I. Introduction. Prior to developing the Immanuel approach, we had decided to avoid group emotional healing exercises due to concerns about the possibility that many people might get stuck simultaneously. With all other approaches to emotional healing that we are aware of, you can only do troubleshooting in a one-on-one setting. Therefore, we never did group exercises because we did not want to get to the end of an exercise and have 38 people stuck in traumatic memories, each needing an experienced facilitator to provide one-on-one troubleshooting. Actually, I did this once. I tried a group exercise at one of our seminars, with maybe 50 to 75 people. Many of the participants experienced wonderful healing; but a number of the other participants got stuck in negative memories, we were not able to provide one-on-one troubleshooting in the group context, and these people had miserable experiences. Once was enough. Hence the decision to avoid emotional healing exercises with groups. However, as Dr. Wilder and I worked with the Immanuel approach we realized that several of the principles and process pieces that are new with the Immanuel approach make it possible to deploy a number of “safety nets” that protect against this problem. Therefore, one aspect of the Immanuel approach to emotional healing that is particularly exciting is that it can be used in group settings.

When one thinks about the war torn third world countries, where millions of people have post-traumatic stress disorder but where there are minimal resources available for these multitudes to get effective treatment to address their traumatic memories, it is hugely strategically important that the Immanuel approach can be used with many people simultaneously. For example, wouldn’t it be glorious if an emotional healing mission team could gather a couple of hundred trauma survivors and facilitate healing for all of them at the same time? With this kind of possibility in mind, Charlotte and I, Dr. Wilder, the Khouris, the Courseys, Pastor Patti Velotta, Mark Hattendorf, and several other colleagues have been experimenting with group exercises in a number of different settings over the last four to five years. And the results so far have been very encouraging – together, we have worked with thousands of group exercise participants, with group sizes from 25 to 1200, and we have seen lots of healing with minimal problems.

Prior to developing the Immanuel approach we were also cautious about lay people doing emotional healing work (we wanted them to get a lot of training before facilitating lay ministry), and we felt that beginners should only practice under the close supervision of experienced facilitators. As with group exercises, we were concerned that recipients might get stuck – we were concerned that some recipients would open up painful memories, encounter difficulties beyond the troubleshooting abilities of lay ministers/beginners, and then be re-traumatized by remaining in the unresolved trauma for extended periods of time. However, as we have been working so diligently to clarify the principles and sharpen the tools for using the Immanuel approach with groups, we have realized that the same “safety nets” that make it possible to use the Immanuel approach safely with groups also make it possible for lay people to safely provide emotional healing ministry with much less training. This means that more lay people can become lay ministers much more quickly and easily, and this means that many people with less complicated trauma will be able to get healing with lay ministers, instead of having to wait for one of the rare and overloaded Immanuel approach mental health professionals. Furthermore, these same “safety nets” also make it possible for unsupervised beginners to safely practice with each other. This means that a handful of people anywhere in the world can get together to learn
and practice with each other. You don’t have to wait for one of the rare Immanuel approach trainers to come and supervise as you practice with each other.\(^1\) You can just gather a handful of your friends, family, or colleagues, put together your own study group, and then receive Immanuel approach healing in the context of practicing with each other.

This is good news for the millions of third world citizens with severe post traumatic stress disorder and minimal resources, and also for those of us with less trauma and more resources. Even in first world countries there are many people with moderate trauma who are having a hard time finding someone to facilitate Immanuel approach sessions for them. I spent the fall of 2012 working with Andy and a professional website designer building the new Immanuel network directory (see the “Referrals” page of \(\text{www.immanuelapproach.com}\)). When we first put it up, I had hoped that large numbers of facilitators would quickly post profiles, and that this would make it much easier for folks to find a facilitator. Unfortunately, many well trained, experienced facilitators have chosen not to post profiles because they are already swamped with more requests than they can care for. Consequently, many who would like to receive Immanuel approach sessions are still having difficulty in finding facilitators, and this problem will probably continue for some time.

Bringing us back to “It’s good news that the Immanuel approach safety nets make it possible for many more lay ministers to get adequate training much more quickly and easily, and it’s good news that these same safety nets make it possible for unsupervised lay person beginners to safely practice with each other.” My hope is that large numbers of lay people will take advantage of every possible training opportunity, so that we have a steadily, rapidly growing number of facilitators available to the general public. I am also hoping that people will build study/practice groups by actively recruiting family and/or friends and/or colleagues, and then use the do-it-yourself Immanuel approach training resources in this context.\(^2\) If these possibilities develop as I am hoping they might, then sessions facilitated by lay people/lay ministers practicing with each other in the context of do-it-yourself Immanuel approach study/practice groups will be one of the most important resources for those who are wanting to experience the Immanuel approach.

II. Immanuel Approach safety nets. As just mentioned, several of the principles and process pieces that are new with the Immanuel approach make it possible to put a number of “safety nets” in place – safety nets that make it possible to responsibly use the Immanuel approach in group settings, that make it possible for lay ministers to responsibly facilitate Immanuel approach healing with much less training, and that make it possible for beginners to responsibly practice without supervision.

**A. Safety net number one:** The initial steps of identifying a positive memory, deliberate appreciation, and establishing an adequate interactive connection with the Lord combine to set up an especially reliable “home base” that the lay person/beginning facilitator can use as a back

\(^{1}\)It is tremendously helpful to have a trainer teach you about the Immanuel approach and then supervise you as you practice with each other, and you should therefore take advantage of any opportunity to learn from someone who is already experienced with the Immanuel approach, but I don’t think this is necessary (which is a good thing, since there are so few trainers).

\(^{2}\)My thoughts regarding Immanuel approach do-it-yourself training can be found in appendix C. (As of 1/2014, appendix C is pending. This material can currently be found in the “Where/How Do I Get Training Regarding the Immanuel Approach?” essay on the “Training” page of the Immanuel approach website (\(\text{www.immanuelapproach.com}\), and/or Appendix C of Outsmarting Yourself.)
up troubleshooting resource, or troubleshooting “safety net.” If the recipient loses her connection with God and other basic Immanuel intervention troubleshooting tools are not effective in reestablishing an interactive connection, the facilitator can coach the person to go back to the interactive connection from the beginning of the session. And then, in this safe, positive context, the facilitator can coach the recipient to engage directly with Jesus and ask Him for guidance and help regarding the point in the session where she was not able to perceive His presence or establish an interactive connection. We have been amazed at the effectiveness of this simple safety net troubleshooting intervention.

The especially reliable home base that gets set up at the beginning of the session also provides a “make sure the person is okay” safety net at the end of the session. If the recipient gets stuck in a bad place and is not able to resolve whatever blockages are preventing her from moving forward, or if she is unable to finish processing her traumatic memory because she simply runs out of time, she can return to the positive memory, appreciation, and interactive connection with the Lord that were all refreshed at the beginning of the session. She may be disappointed that she was not able to resolve the traumatic memory, but she at least ends up back at a safe place of relational connection and positive emotions.

An airplane analogy helps in understanding the particular importance of the make-sure-the-person-is-okay-at-the-end-of-the-session safety net. Having a safety net that helps the recipient get back to her initial interactive connection with Jesus, even if she gets stuck regarding her trauma work and/or runs out of time, is like having a safety net that would enable a pilot to always get her plane safely back on the ground, regardless of any problem she might encounter in the air. The scariest part of flying in an airplane is that if things go wrong, you can drop out of the sky at hundreds of miles per hour and end up as flaming debris scattered across somebody’s cornfield. And this is why you never hear of beginner pilots practicing without an experienced pilot sitting right next to them. Without one-on-one supervision, a beginner making even one serious mistake, or encountering any serious problem she doesn’t know how to deal with, would pretty much be dead. No sane person will take this kind of risk.

In contrast to this scenario, think about how not scary and not dangerous flying would be if there was a big red button in the middle of the control panel that could always get you safely back on the ground. You’ve miscalculated the cost of bucking a strong headwind all the way from New York to Chicago, and so you’re running out of fuel over the middle of lake Michigan? No problem – just push the big red button and you’re perfectly safe, back on the ground in New York. You can’t see the ground because of heavy cloud cover, your navigational system gives out, and now you’re totally lost somewhere over the rocky mountains between New York and Los Angeles? No problem – just push the big red button and you’re perfectly safe, back on the ground in New York. You might be disappointed that you weren’t able to get to Chicago or Los Angeles, but I think most people would be willing to handle the risks of practicing without supervision if this were the worst that could happen. It’s still ideal to learn the Immanuel approach with an experienced facilitator sitting beside you and coaching you as you practice, but in areas where no experienced facilitator coaches are available, having a safety net that can get the recipient safely back on the ground minimizes the risks to the point that many beginners are willing to learn and practice even without supervision.

**B. Safety net number two:** When working with groups, when teaching the basic exercises to lay ministers, and especially when training beginners, we set a policy that establishes a second safety net. Those who are not able to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection with Him at the beginning of the exercise are encouraged to participate in the rest of
the exercise as intercessors, but they do not work with their own traumatic memories. This precaution seems to identify and protect those who are most likely to get stuck and have a negative experience, and thereby provides a second safety net. It also identifies those who do not have the primary safety net in place, which is another really good reason for them to abstain from working on their own trauma.

