

TAMAR

Trauma, Addictions, Mental health, and Recovery

Participant Workbook (Men)

NASMHDP



Acknowledgements

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Welcome

TAMAR stands for Trauma, Addictions, Mental Health, and Recovery. This group will help you to understand how painful things that may have happened to you, also known as “trauma,” have affected your life, and how you can begin to feel better right now.

Your workbook is for you to record any thoughts and feelings you have about this group and what you are learning. You do not have to share it with anyone unless you want to.

We will be practicing many approaches for dealing with triggers and getting through tough times in our lives, including writing and creative expression.

Each module has a mind-body skills practice exercise. The exercises are meant to help you relax, but some people might experience agitation with some of the exercises. If you start to become more distressed at any point while doing these exercises on your own, please stop doing the exercise and use another coping strategy or talk to someone. A variety of skills are shared in group. You are encouraged to try them all, take what you like (what works for you) and leave the rest.

The Modules

Module 1: Introduction to TAMAR

Module 2: Understanding the Stress Response

Module 3: Trauma Reminders

Module 4: Self-soothing

Module 5: Tolerating Distress

Module 6: Containment I

Module 7: Containment II

Module 8: Physical and Emotional Abuse

Module 9: Sexual Abuse

Module 10: Trauma and Addiction

Module 11: Addressing Tobacco

Use

Module 12: Boundaries and Safety

Module 13: Intimacy and Trust

Module 14: Sexual Communication, Negotiation, and Consent

Module 15: Parenting

Module 16: Closing Ritual

Module 1: Introduction to TAMAR

Materials

Meeting A

- When Bad Things Happen to Good People
- Well-known People with Difficult Past

Meeting B

- Poetry Therapy - Alice Walker
- Visual Poem—Protection
- Phrases for Visual Poem
- Visual Poem

Mind-body skills

- Abdominal breathing

When Bad Things Happen to Good People

- Childhood sexual, physical, emotional abuse
- Neglect, abandonment
- Rape, date rape, sexual assault
- Trafficking
- Domestic violence
- Experiencing/witnessing other violent crime
- Serious injury or illness
- Death, loss, grief
- Institutional abuse and neglect
- War/terrorism
- Community and school violence, bullying
- Chronic stressors like racism, poverty
- Natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, hurricanes
- Any misuse of power by one person over another

Would you like to add to the list?

Did any of these things happen to you?

Well-known People with Difficult Pasts

Can you guess who these people are?

a) This politician grew up wondering if something was wrong with him because his mom was white, and his dad was black. He wondered how his life would have been different if his father had not left him at a very early age.

ANSWER: _____

b) As a child, this mega-famous female rapper, TV star, and film star was sexually abused by a teenager charged with her care.

ANSWER: _____

c) This TV celebrity billionaire's growing-up years involved poverty, drugs, sexual abuse, and pregnancy (at age 14) of a baby who died shortly after birth.

ANSWER: _____

d) This federal judge grew up in housing projects, was diagnosed with diabetes at age 7, and experienced the death of her father at age 9.

ANSWER: _____

e) This singer-turned-actress' father was addicted to crack cocaine, was sometimes violent, and would steal from her mother. At one point, he burned down their home and her mother barely escaped.

ANSWER: _____

f) This former Sacramento Kings basketball star was arrested 15 times in his early life and adolescence.

ANSWER: _____

g) This famous filmmaker and creator of the "Madea" series experienced physical and sexual abuse as a child and recalls that he "never felt safe" growing up.

ANSWER: _____

Mind-body Skills: Abdominal (belly) breathing

Normally, we breathe very shallowly, up in our chests. Learning to breathe down into our stomachs naturally helps calm us down. It also brings more oxygen into our body and brain, which helps us think more clearly. Belly breathing before a stressful situation can be very helpful. Here is what you do:

1. First, breathe as you normally do.
2. What parts of your body move as you breathe? Notice what it feels like.
3. Now, sit and place your hand on your stomach.
4. With your mouth closed, breathe in for four seconds or until you feel your whole chest fill with air all the way down to your belly.
5. Hold in the air for four seconds.
6. Slowly blow all the air out until it's all gone.
7. Try this three or four times.
8. Did you notice anything different about how you feel?

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

I do not like violence. So much has been done to me.
But having embraced my complete being
I find anger
and the capacity for violence
within me.

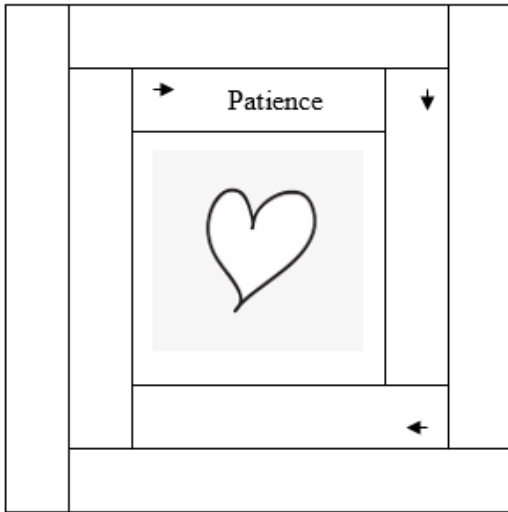
Control
rather than eradication
is about the best
I feel I can do.

Alice Walker

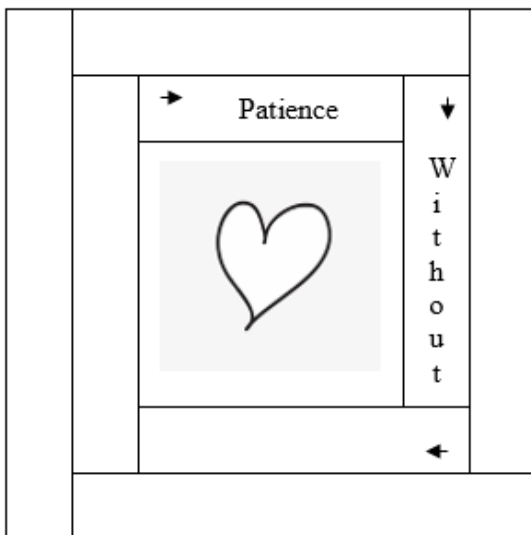
¹ Excerpted from Walker, A. (1996). *Her blue body everything we know: Earthling poems 1965-1990 complete*. New York: Harcourt, Inc.

Visual Poem—Protection

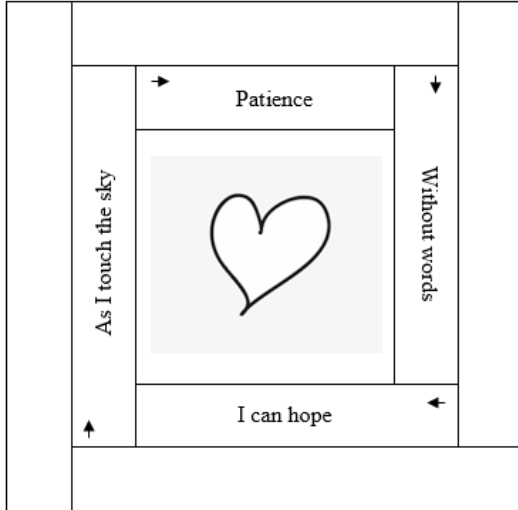
1. Think of an image to represent something about yourself you need to protect. This could be a strength, a feeling, a personal quality, an activity, a relationship, an area of vulnerability that needs protecting.
2. Draw this image (or a symbol representing it) in the center of the provided square form. Make a brief note about what this image means to you.



