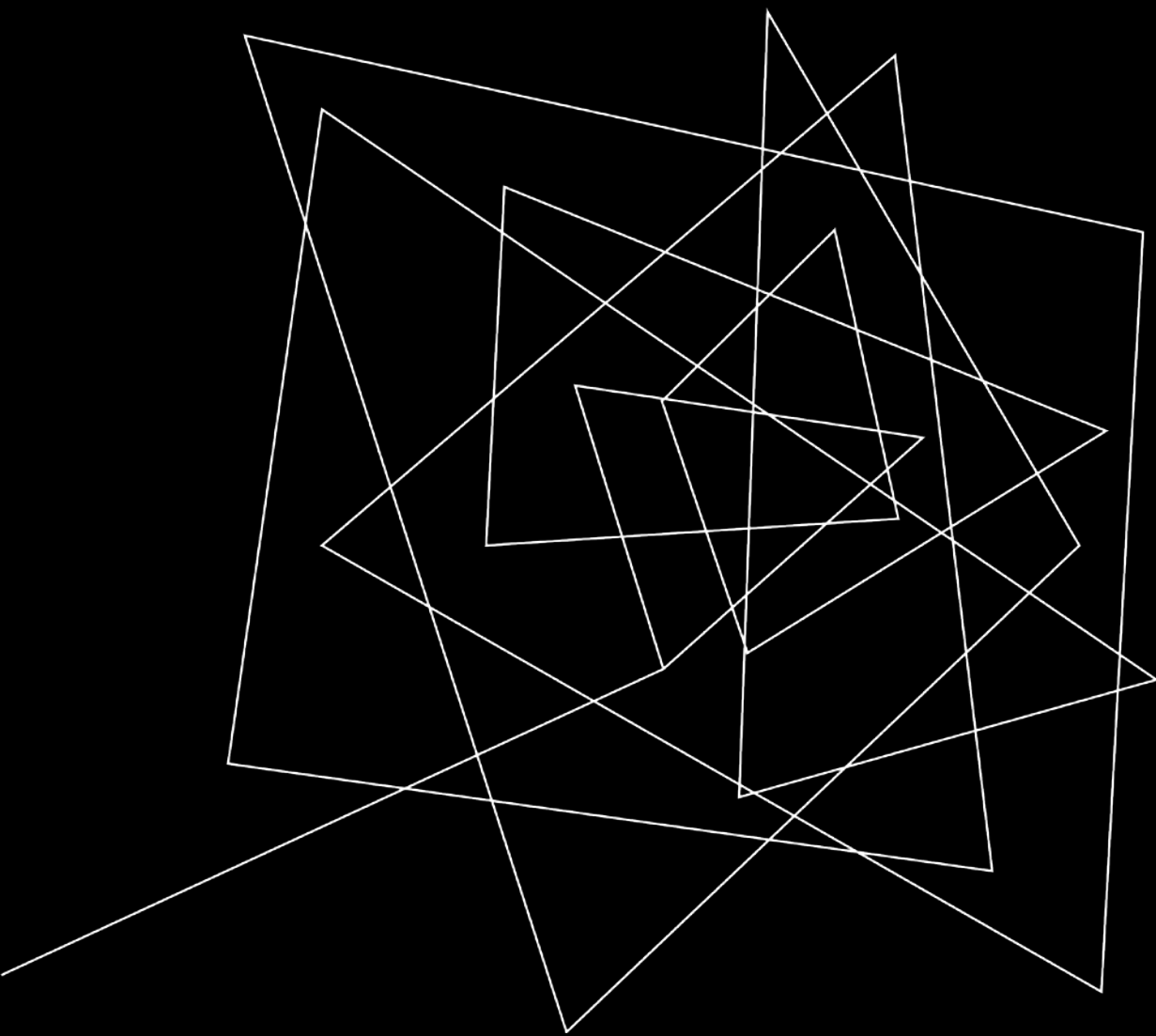


The top-left portion of the page features a complex, abstract graphic composed of several thin, black, overlapping lines. These lines form a series of irregular, nested shapes that resemble a stylized, fragmented map or a series of overlapping planes. The lines are thin and black, set against a plain white background.

# THE HIDDEN TOLL OF RELIGIOUS TRAUMA

Caroline Winzenried



# WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Long-term cognitive, emotional, physiological, behavioural, and social impairments resulting from a distressing event or situation.