C. Safety net number three: Whether you are working with a large group of three hundred or whether you are practicing in an Immanuel approach study group of twelve, the first step of the group exercise is to divide the larger group into very small circles of three to five. This provides a third safety net, or maybe I should say that it provides a team that can make sure the first safety net gets deployed effectively. If the recipient gets stuck in a negative place, the others in her small group can help her return to her initial positive place by coaching her to describe the initial positive memory, to repeat the deliberate appreciation exercise, and then to reestablish the initial interactive connection with the Lord. Dividing the larger group into small clusters also provides a setting in which each member can report regarding her experience (describing “whatever comes into her awareness”), at each step in the process, and thereby benefit from the ways in which our brains work better in community. This significantly increases the effectiveness of the exercise, both increasing good results and decreasing disappointing results.

III. The super simple exercise: During the summer of 2012, a mission team spent a week in Uganda doing emotional healing ministry with teens and young adults who had survived horrific war crimes perpetrated by Joseph Kony’s Lord’s Army, and the reason I know about the adventure is that one of the team members (Julie Woodley), learned about the Immanuel approach a couple months before they left. The team had already been prepared to use Theophostic-based tools and emotional healing resources that Julie has developed, but Julie was excited about what she was learning and experiencing with the Immanuel approach, so they threw in some Immanuel approach pieces at the last moment. And the final result was quite spectacular – more than a hundred teens and young adults received powerful healing as they encountered Jesus’ living presence in their traumatic memories.

Several months later I was having lunch with Julie and Jim DeMar, another member of the summer 2012 Uganda mission team. Julie and Jim were describing the amazing things they had witnessed during their recent trip, and we were all talking about the possibility that the two of them would lead a second, similar trip in August of 2013. Somewhere in this conversation, I popped out with, “You know, if we stripped the Immanuel approach down to the absolute minimum, I think we could come up with a package of principles and tools that would still be effective for most trauma, and that your mission team could leave behind in Uganda – I think we could come up with a package that you could explain, demonstrate, and then coach practice with to the point that when you leave, the young people in Uganda could keep using it to minister to each other.” And then I threw out a bunch of thoughts regarding how one might go about training a mission team to implement this vision. When I was finished, Julie and Jim paused, and then responded with, “We’re going to bring our team to Evanston so that you can train them to do

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3If you are not already familiar with our teaching about the importance of each participant describing “whatever comes into her awareness,” and the intriguing ways in which God has designed our brains to function best in community, see The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life), chapter 17, “Describe Whatever Comes Into Your Awareness (Our Brains Work Better in Community).” Draft version available as free download from the “Getting Started” page of www.immanuelapproach.com.
So I came up with a super simple package of principles and tools specifically designed for this purpose. In every possible way I tried to limit the explanations, healing interventions, and troubleshooting tools to a package that a mission team of lay volunteers, with one week to work with, could effectively transfer to uneducated teenagers in Uganda. We got a chance to test drive this super simple package in the spring of 2013, when Jim, Julie, their team for August 2013, another small mission team preparing for emotional healing work in India, and a few other folks gathered in Evanston for two days of training, and the results were very encouraging. The participants seemed to experience minimal intimidation, overwhelm, or confusion, and most of them were able to facilitate significant emotional healing. And as I watched the seminar participants learning and practicing with the super simple exercise, I realized that this super simple package is not just good for teaching teens in Uganda, but that it is probably also the best exercise for any lay person beginners practicing for the first time with the full Immanuel approach. Therefore, as of March 2013, I am including the super simple exercise in the package of exercises for groups and beginners, and my recommendation is that people become comfortable and confident with this super simple exercise before adding additional healing interventions and troubleshooting tools.

I would like to offer a few final thoughts to teams trying to teach the Immanuel approach during short mission trips and to Immanuel approach trainers who work with lay person beginners. When demonstrating the super basic principles and tools, the goal is not to use all of the knowledge, skill, and tools that you have in order to resolve every possible problem as efficiently as possible, but rather to present the simplest possible package that will still work fairly well most of the time. When I demonstrate this super basic package, I openly acknowledge that there will be some situations that are more complicated, and that will require principles, tools, and skills in addition to those included in the super simple exercise. And then I remind the trainees that this is what the safety net is for. In fact, when I do demonstrations in this setting, I try to find at least one person with more complicated issues, and then deliberately withhold additional skills and tools so that I can model, “this is what it looks like when you encounter something more complicated, so that the super basic tools and skills are not adequate to resolve the problem, and then you need to use the safety net.” And when I coach practice sessions in this setting, I require people to use the safety net, even if they don’t actually need it, because I want them to prove to themselves that it’s okay to stop a session without fully resolving the trauma, and then use the safety net to help the recipient get back to a good place.

When demonstrating the super basic principles and tools, the goal is not to impress the trainees with how you can handle every possible problem, but then produce a final reaction of, “Wow. You’re really skillful and amazing (but I could never do that myself).” Rather, the goal is to impress the trainees with how simple it can be, and to have their final reaction be, “I can do that!” Another way to say this is that the more knowledge, skill, clinical judgement, and therapy tools you include in your demonstrations, the more intimidating and overwhelming the overall

4 When I refer to “the full Immanuel approach,” I’m referring to the full process, including working with traumatic memories, as opposed to just practicing with the positive memory, deliberate appreciation, and interactive connection with God safety net pieces.

5 If they aren’t finding places where they are genuinely stuck, I tell them, “As soon as the recipient gets connected to the traumatic memory, use the safety net immediately, before she even invites Jesus to be with her in the painful place.”
package will feel to the average lay person beginner.

At this point my observation is that first time lay beginners have a much easier time getting started if they begin with the super simple exercise as their first experience with practicing the full Immanuel approach, and if they make sure to prove to themselves that the safety net works. Most are amazed by how much trauma gets healed, even when they are limited to only the super simple principles and tools.

IV. Basic Immanuel approach exercise instructions: Note that this is a description of the complete basic exercise, including all of the pieces from establishing an initial interactive connection through resolving traumatic memories, and including a few more healing interventions and troubleshooting tools than the super simple exercise. Groups who are already experienced with the Immanuel approach routinely go through the full basic exercise, just as described here. However, if you are working with total beginners, who are trying the Immanuel approach for the very first time, we strongly encourage you to begin with the introductory exercise at the end of this document that includes just the safety net pieces (positive memory, deliberate appreciation, and establishing an initial interactive connection). And then, after people feel confident with the initial steps up to the point of establishing an interactive connection with Jesus, continue on to working with painful memories. Some of our beta-testing groups have spent as much as four to eight hours just practicing these initial steps of positive memory, appreciation, and connection, establishing the foundation for the session and getting the primary safety net in place, before moving on to the more challenging trauma work. And again, when you first start working with painful memories, begin with the super simple exercise, with ONE healing intervention and ONE troubleshooting tool. Then, after people feel comfortable with the super simple exercise, move on to the full basic exercise described here, that includes a few more interventions and troubleshooting tools.

A. Break up into small groups: When breaking a larger group into smaller circles for practicing the exercises, three is usually the ideal number. Three is the smallest number that protects against inappropriate pair bonding, and it also provides for a person who can intercede

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6 Careful, generous practice with getting the primary safety net in place (setting up a “home base” positive memory and establishing an initial interactive connection with Jesus), is especially important when working with people who have intense trauma, and especially especially important when working with groups of people who all have similar intense trauma. If one of the participants starts talking about her trauma with too much graphic detail, and thereby triggers many of the others, the participants need to have enough skill with the primary safety net so that the ministry team can call a “time out,” and then coach everybody to go back to their positive memories and connections with Jesus. Another way to put this is, “If you’re in a situation where most of people in the room might catch on fire at the same time, you really want to make sure that the sprinkler system is in place and ready to go.”

7 According to Dr. Wilder, if a man and woman spend time together as a couple their neurological bonding circuits will unavoidably move towards pair bonding, and this involuntary, neurological pair bonding inherently includes a sexual component. This pair bond does not grow because the man and woman start out wanting to pursue an inappropriate relationship, but just because that’s what bonding circuits do when members of the opposite sex spend time together as a couple. In contrast, when three or more people are together their neurological bonding circuits will usually try to build family bonds (as opposed to romantic pair bonds). Note regarding reference: Dr. Wilder learned about pair bonding vs family bonding in a private conversation with Dr. Allan Schore. Unfortunately, we are not aware of any published research reference regarding this phenomena.
and refer to the notes while the primary facilitator is focusing on the recipient. Aside from these considerations, smaller is better because each person will have more opportunity to participate as both recipient and lead facilitator, and because most people will feel more comfortable working on personal pain in the context of a smaller group. Sometimes other factors need to be considered, such as when four or five people come to a conference as a team and it seems right for them to practice together; but unless there are significant considerations indicating otherwise, we encourage people to break into clusters of three. If you have lots of time and don’t mind the exercises going very slowly, you can work in larger groups of six, eight, or even more, but you will want to pay special attention to the concern that some participants may not feel comfortable working in front of such a large audience. In certain very specific situations, two is the right number. For example, we encourage prayer partners and marriage partners to experiment with facilitating Immanuel approach sessions for each other, and the most convenient arrangement is often to get together with just each other. However, Immanuel approach sessions can be powerfully intimate experiences, and people who practice in pairs need to be VERY careful to avoid inappropriate pair bonding. In fact, we strongly recommend that people not practice as mixed gender pairs in any situation where a growing pair bond would be a problem.8

As you continue with the exercises, keep both functions of the small group in mind: 1) The small group provides a context for describing “whatever comes into your awareness” at each point in the exercise;9 2) the other members of the group can help the recipient get back to the positive initial starting place if she gets stuck in intense negative emotions.