3. Circle one word from column I that might be helpful to improve your sense of protection. Write this word in the box above the picture. See example below:



- Circle one phrase from each of the other columns that has significance to you and relates to what it is that you need to protect. Write each of these phrases in the rectangular boxes continuing to move outward around the image until all the boxes have writing in them. See diagram below:



- You have completed your visual poem. You may want to write the poem in a more typical written form. The order of the phrases can be varied. One possibility is to read/write the poem starting with the shortest, most interior phrases, continuing around the square toward the outermost edge, until you have read/written all the phrases. Another way is to start with the longest exterior phrase and read/write the poem going inward until you reach the last rectangular box with one word. You may wish to use the one-word column selection for the title of your poem.
- Write about the meaning of the visual poem.

Phrases for Visual Poem

Circle one phrase from each column that has significance for you.

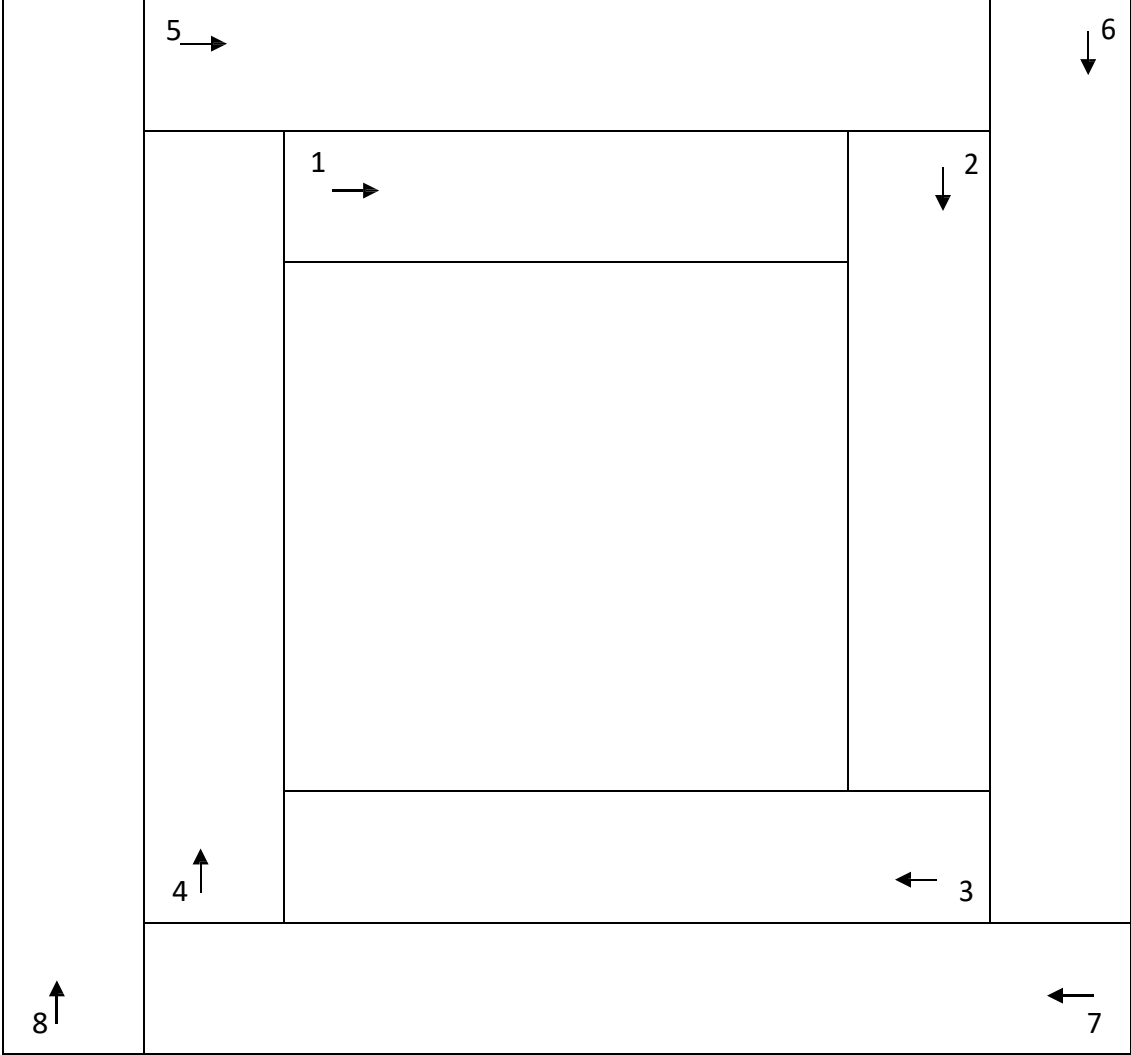
1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledge	After Betrayal	I See Energy	As I Arrange a Change	Tempted by my Imagination	I Broaden my Understanding
Compassion	From Despair	I Can Smile	As I Look for Choices	Reminded of Possibilities	I Will Keep my Spirit Intact
Recovery	Toward Opportunity	I Balance Pain	As I Call for Help	Needed by Other Beings	I Will Keep on Walking
Stillness	Against Gravity	I Touch Comfort	As I Speak with the Sun	Surrounded by Luminosity	I Carry Dawn in my Arms
Heartstrings	Out of Silence	I Can Hope	As I Slow Down	Repaired by Small Mercies	I Will Save my Life
Resilience	Beyond Belief	I Feel Spring	As I Watch over Myself	Protected by Caring	I Will Go Beyond Worries
Inspiration	Inside Truth	I Am Becoming	As I Search for Beauty	Dazzled by Encouragement	I Will Receive Gifts of Wonder
Humanity	Against Violence	I Can Dance	As I Touch the Sky	Aligned with Wisdom	I Will Find Wheels or Wings
Patience	Without Words	I Cry Out	As I Weep for Dreams	Treated with Respect	I Will Memorize Flowers
Negotiation	Beneath Stones	I Hug Trees	As I Give Permission	Jumbled by Feelings	I Will Believe in Myself
Integrity	With Kindness	I am a Warrior	As I Crystalize Form	Refined by Creativity	I Will Seek a Sacred Place
Appreciation	Across Indecision	I Receive Strength	As I Applaud Myself	Reassured by my Own Hand	I Will Make Gentle Sounds
Willingness	Through Tears	I am Aware	As I Yearn for Consolation	Deepened by Presence	I Deserve to be Real
Tenderness	Above Nonsense	I Bring Solace	As I Discover Truth	Linked to Survival	I Will Hold on Tight
Intention	With Preparation	I Blink Twice	As I Become More Aware	Edged with Hunger	I Will Discover the Doorways
Adventure	Between Realities	I am Alive	As I Grieve My Losses	Imprinted with Color	I Will Take a Second Look
Dignity	Before Action	I Question Control	As I Hold Raindrops	Removed from Mayhem	I Will Make a First Try
Connection	Amidst Blooms	I Look into Life	As I Play in This World	Wrapped in Thought	I Will Abide by Faith

Phrases for Visual Poem

Circle one phrase from each column that has significance for you.

