

Twitter Thread by Steve Cuss

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Anxiety resides in 4 spaces:

- 1. The space inside you**
- 2. The space between you and another**
- 3. The space between others**
- 4. The space inside another.**

A powerful de escalation tools is to first locate the anxiety. Where is it?

Often the answer is 'all 4.' Yikes!

1/

Anxiety is contagious, we spread it and escalate it unless we know how to manage it.

This was perhaps my biggest lesson as a trauma chaplain - the very hard work of not catching someone's anxiety.

2/

When I caught it, I was no good to them. I no longer saw what was going on, I was now 'infected' by my own triggers, assumptions, the story I tell myself. I was all wrapped up in myself.

But when I managed my anxiety, I was able to be calm, aware and fully present to them.

3/

Even in the very worst moment of their lives, even if they had me by the shoulders screaming, 'how could God allow this to happen?'

4/

Incidentally, early in chaplaincy, I thought this was an actual question. Because I was anxious, I was more infected by my need to answer than I was to simply be calm and present with them in their pain.

5/

One way to practice anxiety management is to sit with someone in deep pain for a long time without offering a suggestion, advice, help, without relieving them of their anxiety.

Without shrinking their pain down to a size that feels better for you.

!!!

6/

You can also watch anxiety spread between people - between you and others, but also when you walk into a room and already sense a mood.

We have all 'stepped on a mood' when we walk into a room.

In fact one anxiety tool is to learn your impact when you walk into a room.

7/

Especially for people of extra privilege, we don't initially understand our power. (I speak as one: tall, deep voice, white, male, leader, Aussie. Plenty of privilege there.)

To understand my impact can help me manage anxiety.

8/

And to make this a briefer than usual thread, because hey now, it is a beautiful Saturday morning....

the 4th space: the space inside another.

Holy ground. Sacred territory.

Stay Away. Danger, Will Robinson.

9/

Much anxiety is generated when we ruminate on 'why do they do it that way, why don't they think this way?'

That is space inside another. You cannot manage that space. Out of the 4 spaces, that is the space between them and God.

10/

Much initial anxiety can be relieved by asking yourself, 'what is mine to carry, what is God's, what is theirs?'

It gets anxiety back where it belongs.

11/

It helps you carry the 'each day has enough troubles of its own' anxiety, keeps you from reactivity, rushing in to solve, rescue, 'make people feel better' which is usually impossible.

So 4 spaces. God inhabits all of it.

12/

When we know God is with us, anxiety gets displaced.

Anxiety is displaced by love and laughter.

When do you feel most fully loved?

God is not only with you, but ahead of you.

That meeting you're walking into. You are walking into the active presence of God.

13/

It is not all on you, in spite of what Anxiety tells you. God is with you and ahead of you.

When in your life do you feel most fully loved?

What if you could answer that question with dozens of examples, not just one or two?

Peace this beautiful Saturday.

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