**Opening prayer and commands (optional, depending on context):** Whenever I facilitate the Immanuel approach, I start the session with opening prayer and commands, as described in the “Opening Prayer and Commands” essay (available as a free download from either the “Getting Started” or “Resource” pages of [www.immanuelapproach.com](http://www.immanuelapproach.com)). And if I am coaching Immanuel approach prayer partners or a small study/practice group, I usually encourage them to start their sessions and practice exercises with our sample opening prayer and commands, or our sample condensed opening prayer and commands (also available as free downloads from either the “Getting Started” or “Resource” pages of www.immanuelapproach.com). However, with large group exercises I usually say the opening prayer and commands myself, silently, before we start the group exercise. This is because most of the larger groups I have worked with have included participants who had very little teaching or experience with demonic phenomena, and I was concerned that the prayers and commands dealing with demonic spirits might confuse and/or trigger them. If you are leading a group exercise and you happen to know that the participants are familiar with demonic phenomena, I think it is ideal for small cluster of three to five participants to start the exercise with our sample opening prayer and commands

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8For example, growing intimacy and pair bonding between spouses would be wonderful, but a growing pair bond between practice partners who are each married to someone else would be a huge problem.

9We realize that it takes a lot more time for each participant to report to the rest of the group at each step in the process (as opposed to each person just doing the exercises silently in her head), but our perception is that this is part of the larger picture that has enabled people to do group exercises and unsupervised beginner practice with good results and minimal breakage. If you are skeptical regarding the importance of this piece, please review *The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)*, chapter seventeen, “Describe Everything that Comes Into Your Awareness (Our Brains Work Better in Community).”
(or at least something similar).

**B. Positive memories and deliberate appreciation:** Ask the Lord to bring forward a memory of a previous positive experience of perceiving His presence and connecting with Him. If no memory comes forward spontaneously, take time to deliberately find one. Ask the Lord to help you recognize different aspects of the positive experience that you can specifically appreciate. Each person in the group then describes her positive connection memory to the others in the small group, and names specific things she appreciates about the experience. The goal is to reconnect with the positive memory, and to describe specific things that you appreciate until you feel appreciation/gratitude. Note that faith and gratitude “momentum” usually grow for all in the group as each person shares.

Remember that you may need to help other group members in using safety net #1 later in the exercise. As described below, sometimes you will need to remind them of specifics as part of coaching/helping them to return to their positive memories, repeat their deliberate appreciations, and reestablish their initial connections with Jesus. So pay attention (taking brief notes is ideal).

As we and our colleagues have been working with the Immanuel approach, with groups and individuals and in many different settings, we have identified several frequently asked questions and special considerations with respect to the positive memories that recipients work with to begin the Immanuel approach process:

1. **“What if I don’t have any memories of positive connections with the Lord?”**: Memories of past positive connections with the Lord are ideal, but if you have not yet had special interactive connections with God then use a memory of some other special event. For example, a memory of a particularly beautiful experience with one of your children, a favorite family Christmas memory, a memory of an especially positive vacation with friends, or a memory of thoroughly enjoying your favorite meal. You can practice deliberately reentering the positive memory, reconnecting with the positive emotions associated with the positive memory, and deliberately focusing on things you appreciate even if an interactive connection with God was not part of the original positive experience. Also, for step 3, below, you can experiment with asking the Lord to help you perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection in the context of this “non-God” positive memory. Maybe this exercise will be your first time for perceiving the Lord’s presence and experiencing and interactive connection.

2. **More than one positive memory:** One positive memory is usually adequate, but it is ideal to have several, since appreciation momentum builds as one works with several positive memories in succession. Having several memories available will be helpful if anyone gets stuck in particularly intense negative emotions later in the exercise, and therefore needs an especially strong positive memory and appreciation safety net. So if you are working with people who are more likely to need an especially strong safety net (for example, they have survived severe trauma, their support system is poor, and their coping skills are weak), we recommend repeating the first step several times, so that each person has a safety net that includes several positive memories.

3. **Appreciation memories without splinters:** Many people have positive connection with God memories that still include trauma splinters. For example, the person’s appreciation memory may be for an Immanuel approach session in which she experienced Jesus’ loving,
healing presence powerfully with her in a traumatic memory of her intoxicated father emotionally, physically, and sexually abusing she and her siblings. However, in this kind of complicated trauma, it is common to have a number of distinct traumatic pieces, so that unresolved pieces (or “splinters”) may remain, even while the parts of the memory that have been resolved are indeed now positive places where the person experiences the Lord’s healing presence. And if the traumatic memory the person works on later in the exercise resonates with the unresolved splinters, the initial appreciation parts of the memory can get blended together with the negative thoughts and emotions from the (now) activated splinters, so that the memory is no longer usable as a safety net. Therefore, if the people you are working with are describing appreciation memories that may have splinters (the positive memories being describe are about the Lord’s presence in the midst of trauma), and especially if many of the people in your larger group have similar traumas, so that each person’s splinters could trigger other participants, it is important to coach the participants to deliberately find positive memories that are completely free of splinters – memories without any aspect of pain or trauma. For example, feeling God’s presence while appreciating a beautiful sunset, seeing Jesus standing beside her as she holds her new baby, or experiencing a connection with Jesus in the context of a particularly beautiful worship service.

If a participant discovers that all her memories of positive God connections are memories of God’s presence in the midst of trauma, she can try a simple exercise that is often successful in generating completely splinter-free memories of interactive connections with God. The participant starts with a non-God positive appreciation memory, such as holding her baby, playing with a favorite pet, spending time with a best friend, or some beautiful nature experience like looking out over the Grand Canyon at sunrise. Then, just as for those who don’t yet have positive memories for interactions with God (above), she can go through the deliberate appreciation step with these non-God positive memories, and then use these same memories to go through step C, below. With this simple exercise, many become able to perceive God’s interactive presence in memories that had previously been non-God positive memories, and these new interactive connection positive memories are totally splinter-free (not associated with trauma in any way).

C. Reenter a positive memory and establish an interactive connection with the Lord: After you have identified one or more memories of past positive connection with the Lord, and feel appreciation for His presence and care in these past experiences, spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the memories. Then, from “inside” the memory, pray something along the lines of “Lord, help me to be aware of Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You.”10 Share whatever comes into your awareness with the others in your group. Again, if you have not yet had experiences of interactive connection with the Lord, then use a memory of some other special event.

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10In most cases the person perceives the Lord’s living presence and establishes an interactive connection in the context of the memory imagery (the subjective experience of being inside the memory spontaneously morphs into a new, living interaction with Him, but still in the context of the autobiographical content carried in the memory). However, some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the room where they are receiving ministry; some people with perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the context of a different memory that comes forward spontaneously; some people will perceive the Lord’s living, interactive presence in the context of imagery that does not seem to be coming from any specific memories, and some will experience two or more of these simultaneously.
Note that it’s best to take turns for the piece just described (the first part of step C), with group members going through this part of the process one at a time. This is because of the way our brains work better in community. When people go through this step in the Immanuel approach process, perception of the Lord’s presence and the interactive connection can sometimes be subtle, presenting through thoughts and/or images and/or emotions that the participants initially do not recognize. In fact, people often do not recognize the Lord’s presence, or that an interactive connection has been established, until they describe what they are experiencing, out loud, to the rest of the group. And these subtle thoughts, images, and emotions that the person misses until she describes them out loud – these subtle pieces on the periphery of her awareness, that don’t initially feel important or make sense – these are the pieces of mental content that the “describe whatever comes into your awareness” technique is designed to capture. When a person disciplines herself to describe these pieces to the others in her group (even though they don’t yet feel important or make sense), they get pulled through the part of her brain that is able to feel that they are actually important, and that is able to recognize how they fit into the picture.\(^{11}\)

Taking turns is important because it’s hard to hold onto these subtle, vague, “unimportant” thoughts, images, and emotions. Shoot, noticing them even when they’re right in front of you is difficult, let alone trying to remember the vague, “unimportant” content that was hovering in the periphery of your awareness ten minutes ago. If everybody goes through the first part of this step at the same time, when they get to the second part where each group member describes her experience, there will be a long delay between the prayer and the verbal report for everybody but the person who goes first. The participants should therefore take turns, with each member of the group going through the whole process of reconnecting with her positive memory, asking the Lord for help with perceiving His presence and establishing an interactive connection, and then describing “whatever” comes into her awareness before moving onto the next participant.\(^{12}\)

After each member of the group has gone through the first part of this step, pick one person to continue through the rest of the exercise as the recipient and pick a second person to be the primary facilitator. As the recipient is working on her traumatic memory, the primary facilitator (with the support of the other group members) should be reminding/coaching her regarding the instructions. (Ideally, the facilitator will coach regarding the instructions to the point that the recipient can focus all of her attention on her healing, without having to worry about looking at the instructions.) The facilitator (with the support of the others) also needs to apply the safety nets if the recipient gets stuck. *Note that from this point onward these exercise instructions are directed to the facilitator.*

**If the recipient perceives Jesus’ presence and has established an interactive connection with Him:** proceed on to D.

\(^{11}\)To review these principles with respect to how your brain works better in community, see *The Immanuel Approach (to Emotional Healing and to Life)*, chapter seventeen, “Describe Whatever Comes Into Your Awareness (Our Brains Work Better in Community).”