7	8
Expecting Simplicity and Complexity	The World Begins to Radiate Light
Acknowledging the Sweet and the Bitter	No Longer Seen and Not Heard
Exploring Playgrounds and Battlefields	My Distress Becomes Bearable
Considering Scarcity and Abundance	More than Zero, Less than Infinity
Embracing Similarity and Diversity	Places of Sanctuary can be Found
Continuing with Doubt and Certainty	Forever Changing, Forever the Same
Absorbing Light and Shadow	My Anger Begins to Serve a Purpose
Breathing in and Breathing out	The World Offers a Measure of Reason
Remembering Triumphs and Tribulations	Somebody is Calling my Name
Accepting Fragmentation and Wholeness	In a Moment of Total Strength
Experiencing Aloneness and Correspondence	I Recognize Things of Essential Worth
Navigating the Visible and Invisible	Sometimes in Fury, Sometimes in Despair
Allowing Yes, No, and Maybe	Garlic Heals, Hot Chocolate Soothes
Weaving Together Sorrow and Joy	As it Unfolds, One Moment at a Time
Honoring the Difficult and the Easy	I am Learning to Live with Who I am
Voicing Rights and Wrongs	Something More Powerful than Fear
Envisioning Responsibility with Freedom	Waiting in Darkness, Waiting for Light
Shifting Between Contraction and Expansion	Echoes from the Universe, I Stand in Awe

Visual Poem



Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 2: The Effects of Trauma

Materials

Meeting A

- Examples of the Effects of Trauma

Meeting B

- Felt Sense
- Coloring Your Felt Sense (sides A and B)

Mind-body skills

- 4:8 Breathing

Examples of the Effects of Trauma

- We may have scary memories or dreams.
- We may feel jumpy or nervous or angry.
- We may watch out for danger and worry about bad things happening.
- We may have trouble sleeping and paying attention.
- We may not want to talk or think about trauma(s), but traumatic memories pop into our minds anyway.
- We may feel upset and have strong reactions in our bodies (heart beating fast, sweating, stomach ache) when something reminds us of the trauma(s).
- We may do anything we can to avoid a place or a person who reminds us of the trauma or bad experience.
- We may feel empty and numb, like we can't feel anything at all.
- We may use substances to try to cope with upsetting feelings and sensations in our body.
- We may turn to unhealthy relationships.
- We may have a hard time trusting other people.

What can you add to the list?

Have you experienced any of these feelings?

Mind-body Skills: 4:8 Breathing

In 4:8 breathing, the idea is to make the exhale twice as long as the inhale. Most people find it very calming and relaxing. If the 4:8 count feels too long or causes anxiety, there is no need to push yourself. Try decreasing the breath lengths to a count of four in and six out, or two in and four out, and so on. The most important thing is that the exhale is longer than the inhale, not the absolute length of the breath.

- To begin, sit comfortably. You may keep your eyes open or closed.
- Breathe in through your nose, counting silently 1, 2, 3, 4 as you inhale.
- Breathe out through your mouth, counting silently 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 as you exhale.
- Imagine breathing out slowly and steadily as if through a straw.
- Try to keep your breathing even and smooth.
- See if you can keep your mind on the counting and feeling your breath, going in your lungs or out of your nostrils. If your mind wanders to other thoughts, bring it back to focus on your breathing as soon as you realize it.
- Repeat breathing and counting two more times, or as much as you like.
- How do you feel?

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Felt Sense

Examples of felt sense qualities

1. **Feeling/sensation**

- Pressure – even, uneven, supportive feeling, crushed feeling, cutting off circulation
- Air current – gentle, cool, warm, from right, from left, stimulating, rush, like a feather, like mist
- Tension – solid, dense, warm, cold, inflamed, protective, constricting, angry, sad
- Pain – ache, sharp, twinge, slight, stabbing
- Tingling – prickly, vibration, tickling, numb
- Itch – mild, angry, irritating, moving, subtle, small, large area

2. **Temperature** – warm, hot, burning, cool, cold, clammy, chills, icy, frozen, feels like: hearth, oven, fire, sunshine, baked bread, snow, stone, shade

3. **Size** – small, large

4. **Shape** – flat, circle, blob, like a mountain

5. **Weight** – light, heavy

6. **Motion** – circular, erratic, straight line

7. **Speed** – fast, slow, still

8. **Texture** – rough, wood, stone, sandpaper, smooth, silk

9. **Element** – fire, air, earth, water, wood

10. **Color** – gray, blue, orange etc.

11. **Mood/emotion** – sinking, pulling in, open, closed, uplifting, sunny day, dark cloud, storm

