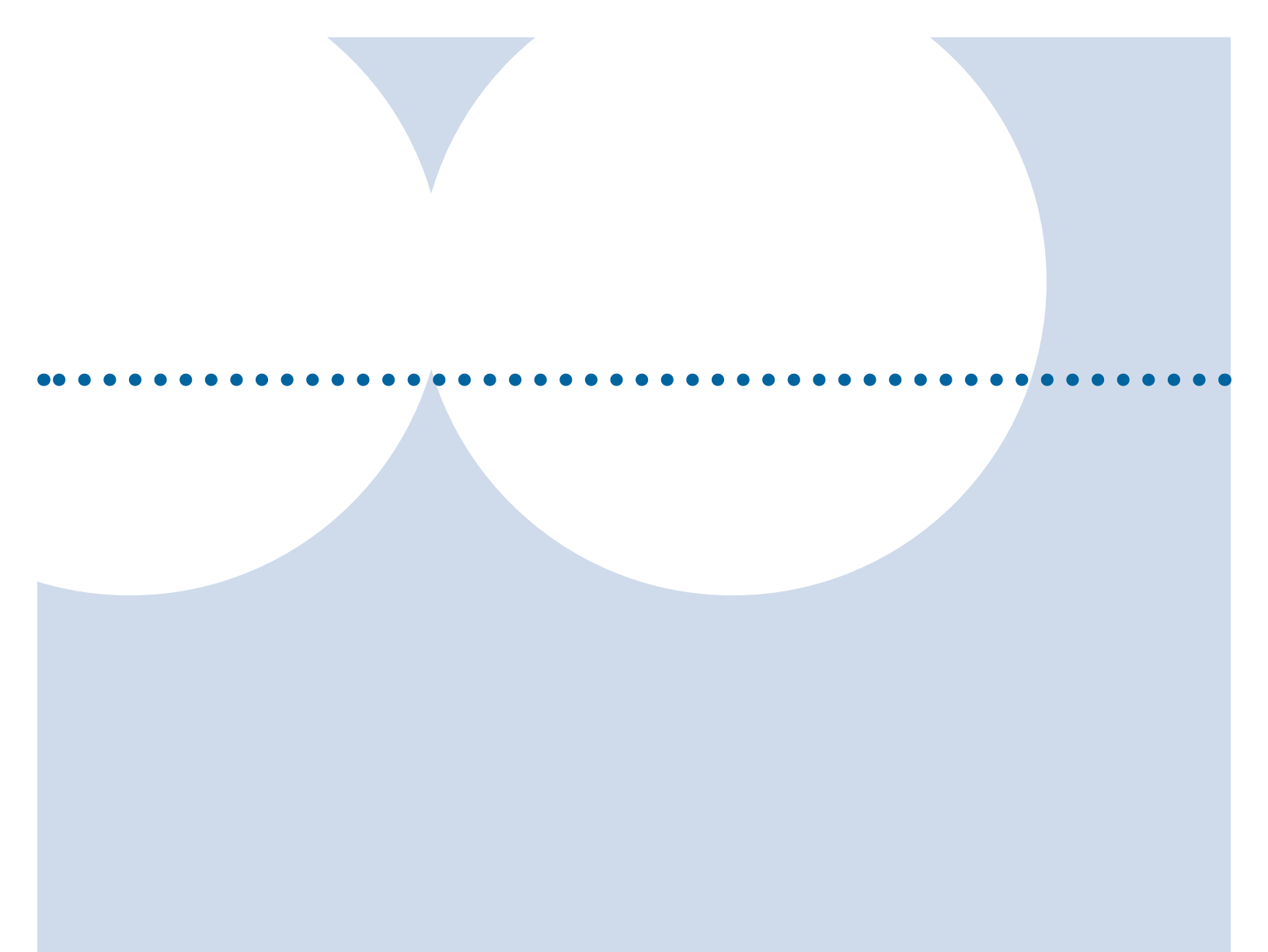
Hurts Whole Lot

Hurts Even More

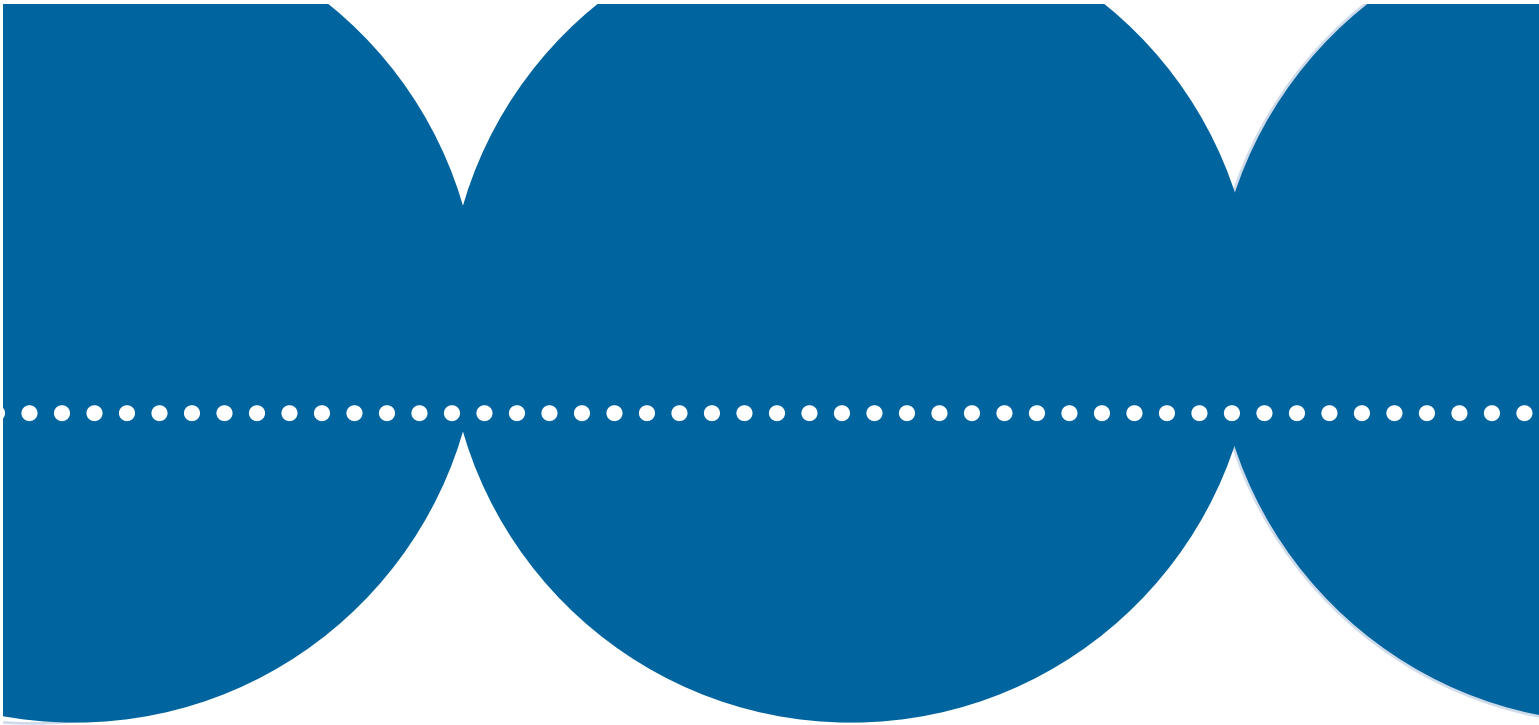
Hurts Little More

Hurts Little Bit

No Hurt



Rev. James Otte serves as part-time associate pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church, Plano, Texas, where he has been since 2001. He provides pastoral care, makes counseling referrals and works with various family ministries. He serves on the LCMS Texas District Commission for Ministerial Health. A licensed counselor, he previously served on the staff of Samaritan Counseling Center of East Texas and as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, both in Nacogdoches, Texas. He holds a master's degree in education and community counseling from Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches; a master's of divinity degree from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; and a bachelor's degree from the former Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Ind.



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