\(^{12}\)If all the participants already have experience with the Immanuel approach, and are consistently able to quickly and easily perceive the Lord’s presence and establish and interactive connection, then you can save time by doing the first part of this step all together. That is, you can have the whole group reenter their memories, invite the Lord, and ask for interactive connections all at the same time, and then take turns just for the next part, where each group member shares regarding her experience.
If the recipient does not perceive Jesus’ presence or have an interactive connection with Him, and you would like to try simple troubleshooting: 1.) Coach the recipient to ask, “What’s in the way of my perceiving Your presence and having an interactive connection with You?,’’ coach her to observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc that come into her awareness, and coach her to describe these to the others in the group regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important. 2.) Coach the recipient to ask, “What do I need to do to take the next step forward?,’’ coach her to observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc that come into her awareness, and coach her to describe these to the others in your group regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important. 3.) Follow-up regarding any directions the Lord provides.

If troubleshooting has identified and resolved blockages, so that the recipient is now able to perceive the Lord’s presence and connect with Him, then proceed on to D.

If the recipient does not perceive the Lord’s presence or have an interactive connection with Him after a brief season of simple troubleshooting, then coach her to return to her positive memories and appreciation until she feels appreciation and is at an okay place to stop.

Caution note: if the recipient is not able to establish an interactive connection with the Lord then she does not have the full safety net in place, and it is very important that she does not go on to working with traumatic memories in a group exercise or unsupervised beginner practice setting. Note to recipient: if your difficulty with perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with Him persists, especially across multiple sessions, we strongly encourage you to get help with Immanuel intervention troubleshooting in the context of individual sessions with someone experienced with finding and resolving blockages.

If time permits, the group can choose a new recipient, and then start again with step C with this next participant.

No memories of positive connections with God: As noted above, if you don’t have positive memories of past interactive connections with the Lord, you can experiment with trying this step with other positive memories. We have been pleasantly surprised to discover that many people can begin to perceive Jesus’ presence and experience interactive connections with Him for the first time by thinking about a positive memory, deliberately stirring up appreciation, reentering the memory and reconnecting with the associated positive emotions, and then asking the Lord to help them perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection. Note that it is especially important for the participant to describe whatever comes into her awareness after trying this experiment (regardless of whether it makes sense or feels important), since her first experience with perceiving the Lord’s presence and having an interactive connection may be subtle, and she may not recognize it for what it is until she shares it with the rest of the group.

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13Remember, the purpose of the “describe everything” discipline is not to push people to describe details they feel uncomfortable talking about, but rather to help people describe details that are being withheld because they don’t feel important and/or make sense. Therefore, coaching the recipient to “describe everything” always needs to be in the context of “to the extent you feel comfortable doing so.”

14Again, this persistent encouragement to “describe everything” always needs to be in the context of “to the extent you feel comfortable doing so.”
D. Choose a traumatic memory to work on: Help the recipient select a low to moderate intensity traumatic memory from one of the following categories (we recommend picking low intensity memories when you are just getting started with these group exercises):\textsuperscript{15}

Memories for painful experiences from your recent adult life that do not yet feel fully resolved. One good way to find low intensity traumatic memories from your recent adult life is to look through recent unpleasant experiences in which you did not perceive the Lord’s presence at the time of the original experience, and you still do not perceive His presence in the memory. Most of these will turn out to be traumatic experiences. Pick one that is minor. Note: picking a memory for a minor traumatic experience in recent adult life is probably the best way to stay in the shallow end of the pool.

Memories that you have been able to think about and talk about without getting overwhelmed, “stuck,” and needing someone else to help you get back on your feet emotionally.

Please \textit{do not} focus on an upsetting symptom and ask: “Lord, take me to the memory where this is coming from.” This approach may take you to a memory that you have never before worked with, or even to a memory you have never before been consciously aware of.\textsuperscript{16}

Please \textit{do not} go to memories where you have gotten stuck and/or overwhelmed, and have needed someone else to help you get back to a place where you were okay.\textsuperscript{17}

Please \textit{do not} go to memories that you have never previously talked about. If you have never previously described the experience to another person, it may be much more important than you feel or perceive. In individual sessions, the person will often report, “A memory has just come to me, but it’s not important – I think it’s just a distraction.” But when I coach them to describe it anyway, they are surprised by the intense negative emotions that well up as they start to talk about it. As you probably recognize, this is an example of the person’s brain working better in community. But we don’t want you to demonstrate this phenomenon by being overwhelmed by unexpectedly intense negative emotions in the context of a group exercise.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15}Some ask “Why not just ask the Lord to bring forward the memory He wants to work on?” This is what we do in individual sessions, but our concern in the group setting is that none of us have perfect perception of the Lord’s guidance. In the context of a group exercise the leader cannot discern with each participant regarding the accuracy of their perception of the Lord’s guidance, and the consequences of mistaken discernment are much greater (for example, getting into an overwhelming traumatic memory in the group setting, without appropriate resources to care for this). Therefore, in the group setting we are usually more conservative and directive, and provide guidelines for selecting memories as opposed to having each person simply ask the Lord what to do/where to go.

\textsuperscript{16}This is a precaution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can feel free to use the “focus on an upsetting symptom, and ask the Lord to take you to the underlying memories” approach.

\textsuperscript{17}Again, this is a precaution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can be more adventurous with respect to the memories you pick to work with.

\textsuperscript{18}Again, this is a precaution for people who are just learning the process. If the people in your group have high capacity and are experienced with the Immanuel approach, you can be more adventurous with
E. Invite/welcome Jesus into the memory, ask Him to help you to establish an interactive connection, and engage with Him to receive healing: Coach the recipient to focus on the traumatic memory, and deliberately reenter/reconnect with it. In some situations, such as emotional healing groups in first world countries, participants will often be high functioning, well defended, and have difficulty connecting with their traumatic memories. For these situations, one simple way for the recipient to reenter/reconnect with the memory is to picture herself back in the painful situation, and then talk about the details until she can feel the negative emotions associated with the original experience.

**Caution note: In some situations the concern will be for the recipient to avoid triggering and overwhelming everyone else in the group. For example, in groups where many of the participants have survived severe trauma, and in which many of the participants share similar trauma, if one group member starts talking about the details of a painful memory the others can quickly become overwhelmed by intense triggering. In these situations, the participants can usually reconnect with painful memories very easily (usually, all they need to do is close their eyes and think about the original experience for a moment), and it will be important for the person leading the overall exercise to coach participants to avoid describing the details of their trauma. In fact, the person leading the overall exercise should specifically coach the participants to describe their trauma very briefly, and in only the most vague and general terms.**

Once the recipient is emotionally connected with the traumatic memory, coach her to invite/welcome Jesus to be with her in the memory, and to ask Him to help her perceive His presence and establish an interactive connection. From the perspective of being inside the memory, she can pray something like, “Jesus, I welcome You to be with me here. Please help me to be aware of Your presence and to have a living, interactive connection with You,” or “Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Please help me to perceive Your presence and to establish a living, interactive connection with You.”

Then coach her to observe whatever comes into her awareness, and to the extent she feels comfortable doing so, describe her internal mental content to the others in the group regardless of whether it makes sense or feels important. (Remember that our brains works better in community, and that she may not recognize Jesus’ presence in her memory until she shares her internal experience with the others in the group).

1.) If the recipient is able to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection: If the recipient is able to perceive the Lord’s presence and establish an interactive connection in the traumatic memory, then coach her to keep focusing on Jesus and to engage with Him at every point in the session, regarding every issue that comes up, and respect to the memories you pick to work with.

19One would think that our very specific instructions about choosing minor traumatic memories for group exercises would avoid the problem of participants overwhelming each other with their traumatic details. Unfortunately, our experience is that people with severe trauma often have very poor judgement with respect to what would constitute a minor trauma. Also, in some situations it will be right to use group exercises with people who have similar severe trauma, and in these situations it is especially important to coach the participants regarding how to avoid overwhelming each other with traumatic details that can be intensely triggering.

20Feel free to adjust the exact wording so that it feels like the best fit for your group’s experience and church culture.
regarding every difficulty that she encounters. For the super simple exercise, just keep coaching the recipient to focus on Jesus and to use the following two prayers (as each is appropriate), “Jesus, what do You want me to know about this?” and “Jesus, please help me.” For the super simple exercise, stay with a very small menu (two or three) very simple variations of these two prayers.

And after each interaction with Jesus, coach the recipient to “describe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, or physical sensations that come into your awareness, regardless of whether they “make sense” or feel important.” (Remember, our brains work better in community).

21 Again, you can adjust the wording so that it feels like the best fit for your group’s experience and church culture. For the super simple exercise, stay with a very small menu (two or three) very simple variations of these two prayers.

22 Again, this persistent encouragement to “describe everything” should always be in the context of “to the extent you feel comfortable doing so.”