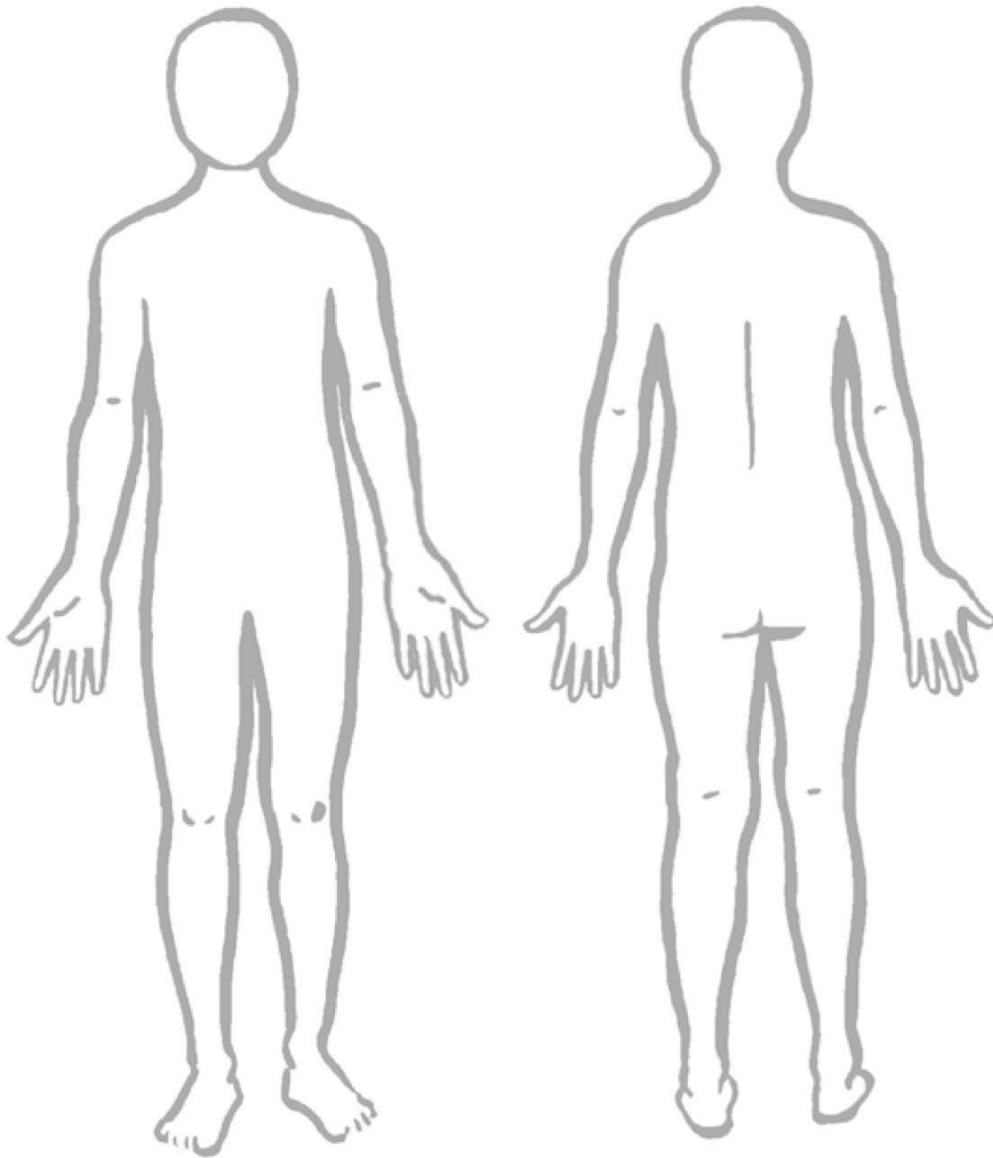
12. **Sound** – buzzing, singing, humming

13. **Taste** – sour, bitter, sweet

14. **Smell** – pungent, sweet, like rain, like leaves

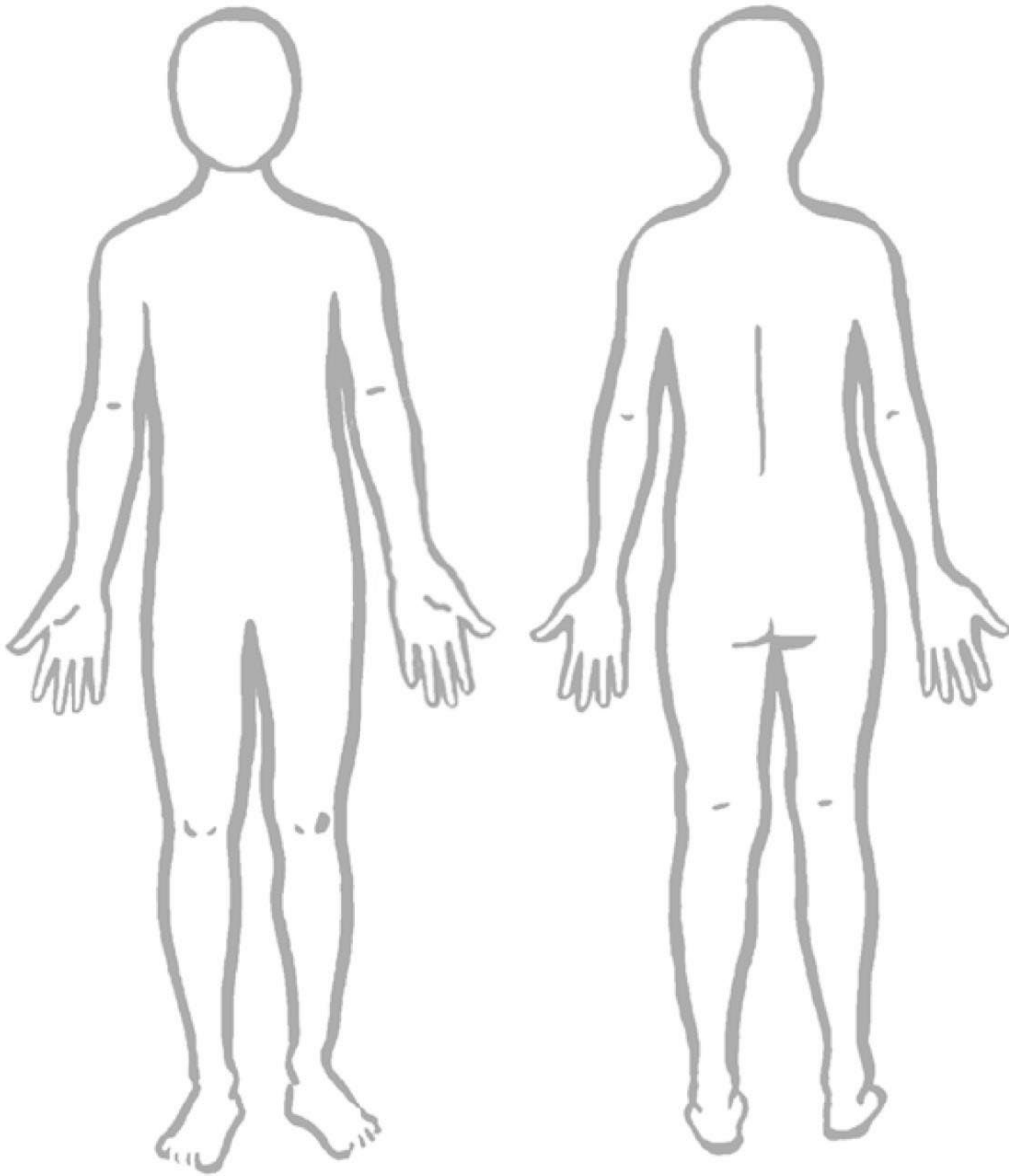
15. **Absence/nothingness** – blank, empty

Coloring Your Felt Sense (side A)



KEY:	
Tension.....	xxxxx xxxxx
Fear Hyperarousal.....	
Absent Numb Nothing..	draw outline
Anger.....	#### ####
Sorrow Regret..	ooooo ooooo
Guilt.....	~~~~~

Coloring Your Felt Sense (side B)



KEY:	
Tension.....	xxxxxx xxxxxx
Fear Hyperarousal.....	
Absent Numb Nothing..	draw outline
Anger.....	#### ####
Sorrow Regret..	ooooo ooooo
Guilt.....	~~~~~

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 3: Trauma Reminders

Materials

Meeting A

- Recognizing Triggers

Mind-body skills:

- Body Scan

Meeting B

- Three Primary States of Mind

Mind-body skills:

- Wise Mind

Recognizing Triggers

Triggers, or trauma reminders, are things that remind you about the trauma(s). They can include certain places, people, words, tone of voice, sounds, smells, types of fabric, physical sensations, etc. When you experience these reminders, you may feel unsafe or as if you were living through the trauma(s) over again. But you can use your coping and relaxation skills to gain control over these reminders.