# LONG TERM EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

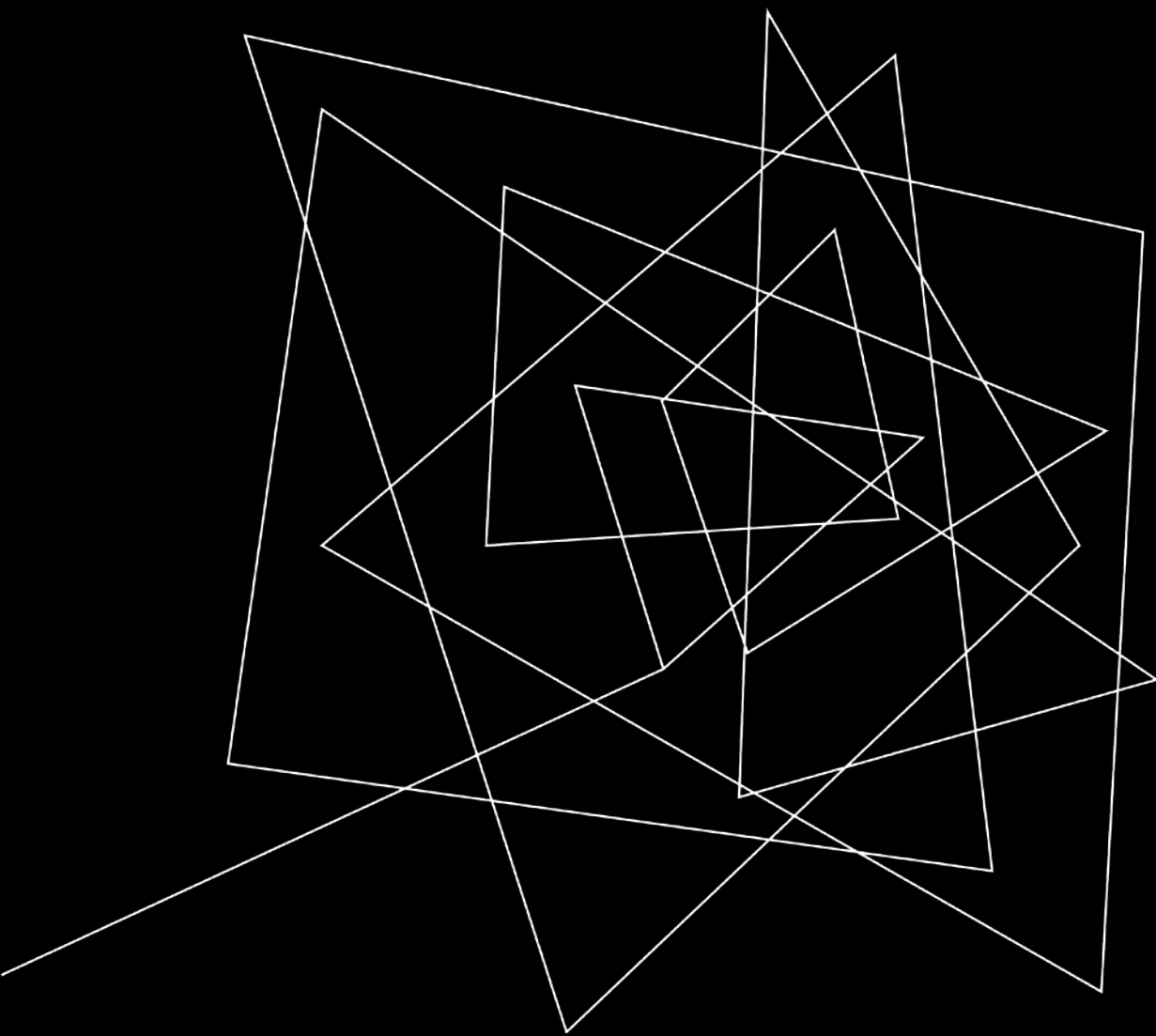
COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	PHYSIOLOGICAL	BEHAVIOURAL	SOCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Flashbacks</li><li>•Nightmares</li><li>•Difficulty concentrating</li><li>•Self-critical beliefs</li><li>•Doubting oneself</li></ul>	<p>Guilt Shame Depression Anxiety Anger Emotional detachment</p>	<p>Poor sleep Gastro issues Hyper-activated nervous system Racing heart</p>	<p>Substance abuse Avoidance of trauma-related stimuli Self-harm</p>	<p>Withdrawing behaviours Alienation Impaired intimacy Volatile relationships</p>

# RELIGIOUS TRAUMA SYNDROME

“Religious Trauma Syndrome is the condition experienced by people who are struggling with leaving an authoritarian, dogmatic religion and coping with the damage of indoctrination.