For the basic exercise with the slightly larger tool box, you can add some additional coaching regarding how to engage with Jesus most effectively. One of these additional coaching tools is to use more discernment and varied vocabulary in coaching the person to ask Jesus for guidance, ask Jesus for healing, ask Jesus for resources, and ask Jesus for help. Another of these additional coaching tools is to help the recipient get words for any perceptions, thoughts, emotions, etc that feel true regarding the memory, and then coach her to share these with the Lord directly. After each interaction with Jesus, coach the recipient to observe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, or physical sensations that come into her awareness, and especially anything she sees or senses the Lord to be doing. And then (as always), coach her to describe all of this to the others in the group regardless of whether it makes sense or feels important. When using the slightly larger tool box, you can also include more skilled coaching to help the recipient notice the content of her internal awareness, more persistent, skilled coaching to describe everything that comes into her awareness, and more skilled help with recognizing the clues that come forward.

2.) If the recipient is not able to perceive the Lord’s presence or establish an interactive connection: If the recipient is not able to perceive the Lord’s presence or establish an interactive connection in the memory, try simple troubleshooting. For the super simple exercise, go straight to the troubleshooting safety net intervention described below (section 5.b.). For the basic exercise with a few more tools: 1.) Coach the recipient to ask, “What’s in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence and establish an interactive connection in this memory?;” coach her to observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc come into her mind; and coach her to describe these to the others in the group, regardless of whether they make sense or feel important. 2.) Coach the recipient to ask, “What do I need to do to take the next step forward?;” coach her to observe whatever thoughts, emotions, images, memories, physical sensations, etc come into her awareness; and coach her to describe these to the others in the group, regardless of whether they make sense or feel important. 3.) Follow-up regarding any directions the Lord provides.

If troubleshooting has identified and resolved blockages, so that the recipient is now able to perceive Jesus’ presence and has an interactive connection, then coach her to engage with him to receive healing (go to E1, above).

If the recipient does not perceive Jesus’ presence or have an interactive connection with him after a brief season of simple troubleshooting, then move to the troubleshooting safety net...
intervention described below (section 5.b.). Please don’t fall into the trap of feeling like a failure if you have to use the safety net. Remember, when you are just beginning to practice with the Immanuel approach it’s actually important and valuable for you to use the safety net, so that you are sure that it really works.

3.) If the recipient becomes stuck, and asking Jesus for guidance and help does not seem to be resolving the problem: If the recipient becomes stuck at any point in working with the traumatic memory and she still has an interactive connection, the first thing to do is coach her to focus on Jesus and ask him for guidance and help, and then coach her to describe whatever comes into her awareness (focusing especially on anything the Lord is doing). However, if these interventions do not seem to be resolving the problem then transition to the troubleshooting safety net intervention described below (section 5.b.).

4.) If you’re running out of time (fifteen minutes or less remaining) and the recipient is still feeling bad: If you are getting to the end of the session (fifteen minutes or less remaining), the traumatic memory has not been resolved, and the recipient is still feeling bad:

a) Super simple exercise: For the super simple exercise, just transition to the end-of-session safety net intervention described below in section 5.a., so that deliberate appreciation and being with Jesus in a positive context can move the recipient to a better place before the end of the session. Again, don’t fall into the trap of feeling like a failure if you have to use the safety net. Remember, when you are just beginning to practice with the Immanuel approach it’s actually important and valuable for you to use the safety net, so that you are sure that it really works.

b) Basic exercise: For the basic exercise (with a few more tools and options than the super simple exercise):

If you want to make sure the recipient’s negative emotions are resolved before she goes home, then transition to the end-of-session safety net intervention described below in section 5.a., so that deliberate appreciation and connection with Jesus can move her to a better place before the end of the session.

If you and the recipient are both okay with the possibility of ending the session with lingering negative emotions, the recipient feels like something positive is happening, and she therefore wants to use all the time to continue working with the traumatic memory, you can make the judgment call to continue interacting with the Lord regarding the traumatic memory right up until the end of the session. Again, if the top priority is to make sure that the recipient’s negative emotions are resolved before you go home, make sure to leave time at the end of the session (like, transition now), so that she can work with the group to use the end-of-session safety net intervention to get back to a better place. As I have mentioned repeatedly, our brains works better in community. The safety net intervention will be much more effective with the group, as compared to the recipient trying to use it on her own after the group exercise has ended.

5.) Safety net intervention overview: What I call the “safety net intervention” is to deploy the first safety net described above – you help the recipient get back to her positive, safe interactive connection with Jesus from the beginning of the exercise. If the recipient’s connection with Jesus at the beginning of the exercise was especially strong and her connection with the negative thoughts and emotions in the traumatic memory is only
moderate, she may be able to go directly back to her initial interactive connection, and then quickly return to gratitude and peace as she spends time with Jesus in that context. However, if the recipient’s connection with Jesus at the beginning of the exercise was not so strong, and if she is intensely connected to the negative thoughts and emotions in the traumatic memory, you may need to coach her to review her positive memory, coach her to repeat the deliberate appreciation exercise, and then coach her to repeat step C in order for her to return to the positive, safe interactive connection from the beginning of the session.23

a) End-of-session safety net intervention: If you’re using the safety net as an end-of-session intervention so that the recipient can end the exercise in a good place, then start with helping her get back to the positive, safe interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise (as just described). Once she has reestablished the connection from the beginning of the exercise, coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and deliberately appreciating both the Lord’s goodness and the initial positive memory until the negative emotions from the traumatic memory have been fully replaced by gratitude and peace.

b) Troubleshooting safety net intervention: You can also use the safety net as a troubleshooting intervention that enables the recipient to continue working with the trauma. If you are wanting to pursue this option, start with helping the recipient to get back to the positive, safe interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise (as just described). And then, continuing in the context of this positive place, coach her to engage with Jesus regarding the painful memory. Coach her to tell/ask Jesus anything she wants to talk/ask about regarding the trauma, and coach her to especially talk/ask about any places of difficulty (for example, any places where she was not able to perceive His presence, or any places where she asked for help but did not perceive resolution). Coach her to continue focusing on Jesus, and then to observe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, or physical sensations that come into her awareness (and especially anything she sees or senses the Lord to be doing). Finally, coach her to describe whatever comes into her awareness. (Your brain works better in community!)

Sometimes, just reestablishing the positive, safe connection from the beginning of the exercise, and then talking to Jesus about the traumatic memory and the problems that developed in trying to work with it, will use up the remainder of the session. However, in some situations the recipient will reestablish an interactive connection, talk to Jesus about the traumatic memory and any points of difficulty, and get to a good place fairly quickly – she has a good connection with the Lord, she understands whatever He has shown her about the problems that developed in working directly with the traumatic memory, and there is a lot of time remaining. At this point, if the recipient desires to do so, she can try again with respect to working directly with the trauma (working from the perspective of being inside/connected to the painful memory). Sometimes the process will then proceed smoothly to complete resolution; but if you get stuck again, just use the safety net intervention again. And repeat this cycle until you run out of time or the traumatic memory gets resolved.

c) Practical tips regarding advanced safety net coaching: With some situations in which

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23The Bob: Safety Net Demonstration live session teaching DVD (#29 in the LMS series) provides a good example of quickly and easily going back to the initial interactive connection, without having to go through the positive memory recall and deliberate appreciation steps.
the recipient is intensely triggered to severe trauma, the facilitator will need to provide special persistence and skill in helping her return to the interactive connection from the beginning of the session.

i) Provide detailed coaching: If the recipient gets stuck in a bad place and is having difficulty getting back to her initial positive memory and interactive connection with Jesus, the primary facilitator and other members of the group need to provide detailed coaching for each step of the safety net intervention. For example, you can remind her of some of the specifics from her positive memory, and then coach her to recall them and describe them in detail. You can coach her to spend time picturing and appreciating specifics that were particularly special, and you can also help her to find some new specific appreciations. If the recipient is still having trouble with actually feeling gratitude, you can coach her to recall and appreciate several positive memories in succession. (Remembering from chapter six, appreciation momentum builds as one works with several positive memories in succession.)

Once the recipient is subjectively feeling gratitude, you can remind her to reenter the positive memory and ask Jesus for help with perceiving His living presence and establishing an interactive connection, and then encourage her to observe and describe whatever comes into her awareness.

ii) Persist with safety net even if recipient doesn’t feel like going to positive memory:
Sometimes the recipient will be strongly connected to a memory of severe trauma, she will be feeling intense negative emotions, and her relational circuits will be deeply off. And because of the ways in which our relational circuits interact with our memories and emotions, with her relational circuits deeply off she will not initially want to think or talk about positive memories, when she tries to recall and reconnect with positive memories she will initially find this to be difficult, and when she starts remembering and talking about her positive memories she will not initially feel any appreciation. In these situations you may need to be very directive and persistent in coaching the recipient to recall and describe her positive memories, name specific appreciations, and deliberately reenter the positive memory, even when she doesn’t initially feel like it. In some situations it may take as long as fifteen to twenty minutes, but our experience is that if a person persists in recalling, talking about, appreciating, and reentering positive memories of experiencing the Lord’s presence, she will eventually calm down, return to feeling appreciation, regain access to her relational connection circuits, and be able to get back to the good place of perceiving the Lord’s presence and feeling connected to Him. It may take some practice to learn to be adequately directive and persistent in these situations, but with appropriate coaching most people can learn this fairly quickly.