Please draw, list, or write about any of your trauma reminders using the space below.

Mind—body skills: Body Scan

This is another skill you can practice to help relax your mind and body in times of stress.

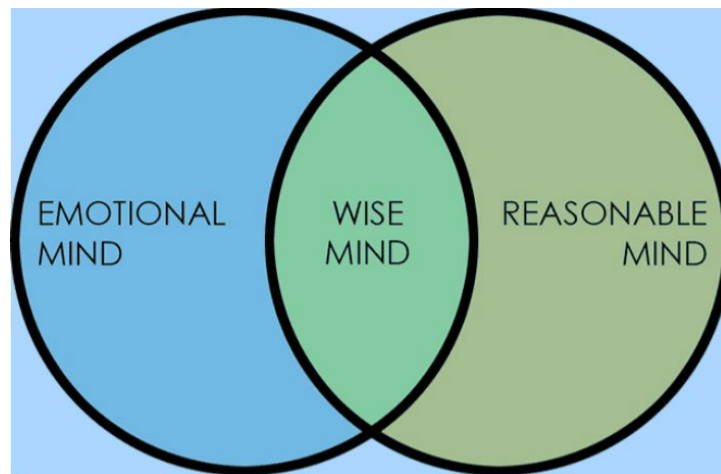
- Begin by bringing your attention into your body. Close your eyes if that's comfortable or keep them open.
- Notice your body seated wherever you're seated, feeling the weight of your body on the chair, on the floor.
- Take a few deep breaths.
- As you bring in more oxygen, feel your body enlivening. And as you exhale, have a sense of relaxing more deeply.
- You can notice your feet on the floor, notice the sensations of your feet touching the floor: the weight and pressure, vibration, heat.
- You can notice your legs against the chair, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.
- Notice your back against the chair.
- Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.
- Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight? Allow them to soften.
- Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.
- Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.
- Soften your jaw.
- Notice your forehead. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.
- Then notice your whole body, present. Take one more breath.
- Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath.
- How do you feel?

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Three Primary States of Mind²

Your mind has three states: The reasonable mind, the emotional mind, and the wise mind. Everyone possesses each of these states, but most people gravitate toward a specific one most of the time.



People use their **reasonable mind** when they approach a situation intellectually. They plan and make decisions based on fact.

Examples:

The **emotional mind** is used when feelings control a person's thoughts and behavior. They might act impulsively with little regard for consequences.

Examples:

The **wise mind** refers to a balance between the reasonable and emotional halves. People can recognize and respect their feelings, while responding to them in a rational manner.

Examples:

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Mind-body skills: Getting in Touch with Wise Mind

Wise mind is sometimes experienced in the center of the body (belly), in the center of the head, or between the eyes. Sometimes a person can find it by following the breath in and out.

Breathe in and out gently. Follow your breath as it comes in and goes out. Let the focus of your attention settle down into your breathing, into the very bottom of your in-breath, into your physical center. This very centered point is Wise Mind.

Practice this exercise daily, so that you can get a sense of what Wise Mind feels like.

You can use the space below to reflect on your experience.

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 4: Self-soothing

Materials

Meeting A

- Clustering

Meeting B

- Coping Kit

Mind-body skills

- Progressive muscle relaxation

Clustering

Clustering is a quick and easy way to generate ideas and insights. It can help us get “unstuck” by breaking through internal barriers. By revealing details of our inner organization and history, clustering facilitates an understanding of our issues and feelings, as well as communication with other people.

Draw your cluster in the space below. You can use the other side of this worksheet to record any written reflections on what you discovered.

Clustering Reflections

Use the space below to write or draw any insights you gained from the clustering exercise.

Mind-body skills: Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

Progressive Muscle Relaxation teaches you how to become aware of muscular tension and to relax your muscles through a two-step process. First, you tense particular muscle groups in your body, such as your neck and shoulders. Next, you release the tension and notice how your muscles feel when you relax them.

This exercise is designed to help you lower your overall tension and stress levels. It can also help to reduce anxiety. It can also ease physical problems like stomachaches and headaches, as well as reduce insomnia and improve sleep.

During this exercise, you will be working with almost all the major muscle groups in your body. To make it easier to remember, start with your feet and systematically move up (or if you prefer, you can do it in the reverse order, from your forehead down to your feet).

If you experience any pain during this exercise due to injury, feel free to skip tensing that particular muscle group.

For example:

- Foot (curl your toes downward)
- Lower leg and foot (tighten your calf muscle by pulling toes towards you)
- Entire leg (squeeze thigh muscles while doing above)

(Repeat on other side of body)

- Hand (clench your fist)
- Entire right arm (tighten your biceps by drawing your forearm up towards your shoulder and “make a muscle”, while clenching fist)

(Repeat on other side of body)

- Buttocks (tighten by pulling your buttocks together)
- Stomach (suck your stomach in)
- Chest (tighten by taking a deep breath)
- Neck and shoulders (raise your shoulders up to touch your ears)
- Mouth (open your mouth wide enough to stretch the hinges of your jaw)
- Eyes (clench your eyelids tightly shut)
- Forehead (raise your eyebrows as far as you can)
- How do you feel?

Source: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/progressive-muscle-relaxation-script.pdf>

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Coping Kit

Use the space below to write or draw a list of things you can do for yourself when you need to cope.

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 5: Tolerating Distress³

Materials

Meeting A

- Distract with “The Wise Mind ACCEPTS”

Meeting B

- IMPROVE the Moment
- Drawing a Breath
- Reflecting on Drawing a Breath

Mind-body skills

- Mindful standing

³ Materials adapted from Linehan, M. (1993.) *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Distract with “The Wise Mind ACCEPTS”

Activities

What activities can you think of that you can get involved in and distract yourself from your distress?

Contributing

Help someone. Do something nice or surprising for someone. What have you done this week to contribute? What can you do next week to contribute? Plan something in advance. This takes you away from your pain and puts your attention on your concern for someone else.

Comparisons

Compare yourself to people coping the same as or less well than you. If you are doing better than you were a year or two or five years ago, make that comparison.

Discussion: What do you think about the comparisons?

Emotions

Read emotional books, listen to emotional music. For this to work, you need to read or listen to things that have an emotion opposite to one you are feeling. For example, if you’re feeling sad or angry, listen to or read or think of something humorous that will make you laugh.

Discussion: Are there examples of books or other media that you can access in this facility that can be used for this purpose?

Pushing away

Push away a distressing situation by leaving it mentally for a while. Build an imaginary wall between yourself and the situation. Imagine yourself pushing it away with all your strength. Block the situation in your mind. Each time it comes up, tell it to go away, or put some other thoughts in its place, perhaps some more pleasant thoughts. Try putting the pain on a shelf, or in a box, to contain it and get it out of the way. You can get it later, but now you can let it go.

Discussion: Describe examples of what worked for you.