## **Symptoms of Religious Trauma Syndrome:**

- **Cognitive:** Confusion, poor critical thinking ability, negative beliefs about self-ability & self-worth, black & white thinking, perfectionism, difficulty with decision-making
  - **Emotional:** Depression, anxiety, anger, grief, loneliness, difficulty with pleasure, loss of meaning
  - **Social:** Loss of social network, family rupture, social awkwardness, sexual difficulty, behind schedule on developmental tasks
  - **Cultural:** Unfamiliarity with secular world; “fish out of water” feelings, difficulty belonging, information gaps (e.g. evolution, modern art, music)”
- (Winell, 2011)



## MEANING-MAKING

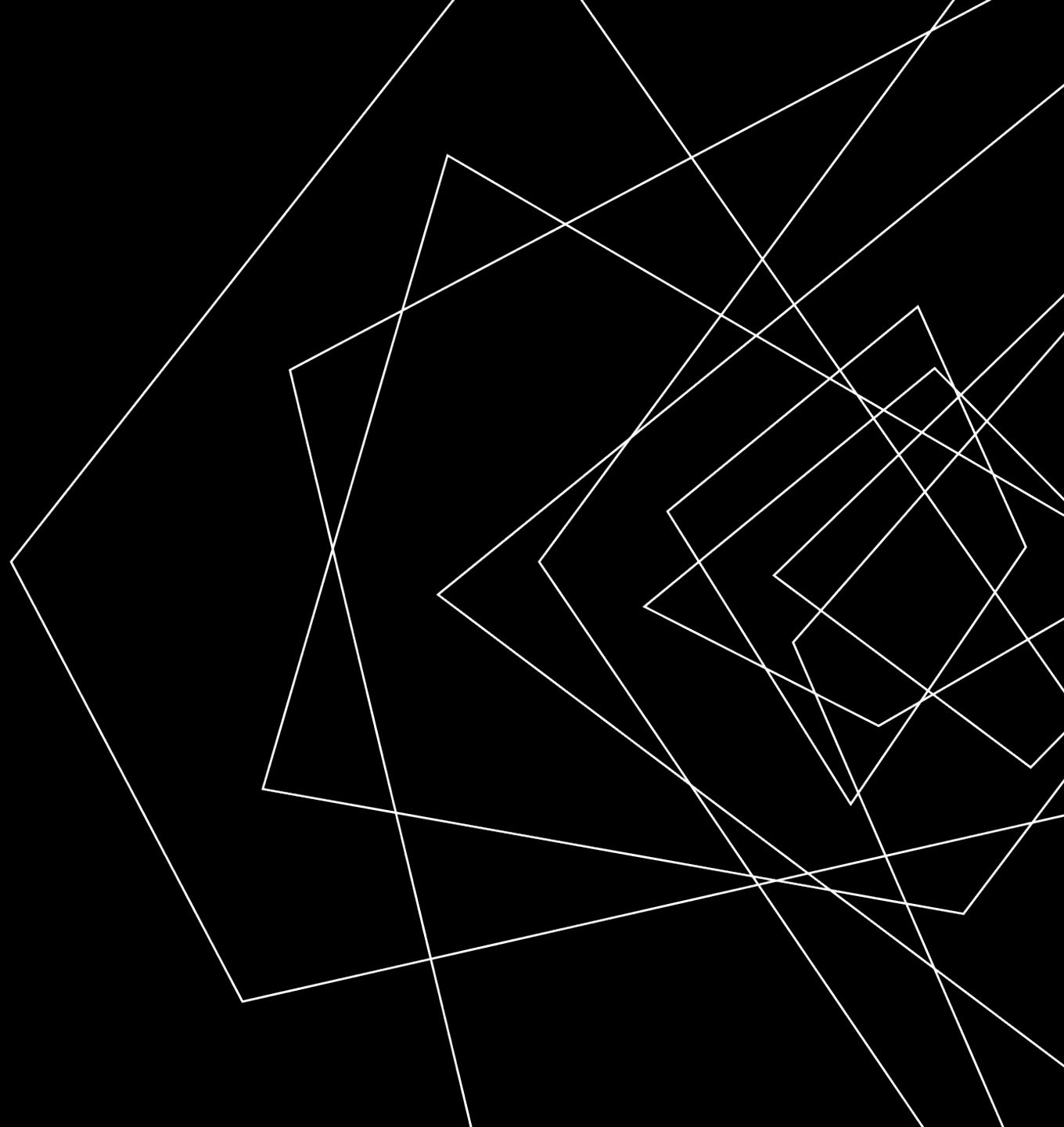
Existential concerns that were once taken for granted in the context of one's prior faith become frightening and hopelessly daunting.

# SOCIAL ALIENATION



# EMBODIED MEMORIES

“It’s a traumatic experience, they told me, not only because of all that was lost in their departure from the church, but also because of everything that still hung on and refused to go away” (Brooks, 2019).



# PURITY CULTURE

“What other sin is said to fundamentally change you forever? You can be born again and have your slate wiped clean of lying, stealing, even murder[...] But sex outside of marriage is the only “sin” that I have ever heard described as changing you. Before sex, you are a virgin. After sex, well...” (Klein, 2018).





## SIN AND PUNISHMENT

“I feel like much of my life was lived in fear. I am reading all I can to continue to find peace from what I’ve been taught. I still fear and I am 65” (Winell, 2011).



## SO, WHAT TO DO ABOUT THIS?

- Support groups
- Sharing your story
- Counselling

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## REFERENCES



# THANK YOU

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