

# Trauma Recovery Uses Several Different Healing Components

by Amy Blumenshine, Coming Home Collaborative

Some military veterans have risked body and soul to accomplish what their nation has sent them to do. Nearly all military veterans have faced the potential sacrifice of the present and future happiness of themselves and their families. Fortunately, great progress has been made in understanding how people can recover from trauma. The information that follows is applicable to all traumas, not just war-related ones. Trained pastors and other pastoral care providers can play key roles in the trauma recovery process.

In her book *Invisible Heroes: Survivors of Trauma and How They Heal*, Belleruth Naparstek honors the courage necessary for those who confront the great terrorizer – trauma – on their paths to recovery, whether from an auto accident, a crime or a military-related incident. She notes that typically trauma recovery takes place over a period of time with those in recovery employing different modalities at different times.

Naparstek identifies a number of components for comprehensive healing. She recommends that the person in recovery have a “reality coach” or “anchor” or “general contractor” who can help them sort through the various interventions listed below. This trusted and knowledgeable person would be at the center of the rest of the work. Congregational care providers could function in this role as it unfolds over time. Alternatively, a therapist with this specialty could also be consulted.

- Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota currently has a contract with the state department of veterans’ affairs to provide free case management and other services to veterans and their families.
- The survivor should engage in regular prayer and other spiritual



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practices, like attending worship. Even those with less clear faith can benefit from symbolic rituals.

- Joining with fellow survivors – those who have had similar traumatic histories – in a support or therapy group is also helpful.
- Many people find that journaling is helpful. Others prefer a different method of self-expression such as dance, poetry, theater, clay, painting or other artwork.
- Naparstek sees a role for medication, especially at the beginning of recovery, before the person has learned self-soothing practices, if their symptoms are severe. Self-soothing practices include various relaxation methods, such as guided imagery, self-hypnosis and progressive relaxation, as well as prayer and meditation.
- In addition, physical exercise, like brisk walking, swimming, aerobic activity, and/or moving meditation, like yoga, tai chi or quigong, is also important. Naparstek also recommends that the person in recovery engage in some manner of mind/bodywork

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### Upcoming events

**Armistice/Veterans Day** is observed November 11. On November 8, churches will be lamenting our failure to fulfill the hopes of our ancestors to live in peace after the First World War. Some will observe a moment of silence or toll solemn bells at 11 a.m.

The **Veterans Ministry Roundtable** meets Tuesday, November 10, noon-1:30 p.m. at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, 2315 Chicago Ave. S. Rev. Marlene Whiterabbit Helgemo, of All Nations Church, will talk about the traditional First Nations approach to helping warriors return to their home community and how her church has been engaging in that healing. A simple lunch will be served. Anyone with interest in ministry with veterans and their families is invited.

On November 11 at 7 p.m., a group of veterans will perform “**At War with Women,**” at Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Avenue on the Hamline University campus in St. Paul. Fran Ford, a local, recently-deceased playwright, wrote the play based on interviews she conducted with military women.

# Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Celebrates Member Osmo Vänskä on November 22

by Joe Bjordal, Central Lutheran Church communications director

Central Lutheran Church, downtown Minneapolis, will honor the gifts and achievements of one of its more famous members on Sunday, November 22, through a major public event. Osmo Vänskä, music director of the Minnesota Orchestra and a member of Central since shortly after arriving from Finland in 2003, will perform with the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and then sign copies of a new biography.

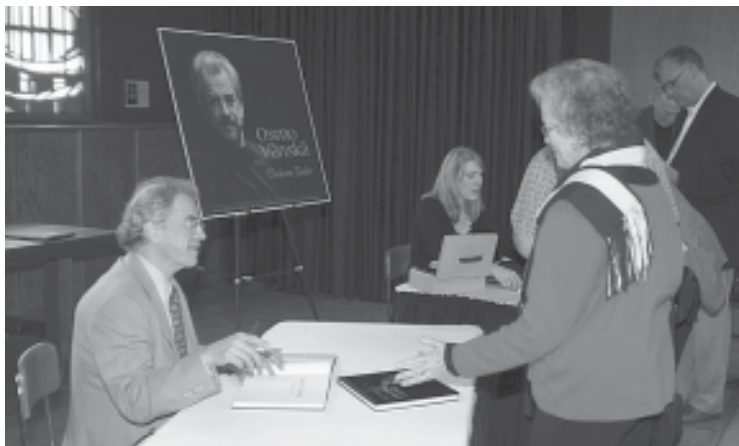
At 4:00 p.m., Vänskä will be the featured soloist in Mozart's Clarinet Concerto with the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of William Schrickel. The orchestra will also perform a work by Vänskä, "The Bridge," a composition created in 2007 following the collapse of the Interstate 35W bridge in Minneapolis. The work was premiered in 2008.

Following the concert, Vänskä will be honored at a reception and will sign copies of a new book about his life, *Osmo Vänskä: Orchestra Builder*, published by Kirk House Publishers, owned by another Central member, Leonard Flachman. Written by longtime *Star Tribune* music critic Michael Anthony, the book provides insight not only into the mind and psyche of a gifted conductor, but also into the inner workings of a great orchestra (available at [www.kirkhouse.com](http://www.kirkhouse.com)).

"An Afternoon with Osmo Vänskä" is the first initiative of the new Communications and Public Relations Ministry Team, one of over 50 such teams at Central Lutheran Church. The work of the team is aimed at "getting more than the usual suspects through the doors," according to Rebecca Jorgenson Sundquist, team leader.

Sundquist says that statistics reveal that a high percentage of new members at Central had their first exposure to the congregation at a public event, such as concerts by the Minnesota Orchestra or Augsburg College's annual Advent Vespers.

The team is not being timid in inviting the public to the November 22 event. An invitation is being mailed directly to 5,000 residences in downtown Minneapolis, currently home to more than 30,000 persons, many of whom, says Sundquist, "could literally walk to church!"



Osmo Vänskä, music director of the Minnesota Orchestra and member of Central Lutheran Church, signed copies of his new biography for members of the congregation on October 4.

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with a practitioner of energy healing such as massotherapy, Therapeutic Touch, Myofascial Release or Reiki.

- Naparstek particularly emphasizes using guided imagery. She notes that people who have been bruised by trauma tend to be more readily able to engage their imaginations in the healing process. Guided imagery is a significant part of a number of the new therapies showing promise with treating trauma, such as EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing), PET (prolonged exposure therapy) and TIR (trauma incident reduction.)

In addition to the healing activities mentioned above, many victims who have grown into "victors" engage in volunteer or other altruistic endeavors. Some people find it helpful to avoid consuming certain substances, such as caffeine, alcohol, or sugar, that they have found to trigger their symptoms. For those who have become chemically dependent, maintaining sobriety is, of course, a priority.

Ideally, congregations can be about promoting the health of all members, and holding up each other as people work through the traumatic experiences that have limited their enjoyment of life.