



# The Institute of Family Living

## HEALING THE WOUNDS OF TRAUMA

*The horrors of September 11<sup>th</sup> shattered our sense of invulnerability. Some things we took for granted: a safe border with the United States, freedom from terrorism in North America, secure workplaces, an economy that provides many of us with more than enough — these are no longer “givens.”*

*In the emerging new reality, how can we live faithfully? How do we find the inner peace which transforms our lives from living in fear to living in hope?*

*At IFL, it has been our privilege to be part of the healing process of a group of Canadian professionals who were caught in or near the second tower of the World Trade Centre at the time of the terrorist attacks. Their journey of healing from such a catastrophic experience has included group therapy, psychoeducation, and individual and couple therapy. Our involvement as a community of therapists is our way of contributing to the necessary work of healing and peace-making.*

*This is not new work for us. Such challenges face all people who endure trauma and have to rebuild their lives.*

*Our vocation as therapists has always involved us in our clients’ journey of healing from various forms of trauma to themselves or their family members: sexual abuse, rape, family violence, severe accidents, homicide, and suicide. The therapeutic task is to help to create a safe place for our clients to explore not only the memories of the traumatic event, but also to begin to imagine, to learn and to practice the skills needed to rebuild their lives.*

*One of the biggest challenges to healing from a personal or communal disaster is to learn how to feel safe in the world, safe in relationships, safe in one’s own bodily self. To that end, our therapeutic team includes different specialties that can help clients establish stability and healing.*

*We have therapists trained in trauma-focused therapy, including such modalities as focussing, hypnotherapy, EMDR, family restructuring, group therapy, and art therapy. Our medical doctors can assess and diagnose conditions which may require medication.*

*However, the challenge of healing from trauma is greater than simply reprocessing painful memories or learning new skills. It is an essentially spiritual process of finding hope and discovering once again the God-given capacity to be human: to love, to trust, to laugh, to enjoy the beauties of divine and human creation, and to experience community.*

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