

# BECOMING A TRAUMA HEALING FACILITATOR



The Trauma Healing Institute at American Bible Society is developing a network of facilitators who can be deployed to lead trauma healing sessions around the world. An online database serves the network by making available information on the facilitators including:

- ☑ their area of expertise in one or more of:
  - **CLASSIC** adult trauma healing,
  - **STORY-BASED** oral trauma healing, and
  - **CHILDREN'S** trauma healing
- ☑ their level of competence:
  - **CAREGIVER FACILITATOR:** able to lead healing groups
  - **TRAINING FACILITATOR:** able to also equip other facilitators
  - **MASTER FACILITATOR:** able to certify others as facilitators
  - any of these levels “in training” or “in need of retooling”
- ☑ the languages they speak and the countries with which they are connected
- ☑ their contact information, church or organization affiliation, educational level, mental health training, and cross-cultural experience

## Competency-based assessment

Facilitators need to have the following competencies:

- ☑ Able to manage personal well-being.
- ☑ Able to work on a team.
- ☑ Able to help traumatized people (listening, confidentiality, and so on).
- ☑ Able to lead groups in a participatory way.
- ☑ Demonstrated understanding of the content.

## How to get started

The normal path to acquire these competencies is:

**1. DETERMINING APPROPRIATENESS.** To enter the training process, a person needs to have the intention of helping others and be in a position to do so: time available, accepted by his or her community as a leader, and having gifts in the area of soul care.

**2. INITIAL EQUIPPING SESSION.** Candidates attend an initial equipping session, which covers *Healing the Wounds of Trauma* in a way that allows participants to: explore their own trauma and bring it to Christ for healing; experience participatory learning; learn basic biblical and mental health principles related to trauma care; develop plans for using what they have learned in their community; and prepare reports on their activities.



The equipping session can be conducted as a five-day seminar or a series of weekend sessions. During the session, participants are evaluated by a simple test to measure mastery of the content, a short practice teaching exercise, and observing their interaction with others and personal well-being.

At the end of the initial session, staff gives participants feedback on whether or not they recommend them to continue in the process and, if so, their strengths and the areas that need improvement. A certificate of participation is awarded at the end of the initial equipping session.

**3. PRACTICUM.** Participants return to their communities and apply what they have learned. Before coming to the advanced equipping session, they need to teach the five core lessons at least twice to groups of at least three people (plus as many of the optional lessons as possible), and send in reports on their activities.

**4. ADVANCED EQUIPPING SESSION.** The advanced equipping session focuses on consolidating the facilitator's competencies in view of their practicum experience. By the end of the advanced course participants should be able to:

- ☑ Solve program issues that arise as they carry out their ministries.
- ☑ Teach and use the materials with competency.
- ☑ Facilitate sessions in a participatory way.
- ☑ Care for traumatized people in a skillful way.
- ☑ Plan program roll-out.
- ☑ Report on their activities using the forms.

Evaluation is carried out in the same way as in the initial session, but attention is also given to the extent and quality of the candidate's practicum experience.

**5. CERTIFICATION AND DEPLOYMENT.** At the end of the advanced session, participants are awarded a certificate of participation. Those who qualify are also given a certificate of their facilitator status. For some, these certificates may be awarded later when the competencies have been acquired.

The primary record of a facilitator's status is the trauma healing database, to which facilitators are given access. If it is not possible to provide a printed copy of the certificate, a PDF copy is sent via e-mail. A person may first receive a caregiver certificate, then a training facilitator certificate, and finally a master facilitator certificate for each trauma healing model: classic, story-based, and children's.

The certificates mark an important stage in the equipping process, but not the end of learning! Facilitators continue to increase their skills by leading equipping sessions, first as assistant staff alongside someone more experienced and, over time, as the main facilitator.

When a facilitator has matured in their ability to not only lead equipping sessions but mentor others, evaluate their competencies and provide leadership on a higher level, he or she is named a master facilitator.

**6. COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE.** Facilitators are encouraged to continue increasing their skills by connecting with a "community of practice," that is, others working in trauma care. This can take place locally, nationally, internationally, and/or virtually through the Trauma Healing Institute website. The goals of a community of practice are networking, problem-solving, professional development, strategizing to better respond to needs, prayer, and encouragement.

## Apprenticeship model

In some cases, training facilitators can equip others one-on-one. Perhaps they lead a healing group and one of the participants shows potential to become a facilitator. They then mentor this person, gradually having them lead parts of sessions, until the competencies are acquired.

## Inactive Facilitators

If at any point a facilitator no longer demonstrates the necessary competencies, or becomes unavailable to lead trauma healing sessions due to other commitments or retirement, their status in the database is changed to "inactive" to ensure that the list of facilitators for a given country represents those actually available for service.

Facilitator candidates with their certificates of participation. Initial equipping session, story-based trauma healing, Yida Refugee Camp, South Sudan, December 2012.