Thoughts

Examples include: counting to 10 or counting the tiles in a floor, the panes in a window, or the cracks in a wall. Anything to keep your focus on the counting. This is a good one to use in a sudden emergency, when you need to quickly pull something out of your bag of tricks. Other ways of distracting your thoughts are reading, doing crossword puzzles, and writing poetry, if you can keep your thoughts away from your pain.

Discussion: Can you think of other ways to distract your thoughts?

Sensations

Hold ice in your hand or apply it to the back of your neck; put a rubber band on your wrist and snap it; listen to loud music; take a hot or cold shower. Any strong physical stimulus like this can loosen your connection to your pain and distract you from it.

Discussion: What can be practiced/allowed in a NYS DOCCS facility?

Mind-body skills: Mindful standing

Mindfulness can be practiced anytime, anywhere. We do not have to be sitting still with eyes closed. We can even practice when standing in line.

- Stand up.
- See if you can notice what it feels like to stand mindfully.
- Do you feel your calf and leg muscles working?
- Notice the sensation of your feet in your shoes.
- Now gently begin to shift your weight slowly to one foot, then the other foot.
- See if you can be aware of which muscles are working as you shift your weight slowly back and forth.
- Does one leg feel heavier? Lighter?
- Now shift back to center and stand while breathing mindfully.
- No need to make the breath longer or shorter. Just breathe naturally, noticing where you can feel the breath the most. Is it at the nostrils? The rise and fall of the chest or stomach?
- Bonus: see if you can follow your breath while you also practice awareness of the sensations of standing.

How do you feel?

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

IMPROVE the Moment

Imagery

Imagine very relaxing scenes. Imagine a secret room within yourself, seeing how it is decorated. Go into the room whenever you feel very threatened. Close the door on anything that can hurt you. Imagine everything going well. Imagine coping well. Make up a fantasy world that is calming and beautiful and let your mind go with it. Imagine hurtful emotions draining out of you like water out of a pipe.

Meaning

Find or create some purpose, meaning, or value in the pain. Remember, listen to, or read about spiritual values. Focus on whatever positive aspects of a painful situation you can find. Repeat them over and over in your mind.

Prayer

Open your heart to a supreme being, greater wisdom, God, your own wise mind. Ask for strength to bear the pain in this moment. Turn things over to God or a higher being.

Relaxation

Try muscle relaxing by tensing and relaxing each large muscle group, starting with your hands and arms, going to the top of your head, and then working down; exercise hard; massage your neck and scalp, your calves and feet. Breathe deeply; half-smile; change facial expression.

One thing in the moment

Focus your entire attention on just what you are doing right now. Keep yourself in the very moment you are in; put your mind in the present. Focus your entire attention on physical sensations that accompany non-mental tasks (e.g. walking, washing, doing dishes, cleaning, fixing). Be aware of how your body moves during each task.

Vacation

Give yourself a brief mental or physical "vacation," if possible.

Encouragement

Cheerlead yourself. Repeat over and over: "I can stand it," "It won't last forever," "I will make it out of this," and "I'm doing the best I can do."

Drawing a Breath⁴

Post-traumatic stress can affect the way you breathe. Holding your breath, as well as breathing rapidly or shallowly may be related to chronic anxiety which can be a symptom of post-traumatic stress. Awareness and regulation of the quality of your breathing can have several positive effects. Slowing and deepening your breath allows for adequate intake of oxygen and output of carbon dioxide, both of which are necessary for physical well-being. Conscious breathing during times of distress can allow you to release muscular and emotional tension, reducing your level of distress. Focusing awareness on your breathing can shift your thoughts away from flashbacks and nonproductive or obsessive thinking and bring your consciousness back into the present.

This art experience helps you to use the quality of your breathing to manage distress. You will be making two line drawings to depict the quality of your breathing.

1. Sit in a comfortable chair and place your feet solidly on the floor. Notice the sensation of your feet pressing against the floor.
2. Notice the quality of your breathing by considering the following:
 - the depth of your breathing: shallow, deep, moderate
 - the rate of your breathing: fast, slow, moderate
 - the pause between the inhalation and exhalation of your breath
 - the expansion and contraction of your rib and abdominal areas
 - changes in the overall pattern of your breathing

Guidelines

1. Practice drawing different kinds of lines with the pencil on scrap paper: long and short; thick and thin; curved and angular; quick and slow; light and heavy pressure; dashes and dots.
2. Focus on your breathing. As you are inhaling and exhaling, visualize your breath as a line and draw each breath with the pencil on the sheet of white drawing paper. Use one or more types of lines to represent your breathing. Take about five minutes to record your breathing. If you feel comfortable doing so, close your eyes while you draw.
3. Alter the quality of your breathing until you achieve a more relaxed state by letting your abdomen expand when you are inhaling and contract when you are exhaling. As you are inhaling and exhaling, try saying silently to yourself: "breathing in calm, breathing out tension." You may want to substitute your own words for "calm" and "tension."
4. Draw your altered breathing on another sheet of white drawing paper. Take about five minutes to record your breathing. Use one or more types of lines to depict each breath. Close your eyes while you are drawing if you are comfortable doing so.

⁴ Activity adapted from Cohen, B., Barnes, M., & Rankin, A. (1995). *Managing traumatic stress through art: Drawing from the center*. Lutherville, Maryland: Sidran Traumatic Stress Institute.

Reflecting on Drawing a Breath

1. Describe the visual qualities of the lines in each of your drawings.
2. Describe the similarities and differences between the two drawings. Compare both the quality/quantity of the lines and the use of space on the paper.
3. Consider how the line quality reflects your distress level.
4. Describe how you were able to consciously change the quality of your breathing and note the difference it made in your distress level.
5. You can use breath awareness as an indicator of your distress level. How would a drawing of your breathing differ if you were petting a dog, watching a scary movie, riding a Ferris wheel, or watching the clouds go by on a lazy summer afternoon?
6. You can consciously change the quality of your breathing to reduce your stress level. Think of ways you can remind yourself to modify your breathing when you are experiencing distress. With practice, breath regulation will become more automatic.

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 6: Containment I

Materials

Meeting A

- The Concept of Self-regulation
- Self-regulation

Meeting B

- Why Do I Shut Things Out?
- Cycle of Traumatic Stress Responses
- Create a Container
- Reflecting on My Container

Mind-body skills

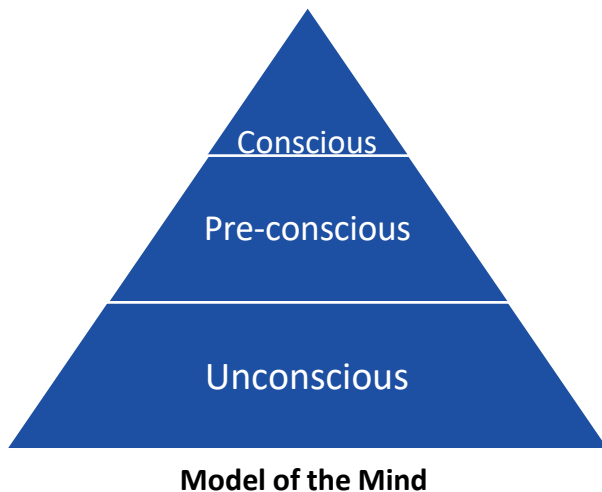
- Breathing Life Cycle

The Concept of Self-regulation⁵

Self-regulation is a term that can be used to cover the whole process of becoming more aware of emotions and other internal experiences. Self-regulation also refers to managing what you encounter, as you become more aware. If you struggle to know what you are feeling at any given time, or have trouble with managing intense feelings, self-regulation skills can help you feel more in control of emotions without having to shut them out completely. Greater control of your emotions will also allow you to increase awareness of pleasant feelings. After all, if you shut out uncomfortable feelings, the pleasant feelings get shut out also.