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24 Again, appreciation momentum builds as one works with several positive memories in succession, and it is therefore wise to build safety nets that include several positive memories if you are working with participants who are at risk for getting particularly stuck in particularly intense traumatic memories. Hopefully, group exercise leaders will be aware of these concerns if they are working with people who are particularly vulnerable. Therefore, for the purposes of these advanced safety net coaching notes I will assume that recipients have several positive memories that they can work with if this is needed.

25 For a definition of relational circuits and detailed explanation regarding these ways in which they interact with our memories and emotions, see the “Key Concepts” page of www.outsmartingyourself.org, chapters 12, 15, 16, and 17 in Outsmarting Yourself, and Part II of the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us” essays (this essay is available as a free download from www.kclehman.com).
iii) Validate distress, reassure that pain is not being dismissed or ignored: When the recipient is intensely connected to a traumatic memory she will sometimes be deeply blended with the subjective experience from inside the original trauma. In these situations, when you suggest going back to the connection from the beginning of the exercise the recipient can feel like you are going somewhere else, and leaving her to stay behind in the painful place by herself. She might feel like you are simply abandoning her, or at the very least that you are trying stuff her pain back down into her unconscious because you don’t want to deal with her messy emotions. In these situations it is very helpful to acknowledge the validity of the person’s distress, remind her regarding the purpose of the positive memory intervention, and reassure her that she is not being ignored, managed, or abandoned. I usually say something along the lines of, “I understand that this painful memory place is very important, and needs to be cared for. We’re not trying to ignore or minimize this memory place, or just stuff it back down. But for right now, the next step in the healing process is to “switch gears” and go back to the positive memories and interactive connection from the beginning of the session. And when you have reconnect with Jesus in that safe, positive place we will ask him for more help regarding this painful place.” Or, for the end of the session, “...but for right now, in this group setting, we want to ‘switch gears’ and help you use the positive memory safety net so that you can get back to a good place for the end of the exercise.”

iv) Start with offering attunement: Attunement can be a particularly helpful resource for any situations in which the recipient is intensely connected to a traumatic memory and resisting the safety net intervention. If you know about attunement and are skilled in providing it, the ideal is to start with offering attunement until the person regains access to her relational connection circuits, and then after she has regained access to her relational connection circuits coach her through the steps of recalling positive memory, deliberately stirring up appreciation, and reestablishing an interactive connection. Again, starting with attunement is ideal; however, persistent safety net coaching as described above, even without skilled attunement, will almost always be effective.

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26 If you can honestly do this (for example, you have plenty of time in the current session and can return to the trauma after getting more help from Jesus in the context of the initial positive memories, or you are planning to have future sessions in which you can return to these traumatic memories), it is ideal to also assure the person that you will eventually come back to continue work on the unresolved trauma. However, do not offer this assurance unless you are sure you will be able to provide what you promise.

27 When I offer attunement as part of the safety net intervention, I usually include comments validating the recipient’s pain, assuring her that we are not just trying to manager her, reminding her of the purpose of the intervention, and reassuring her that we will return. For additional discussion of attunement as a resource for helping the recipient regain access to her relational connection circuits, see chapters 15, 17, and 18 in Outsmarting Yourself, and “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us, Part II: The Pain Processing Pathway” (available as a free download from www.kclehman.com).

28 As mentioned above, a very small number of participants may encounter especially complicated difficulties that can actually hinder them from cooperating with the initial-positive-memory-and-interactive-connection safety net. As also mentioned above, deliberate, skilled, and persistent attunement is one of the most consistently effective interventions for helping these people calm down and get back to a place where they are able cooperate with the initial-positive-memory-and-interactive-connection safety net.
v) Don’t go back to the same memory: Once the recipient has calmed down she may return to the exercise, but if the group had to do a lot of coaching (as opposed to just a few gentle reminders), she should work with a different memory. The fact that she needed so much help indicates that the first painful memory is not good material for a group setting. I am confident the Lord can heal any traumatic memory, but it is best to deal with the more intense and complicated traumas in settings in which the recipient can receive more advanced one-on-one trouble shooting if this is necessary.

F. End of exercise – more appreciation, the Immanuel story, and the safety net:

If the recipient experienced complete resolution of the traumatic memory: Coach the recipient to thank the Lord for His healing presence and healing work. Coach the recipient to formulate and tell the Immanuel story (be sure that she names several specifics she especially appreciates).

If the recipient experienced some kind of positive interaction with the Lord in the context of the traumatic memory, but only partial resolution: 1) If she has not already done so (safety net as she was running out of time), coach the recipient to return to her interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise. As mentioned earlier, the recipient may be able to just go directly to her connection with Jesus, or she may need to repeat the positive memory and appreciation steps in order to reestablish her initial connection. After she has reestablished her positive, safe connection with Jesus, coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and appreciating both the positive memory and the Lord’s goodness until she feels grateful and peaceful. (She should no longer be feeling the negative emotions from the trauma.) 2) Coach the recipient to thank the Lord for this positive interaction, and then help her formulate and tell the Immanuel story regarding the positive interaction that has occurred (be sure to help her name specifics she especially appreciates).

If the recipient did not have a positive interaction with the Lord in the context of the traumatic memory: If you have not already deployed the end-of-session safety net, do it now. That is, coach the recipient to return to her interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise so that she can end the exercise in a good place. Again, the recipient may be able to go directly to her connection with Jesus, or she may need to repeat the whole positive memory, appreciation, interactive connection package. After she has reestablished her positive, safe connection with Jesus, coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and appreciating both the positive memory and the Lord’s goodness until she feels grateful and peaceful. (She should no longer be feeling the negative emotions from the trauma.)

With each of these options, remember to coach the recipient to do the “end of exercise” steps out loud with the others in the group. (Our brains works better in community.)

Brief reminder comments regarding the Immanuel story: The “Immanuel story” is the story of 1) how things were before God showed up, 2) what happened when God showed up, and 3) how things have been different since God showed up. The concepts here are pretty simple, but unfortunately many of us are a lot better at talking about the pain part of the story than we are at talking about the God part of the story. As a result, we will often spend thirty minutes describing every detail of the long history of our pain, and then summarize the God/healing part of the story in thirty seconds. And in groups with a lot of trauma, this can set everybody else on fire. So we want to provide some additional coaching regarding how to formulate and tell the Immanuel story:
First round: Start at the point you first perceived God’s presence with you (as opposed to starting at the beginning of the pain story). With the help of the group, give a blow by blow account of everything from the moment of perceiving God’s presence forward. Tell each thing God did, and your reaction to it. Describe every detail you can get words for, especially your emotions, body sensations (if this is helpful), and anything you perceived to change as you engaged with God regarding the healing work. After these pieces have all been well developed, put them together and tell them as a story. If there are concerns about triggering others, leave the story like this, and tell it to at least three people as soon as (reasonably) possible after finishing the exercises.

Second round (if there are minimal concerns regarding triggering others): Tell the story again, slightly expanded, with a little bit of context regarding the pain part of the story (how things were before God showed up). As soon as (reasonably) possible after finishing the exercises, tell the story to at least three people.

For additional explanation regarding the Immanuel story, see chapter fifteen, “Formulate and Tell the Immanuel Story,” in the draft version of the new book (available as a free download from the “Getting Started” page of www.immanuelapproach.com).

G. Closing prayer (optional, depending on context): Whenever I facilitate the Immanuel approach I end the session with a closing prayer, as described in the “Closing Prayer and Commands” essay (available as a free download from either the “Getting Started” or “Resource” pages of the Immanuel approach website, www.immanuelapproach.com). And if I am coaching Immanuel approach prayer partners or a small practice group, I usually encourage them to close their sessions and practice exercises with our sample closing prayer and commands (also available as free downloads from either the “Getting Started” or “Resource” pages of www.immanuelapproach.com). However, with large group exercises I usually say the closing prayer and commands myself, silently, after we finish the group exercise. This is because most of the larger groups I have worked with have included participants who had very little teaching or experience with demonic phenomena, and I was concerned that the prayers and commands dealing with demonic spirits might confuse and/or trigger them. If you are leading a group exercise and you happen to know that the participants are familiar with demonic phenomena, I think it is ideal for each small group to close the exercise with our sample closing prayer and commands (or at least something similar).

H. Repeat steps C through H with another member of the group: If time permits, the group can return to step C, and then repeat steps C through G with another member of the group.

V. Summary regarding the “Safety net” intervention (going back to the initial positive memories, appreciation, and interactive connection with the Lord): When encountering any of the difficulties below, the recipient can go back to the positive memories, appreciation, and interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise, and then get help from Jesus in that positive context. This simple but effective intervention can be a resource and/or “safety net” in various ways at various points throughout the exercise.

• If the recipient is not able to perceive the Lord’s presence in the traumatic memory, even after asking “what’s in the way?” and trouble-shooting;

if the recipient should become stuck at any point in working with the traumatic memory, and
especially if the recipient becomes stuck and has lost her interactive connection with Jesus;

or if the recipient is able to perceive the Lord’s presence in the traumatic memory, but does not experience a strong enough connection to be able to receive the help she needs;

– for each of these situations, coach the recipient to go back to the positive memory starting place and re-establish connection with Jesus in that context. From the positive memory place of restored connection with Jesus, coach the recipient to ask Jesus for help and specifically ask Him about the traumatic memory. Then if time permits, the recipient can go back to the traumatic memory and apply the new guidance/help she just got from Jesus. Repeat as many times as necessary.