Self-regulation begins with awareness. You cannot regulate what you don't notice. Your mind is the center of your awareness, but your mind is complex. Sometimes you may not notice things that are important. Your mind may wander. Perhaps there are times when you cannot get something off your mind. You might obsess about something that worries you. You may try to focus your attention on a problem to no avail. Information may be elusive. To begin practicing self-regulation, you need to understand some of the ways your mind works.

The diagram below serves as a model of the human mind, so you can get an idea of what happens with traumatic experiences that may be kept out of awareness for extended periods of time. Keep in mind that this is only a model and represents experiences rather than the actual mental processes at work.



- In this model, the conscious mind represents present awareness of the environment and one's self. The conscious mind is in touch with what is happening now. You may be consciously aware of the temperature of the room you are in or of the noises outside.
- The pre-conscious represents things that can be remembered at will or at least with a little effort, like phone numbers and addresses.
- The unconscious represents a place where information or awareness about yourself and your experiences is stored. This information is not necessarily consciously available to you. Those embarrassing slips of the tongue are often said to have come from the unconscious.

⁵ Vermilyea, E. (2000). *Growing Beyond Survival: A Self-Help Toolkit for Managing Traumatic Stress*. Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press.

Memories, disowned feelings, and motivations may exist in the unconscious outside of present awareness. Yet, these aspects of self still affect and sometimes control behavior. When a person dissociates, some aspect of his or her experience may be stored away in the unconscious resulting in the sensation of time loss or amnesia. It's as if information has been stored in a memory bank and cannot be retrieved in the usual way. On the other hand, these memories that you can't get to may sometimes come up with no warning. So, there is often a problem with having no memory or feeling (numbing) or having too much memory or feeling (flooding).

Self-regulation

Please answer the following questions.

1. Conscious mind: Name three things that you are aware of right now (for example: the warmth of the room).
2. How do you know you are aware of them? What evidence is there?
3. Pre-conscious mind: Name three non-traumatic things that aren't usually in your awareness but that you remember easily (for example, your phone number or address).
4. How do you become aware of those things? How do you bring them into your mind? For example, do you create images or think about them?
5. Unconscious mind: What things that are usually not in your mind come into your mind outside of your control (for example, remembering the loss of a loved one or pet)?
6. Which of the items below makes life harder for you: things you are presently aware of, things you can recall, or things that come into your mind outside of your control?
7. Are there changes you would like to make regarding the way your mind is working these days? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

Mind-body skills: Breathing life cycle

Another way to breathe mindfully is to notice the beginning, middle, and end of each inhalation and exhalation (similar to how you can hear the beginning, middle, and end of sounds).

See if you can concentrate on the life of each breath going in and out.

If you get distracted or lost in thought, just return to noticing the beginning, middle, and end of the breath.

Feel free to use the space below to reflect on your experience.

Why Do I Shut Things Out?

Sometimes people who experience trauma will shut thoughts and feelings away in an effort to manage intensely painful experiences. This kind of coping through reduced awareness is sometimes called dissociation, numbing, or avoidance. Dissociation, numbing, and avoidance (shutting things out) are not necessarily done on purpose, and a person may not even realize that it is happening.

When people dissociate or numb out during trauma, the experience is stored in the brain in a different way from non-traumatic experiences. Information about thoughts, emotions, behavior, or physical feelings is disconnected and stored in the brain in such a way that a person may not be able to retrieve it very easily. This information can be lost or unavailable for a short or a long time. Some people find that information from years of their life is unavailable to them. They can't remember. Other people find that they do all kinds of things to keep memories of the trauma from resurfacing. In other words, they remember the trauma, but they try to numb out and avoid thinking about it. What they don't realize is that not dealing with the trauma (once they are safe) increases the power that the trauma has over them.

Usually, coping through dissociation is quite rare. However, for people who have had traumatic experiences as children and little or no help coping with those experiences, dissociation, numbing, and avoidance may have been the only ways to deal with the traumas and remain sane. One of the problems with this method of coping is that the unconscious can, in a sense, "fill up"(not literally). Often, as adults, people who have used dissociation, numbing, and avoidance as their main coping mechanisms find that at some point, they stop working, and thoughts and feelings that relate to the trauma start to crop up. This can lead to a general increase in traumatic stress responses, such as anxiety, hypervigilance, and visual images about the trauma.

For example, if you feel threatened and react to the threat in the same way that you did as a child, chances are the reaction will reinforce the feeling of threat.

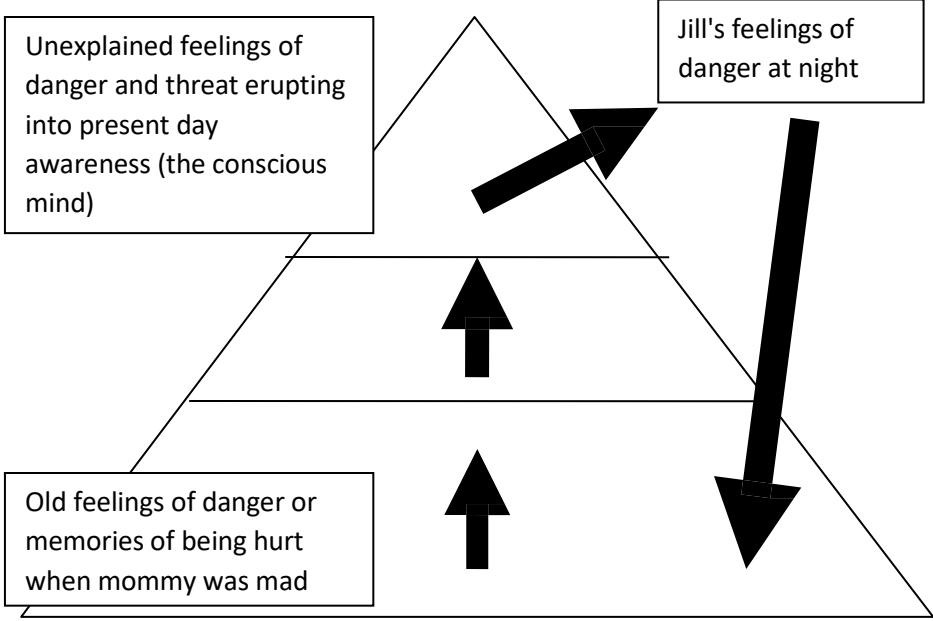
Jill struggles with memories of abuse as a child. She often has the feeling that she is in danger, especially at night. No matter what she does, she can't make herself feel safe. Usually, when she feels scared or threatened, Jill hides in her closet with the light off. She puts a blanket over her head and huddles as far into the corner as possible, just like when she was young and mommy was mad at her. Sometimes she falls asleep there and wakes up extremely disoriented and frightened. Jill has trouble understanding why the closet feels safe sometimes and scary at other times. While in the closet, Jill usually disappears into her mind or worries about whether someone will find her and hurt her.