• At the end of the session, if you run out of time before the recipient has fully resolved the traumatic memory, help her return to her connection with Jesus from the beginning of the exercise. After she has reestablished this positive, safe connection, coach her to spend time focusing on Jesus and appreciating both the positive memory and the Lord’s goodness until she feels grateful and peaceful.

VI. Miscellaneous practical tips:

A. Cautions regarding large groups: We recommend that you do not try these exercises with large groups until you are able to perceive the Lord’s presence and connect with Him in your own experience. We recommend that you do not try leading large group exercises until you are comfortable with facilitating the Immanuel approach in individual sessions, and you have been getting consistently good results. We recommend that you try to begin experimenting with group exercises in smaller group settings (25 people or less), in which you know the people that will be participating. Finally, it is ideal to have a few experienced facilitators available to deal with the possibility that a small number of participants may encounter especially complicated difficulties – complicated difficulties that can actually hinder them from cooperating with the “go back to the initial positive memory and interactive connection” safety net.

B. Four to six repetitions: Almost everybody will feel a bit insecure and clumsy the first

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29For example, on very rare occasions, an internal dissociated part will come forward and refuse to go back to the initial positive memory and interactive connection because she doesn’t trust or like Jesus. Or an internal part will come forward and refuse to cooperate with the safety net intervention because she feels like it will just stuff her and her trauma back in the closet, and then her pain will never get resolved. If you are skilled in working with internal parts and advanced Immanuel interventions, you can work directly with the internal part and her guardian lie fears so that she will eventually be able to cooperate with going back to the initial positive memory and connecting with Jesus. Another, much more general intervention, is to offer deliberate, skilled, and persistent attunement. In my experience, this attunement intervention will always help the recipient to calm down, feel safe, and eventually get back to a place where she is able to cooperate with the initial-positive-memory-and-interactive-connection safety net. If you are not already familiar with attunement, see the “Key Concepts” page of www.outsmartingyourself.org, chapters 11 and 18 in Outsmarting Yourself, and Part II of the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and The God Who is With Us” essays (available as a free download from www.kclehman.com) for definition and explanation. Also, to put all of this in perspective: in working with more than 800 group exercise participants over the past five years, I’ve encounter maybe five people who’ve had this kind of complicated blockage hindering them from using the initial-positive-memory-and-interactive-connection safety net.
couple of times, even with just the safety net practice and the super simple exercise. This is normal and too be expected. In addition to providing reassurance for those who are feeling the most insecure, we need to be aware of this extremely common reality because it is very important to deliberately help people get through it. Studies of the neurology of learning and research focusing on observable behavioral both show a dramatic tipping point for most people at four to six successful repetitions. People who go through a new procedure only two or three times will often still feel insecure enough that they will be reluctant to continue on their own – when they no longer have a trainer providing supervision and encouragement. However, if trainees persist until they have gone through the new procedure four to six times, most of the people who initially felt uncomfortably clumsy and insecure will feel dramatically more comfortable and confident, and they will be much more likely to continue using the new procedure even without coaching or supervision. Therefore, whenever possible we should deliberately plan our training so that participants successfully get through at least the super simple exercise four or more times.

C. Verbal instructions: Mission teams teaching these principles and tools in third world countries should deliberately practice using primarily verbal explanations and instructions to coach participants through the exercises, as opposed to relying on explanatory handouts and written instructions (many of the third world participants will not be able to read). Even in situations where the participants can read, consider leaning towards more verbal explanations and instructions, especially for practice with the safety net pieces and the super simple exercise. My observation is that the detailed instructions are sometimes more distracting than helpful, and I was pleasantly surprised by how well the people at our recent seminar did with only the one page summaries. My assessment at this point is that the ideal is to use this explanatory essay and the detailed instructions as reference resources before and/or after practice exercises, but during the actual exercises have a trainer/leader providing verbal explanations and instructions, with the practice groups using only the 1 page summaries as “cheat sheets.”

D. Alternate one page summaries: Some participants prefer the one page summaries that are essentially outlines of the detailed instructions, whereas others prefer the alternative 1 page summaries that focus more on the key concepts. Particularly with the initial safety net practice and the super simple exercise, I prefer the alternative summaries in combination with good verbal explanations and instructions.

VII. Helpful handouts: When we use these exercises in group settings we have found that some participants like to have copies of the detailed instructions, and that most participants like to have copies of the one page summaries (below), so we usually provide these as handouts. In order to provide maximum convenience and flexibility regarding the use of these resources, we have made each of these handouts available as separate documents on the Immanuel approach website. (These documents can be accessed from either the “Resources” page or the “Getting Started” page of www.immanuelapproach.com.)

Note: We are still learning about and making adjustments to these group exercises, and more raw data is helpful. If you try Immanuel approach group exercises, please let us know what happens.

Karl D. Lehman, M.D. • www.immanuelapproach.com • Charlotte E.T. Lehman, M.Div.
1.) **Break into small groups:** The ideal number for each group is three. Two to five can work.

2.) **Positive memories and deliberate appreciation:** Opening prayer (optional). Focus on a memory of previous positive experience of perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with Him. Each group member describe positive memory to the others, and name specific things you appreciate about these experiences. The goal is to reconnect with the positive memory, and to describe specific things that you appreciate until you feel appreciation/gratitude.

Multiple positive memories: If working with people likely to need an especially strong safety net, repeat the positive memory step several times, so that each person has several positive memories.

No memories of positive connections with God: Use a memory from a non-God positive experience.

Appreciation memories without splinters: If participants are describing appreciation memories that are about God’s presence in the midst of trauma, and especially if many participants have similar traumas (high risk of triggering each other), coach participants to deliberately find positive memories without any aspect of pain or trauma (completely splinter-free). If all memories of positive God connections are memories of God’s presence in the midst of trauma, start with non-God positive appreciation memories, go through the deliberate appreciation step with these non-God positive memories, and then use the same memories to go through step 3, below. This can sometimes generate new (splinter-free) God connection memories.

3. **Reenter a positive memory and establish an interactive connection with the Lord:** One at a time, 1) spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the positive memories, 2) from “inside” the memory, pray something along the lines of “Lord, help me to perceive Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You,” and 3) share whatever comes into your awareness with the others in your group.

No positive God memories: If you don’t have positive memories of past interactive connections with the Lord, you can experiment with trying this step with non-God positive memories.

**If you have established an interactive connection with the Lord:** Name several specifics you especially appreciate about the experience, and express your gratitude to God.

**If you do not have an interactive connection with the Lord, and you would like to try simple trouble-shooting:** 1) Ask: “What’s in the way of my being able to perceive Your presence and connect with You in this memory?,” describe whatever comes into your awareness regardless of whether it makes sense or feel important. 2) Ask: “What do I need to do to take the next step forward?,” describe whatever comes into your awareness. 3.) follow any directions from God.

If trouble-shooting resolved blockages and you have an interactive connection, then name several specifics you especially appreciate and express your gratitude to God.

If you have not been able to establish an interactive connection after brief troubleshooting (or if you decided not to try troubleshooting), return to positive memories and appreciation until you feel appreciation and are at an okay place to stop.

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Super Simple Immanuel Approach Exercise for Groups and Beginners
(1 page summary, Karl D. Lehman, MD, Revised 2/14/2014)

1.) **Break up into small groups:** The ideal number for each group is three. Two to five can work.

2.) **Positive memories and appreciation:** Opening prayer (optional). Focus on memory/memories of previous positive experiences of perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with Him. Each group member describe positive memory/memories to the others, and name specific things you appreciate about these experiences. The goal is to remember and appreciate until you feel appreciation/gratitude.

3.) **Reenter a positive memory and establish an interactive connection:** One at a time, 1) spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the positive memories, 2) from “inside” the memory, pray something along the lines of “Lord, help me to perceive Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You,” and 3) share whatever comes into your awareness. After each person has gone through these pieces, pick a recipient and a primary facilitator for the rest of the exercise (steps #4 through #6), with the others in the group listening, supporting, and interceding.

Note: The recipient must be able to establish an interactive connection with the Lord in step 3 in order to move on to the rest of the exercise. Do not proceed with the remainder of the exercise if you don’t have a recipient with an interactive connection. (See essay for additional explanation)

4.) **Help Recipient choose a traumatic memory to work on:** Select a low to moderate intensity traumatic memory (see full text version for additional directions regarding memory selection).

5.) **Invite/welcome Jesus into memory, ask for interactive connection, engage with Him to receive healing:** (Recipient) From the perspective of being inside the memory, pray something like: “Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Please help me to have an interactive connection.”

   a.) If recipient *is* able to establish an interactive connection in the memory: Engage with Jesus to receive healing (see full text for additional instructions).

   b.) If recipient *is not* able to establish an interactive connection: “Safety net” troubleshooting (reestablish initial connection, engage Jesus there. Full text for additional instructions).

   c.) Recipient has trouble, and asking Jesus for guidance & help does not resolve the problem: “Safety net” troubleshooting (reestablish initial connection, engage Jesus there. Full text for addt’l).

   d.) You’re running out of time and trauma is still not resolved: End of exercise safety net.

6.) **End of exercise – more appreciation, the Immanuel story, and the safety net:**

   **If complete resolution of traumatic memory:** Help recipient to thank the Lord, and to formulate and tell the Immanuel story. Help name specifics especially appreciated. Closing prayer (optional).

   **If some positive interaction with the Lord, but only partial resolution of the trauma:** 1) Help recipient return to connection with Jesus from beginning of exercise, and to spend time with Jesus and deliberate appreciation until he/she *feels* grateful and peaceful (the negative emotions have fully resolved). 2) Help recipient to thank the Lord, and to formulate and tell Immanuel story regarding the positive interaction. 3) Closing prayer (optional, depending on context)

   **If no positive interaction with the Lord in working with the trauma:** 1) Help recipient return to connection with Jesus from beginning of exercise, and to spend time with Jesus and deliberate appreciation until he/she *feels* grateful and peaceful (the negative emotions have fully resolved. 2) Closing prayer (optional, depending on context).
Super Simple Immanuel Approach Exercise for Groups and Beginners
(Alternative one page summary, Karl Lehman M.D., Revised 2/14/2014)

ONE healing intervention,
ONE troubleshooting tool.

Beginning of session: Coach the person to establish an interactive connection, go to a traumatic memory, and offer the basic Immanuel invitation and request from inside the memory. **Remember – don’t go to the traumatic memory if she can’t establish an initial interactive connection**

If the person can connect with Jesus in the memory (and for as long as they stay connected with Jesus), use ONE healing intervention: at every point in the session, regarding every issue that comes up, regarding every difficulty that arises, coach the person to focus on Jesus, engage with Jesus, and ask Jesus for guidance and help, and then coach her to describe whatever comes into her awareness.

If the person can’t establish an initial connection with Jesus in the memory, if she loses the connection with Jesus at any point later in the session, or if the session feels stuck for any reason, then use ONE troubleshooting tool: coach the person to go back to the positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning, and in that context ask Jesus about the problem. After she talks to Jesus about the problem, if you have enough time you can coach her to return to the memory and try again.

End of session: As you are getting close to the end of the session: A) If the trauma is resolved and the person is in a good place, coach her to spend time being grateful; B) If the person is still in an unresolved traumatic memory, help her to go back to the positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning. In this context, coach her to appreciate Jesus and the positive memory until she feels grateful and peaceful.

After emotional healing – The Immanuel story:

First round: Start at the point you first perceived God’s presence with you. With the help of the group, give a blow by blow account of everything from the moment of perceiving God’s presence forward. Tell each thing God did, and your reaction to it. Describe every detail you can get words for, especially your emotions, body sensations (if this doesn’t get in the way), and anything you perceived to change as you engaged with God regarding the healing work. After these pieces have all been well developed, put them together and tell them as a story. If there are concerns about triggering others, leave the story like this and tell it to at least three people.

Second round (if there are minimal concerns regarding triggering others): Tell the story again, slightly expanded, with a little bit of context regarding the pain part of the story. Tell the story to at least three people.

Note: this is like the core of many previous approaches to emotional healing prayer, but with positive memory and connection at front end, ONE super simple troubleshooting tool, a safety net if the person has trouble/gets stuck at any point, and the Immanuel story. Simple differences, but huge with respect to safety of lay ministry, the possibility of group exercises, and self-propagation.
Basic Immanuel Approach Exercise for Groups and Beginners
(1 page summary, Karl D. Lehman MD, Revised 2/14/2014)

1.) Break up into small groups: The ideal number for each group is three. Two to five can work.

2.) Positive memories and appreciation: Opening prayer (optional). Focus on memory/memories of previous positive experiences of perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with Him. Each group member describe positive memory/memories to the others, and name specific things you appreciate about these experiences. The goal is to remember and appreciate until you feel appreciation/gratitude.

3.) Reenter a positive memory and establish an interactive connection: One at a time, 1) spend several minutes reentering/reconnecting with one of the positive memories, 2) from “inside” the memory, pray something along the lines of “Lord, help me to perceive Your living presence, and to have an interactive connection with You,” and 3) share whatever comes into your awareness. After each person has gone through these pieces, pick a recipient and a primary facilitator for the rest of the exercise (steps #4 through #6), with the others in the group listening, supporting, and interceding.

   If recipient perceives the Lord’s presence and feels connected to Him: proceed on to Step #4.

   If recipient does not perceive the Lord’s presence or feel connected to Him, and would like to try simple troubleshooting: See complete version for directions regarding simple troubleshooting. **Don’t proceed to Step #4 unless recipient has an interactive connection with the Lord.**

4.) Help recipient choose a traumatic memory to work on: Help recipient select a low to moderate intensity traumatic memory (see full text version for additional directions regarding memory selection).

5.) Invite/welcome Jesus into memory, ask for interactive connection, engage with Him to receive healing: From the perspective of being inside the memory, recipient prays something like: “Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Please help me to have an interactive connection.”

   a.) If recipient is able to establish an interactive connection in the memory: Engage with Jesus to receive healing (see full text for additional instructions).

   b.) Not able to establish an interactive connection: Simple troubleshooting (full text for add’tl).

   c.) Recipient has trouble, and asking Jesus for guidance & help does not resolve the problem: “Safety net” troubleshooting (reestablish initial connection, engage Jesus there. Full text for add’tl).

   d.) You’re running out of time and trauma is still not resolved: End of exercise safety net.

6.) End of exercise – more appreciation, the Immanuel story, and the safety net:

   If complete resolution of traumatic memory: Help recipient to thank the Lord, and to formulate and tell the Immanuel story. Help name specifics especially appreciated. Closing prayer (optional).

   If some positive interaction with God, but only partial resolution of the trauma: 1) Help recipient return to connection with Jesus from beginning of exercise, and to spend time with Jesus and deliberate appreciation until he/she feels grateful and peaceful (the negative emotions have fully resolved). 2) Help recipient to thank the Lord, and to formulate and tell Immanuel story regarding the positive interaction. 3) Closing prayer (optional)

   If no positive interaction with God in work with traumatic memory: 1) Help recipient return to connection from beginning of exercise, and to spend time with Jesus and appreciation until he/she feels grateful and peaceful (negative emotions are fully resolved). 2) Closing prayer (optional).
Basic Immanuel Approach Exercise for Groups and Beginners  
(small tool box, alternative one page summary, Karl Lehman, M.D., Revised 2/14/2014)

Beginning of session: Coach the person to establish an interactive connection, go to a traumatic memory, and offer the basic Immanuel invitation and request from inside the memory. Then use the following very small tool box of healing interventions and troubleshooting tools. **Remember – don’t go to the traumatic memory if the recipient can’t establish an initial interactive connection**

1) Primary healing intervention: As with super simple, coach the recipient to focus on Jesus, and to engage with Him at every point in the session, regarding every issue that comes up, and regarding every difficulty that she encounters. But feel free to use a little more discernment and varied vocabulary in coaching the person to ask Jesus for guidance, ask Jesus for healing, ask Jesus for resources, and ask Jesus for help.

3) Additional simple healing intervention: Help the person get words for whatever she is thinking, feeling, or experiencing, and then coach her to communicate this directly to Jesus.

4) Additional simple healing intervention: As always, after each interaction with Jesus coach the recipient to describe any thoughts, emotions, images, memories, or physical sensations that come into her awareness. But you can include more skilled coaching to help the recipient notice the content of her internal awareness, more persistent, skilled coaching to describe everything that comes into her awareness, and also more skilled help with recognizing the clues that come forward.

2) Simple troubleshooting: If the person loses perception of Jesus and connection with Jesus at any point in the session, help them reestablish connection: 1) coach simple invitation and request (“Jesus, I make a heart invitation for You to be with me here. Help me to perceive Your presence and to connect with You”), and then coach them to report “whatever comes into your awareness.” 2) If they do not perceive and connect, try VERY SIMPLE trouble shooting: “What’s in the way?” Coach to report whatever comes into his/her awareness. “What should we do? How do we cooperate with Your plan?” Coach to report whatever comes into his/her awareness, and then follow any guidance from Jesus. If this doesn’t work fairly quickly (or at any point the facilitator and/or recipient feel uncomfortable with the session and/or feel they are getting in too deep), help recipient go back to initial positive connection.

5) “Safety net” troubleshooting tool: As with super simple, go back to the initial positive place, in that context ask Jesus for more guidance and help (including, “Why stuck in the other place?”), and then go back to the difficult place when ready. Note: can just stay in positive place, and end session there, if recipient doesn’t feel ready to go back to difficult place.

Safety net: If, for any reason, the session feels stuck, or the recipient can’t get all the way through to healing in the time available, just go back to the positive memory and interactive connection from the beginning of the exercise.

After emotional healing – The Immanuel story: Start at the point you first perceived God’s presence with you. Tell each thing God did, and your reaction to it (blow by blow, details). Describe anything that changed as you engaged with God regarding the healing work.

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30If you are coaching participants to use the wider Immanuel approach for life, with the possibility of issues/agenda other than healing emotional trauma, you can coach the person to ask Jesus for guidance regarding what to do with the session, instead of helping her choose an appropriate traumatic memory.