In this example, Jill engages in a behavior that actually increases her fear. The fact that she hid in closets as a child is significant. Hiding as an adult reinforces the feelings of apprehension she had as a child. However, although it may make her feel more threatened, vulnerable, and disoriented, it also seems like a safe thing to do. Sometimes it makes her focus on the terror of being found and hurt. The adaptation (hiding) is a reaction to the traumatic stress response (feeling threatened), which increases the traumatic stress response (feeling vulnerable, helpless, and disoriented). Jill's initial impulses to hide are creating more distress for her. Her hiding is an effort to shut down awareness.

While that may have been the only way to manage as a child, it may not be the best way anymore. Shutting down awareness, as an adult, increases overall vulnerability in many ways. In the closet, Jill is more vulnerable to her own fears. In the outside world, hiding or reducing external awareness would make Jill more vulnerable to real, external threats as well as more vulnerable to her own internal processes. When survivors attempt to shut away awareness, it often causes something else to come up or erupt. These "eruptions" are often experienced or understood as flashbacks or nightmares and frequently cause an increase in other disruptive experiences and posttraumatic responses. While a certain amount of dissociation is normal, the kind that relates to traumatic events is a way of creating a barrier between you and awareness of things that threaten or frighten you. This type of dissociation frequently interferes with daily life.

Over time, dissociation stops working the same way it used to. When it begins to break down, you may find yourself experiencing thoughts and feelings related to the trauma, nightmares, or other disruptive phenomena. Once this process has begun, or when you feel a need to improve your quality of life, it's time to learn new ways of coping because dissociation is no longer going to work the old way.

The model below shows what can happen if dissociation increases and new material is shut away. Eruptions increase. These eruptions bring into present awareness the very things you may be dissociating to avoid. The result is a vicious cycle of dissociation to avoid the eruptions that dissociation causes. This cycle of traumatic stress responses can keep you from doing all kinds of things that you want and need to do.



Cycle of Traumatic Stress Responses

The "Cycle of Traumatic Stress Responses" shows how avoidance, dissociative coping, and posttraumatic experiences lead to each other creating a virtually constant feeling of being trapped in stress responses. A stress response can trigger avoidance in the form of denial, dissociation, bingeing, substance abuse, self-harm, and other behaviors in an effort to get rid of feelings. These avoidance behaviors, in turn, can trigger stress responses inside because they are reminders of old efforts to deal with painful feelings. The stronger the response, the stronger the impulses are to avoid. The effort spent avoiding leaves little energy to manage day-to-day life resulting in increased stress responses that increase the impulses to avoid.



Fortunately, self-regulation skills can help you tolerate (sit with) and control intense feeling states that have led to avoidance or dissociation in the past. You can learn to feel and control the intensity of your emotions to reduce avoidance, which helps reduce the frequency and intensity of traumatic stress experiences. This exercise will teach you the relationship between dissociation, numbing, avoidance, and traumatic stress and help you to replace old, currently problematic

copying (e.g., dissociation, avoidance etc.) with conscious, more effective methods of coping (e.g. imagery, artwork, self-talk etc.).

The self-regulation recipe we will practice involves the following steps:

Experience: Notice how you feel; notice pleasurable feelings as well as uncomfortable feelings; observe without judging; don't numb out and try not to make uncomfortable feelings worse; take note of what's going on inside.

Express: Say something; tell yourself what you are noticing; write; draw your feelings; tell someone else who can listen supportively.

Contain: Consciously postpone dealing with the overwhelming portion of what you're experiencing; hold only what you can stand for a length of time, then put it aside. You will be storing these things in your pre-conscious instead of your unconscious.

Retrieve: Later, when you are able (with a friend, in therapy, or with a journal), bring back a small portion of what you stored and repeat the process of experiencing and expressing with that small piece.

Create a Container⁶

People who have experienced personal trauma can often become overwhelmed by feelings or thoughts that can lead to non-productive and harmful behavior. If this has been an issue for you, learning to develop and use containment images and techniques can improve your level of functioning and sense of well-being. Containment is a self-management tool that allows you to store overwhelming information, images, or feelings for exploration later, without causing distress to you in the present. The concept of containment is different from advice such as "Pull yourself together and get on with your life" or "Just put the trauma behind you and don't think about it anymore."

Creating an image of a container to hold recurrent, intrusive material provides you with a method of self-control that can protect you from re-traumatization. When you gain more control and become more emotionally stable, you can decide to examine some of these overwhelming thoughts, memories, feelings, or impulses. Then you can remove them, one at a time, from the container or containers you have created for their safe protection. This art experience helps you create an image of a container to temporarily store intrusive thoughts and overwhelming feelings.

1. What one intrusive thought, overwhelming feeling, or unhealthy impulse would you like to temporarily contain?
2. Spend a few minutes considering the necessary features of a container designed to safely hold this thought, feeling, or impulsive behavior. Think about its form, location, and function. The more personalized your image, the more effective this technique will be. You may design a simple or elaborate container. Here are some examples:
 - a chained trunk located under the sea, to confine traumatic flashbacks
 - a locked room located at the end of a long corridor, for storage of overwhelming feelings
 - a DVD located on a shelf in a remote study, to provide for later viewing of traumatic events
 - a filing cabinet located in a vault, for organizing information related to the trauma
 - a protective bubble located on a cloud, to hold unpleasant body sensations

Your container should have some way to be securely closed and a way to be reopened, over which you have complete control.

⁶ Cohen, B., Barnes, M., & Rankin, A. (1995). *Managing traumatic stress through art: Drawing from the center*. Lutherville, Maryland: Sidran Traumatic Stress Institute.

3. Draw a picture of your container.
4. Consider the location that would best suit your container. Add these surroundings to your picture.
5. Study your drawing. Add any features necessary to make your container more effective.

Reflecting on My Container

1. Describe your container in writing. Be as specific as possible about its physical characteristics and location.
2. Explain why the various features of your container are significant to you.
3. What steps must you take to place overwhelming material into your container? For example, you could close your eyes and imagine the following:
 - a symbolic object to represent the unsafe feeling, thought, or sensation
 - wrapping this object up, perhaps labeling it
 - placing this package in the container
 - closing the container securely

Practice these steps to build your confidence in using this technique. You can visualize your container when you are alone or in public to temporarily contain overwhelming feelings and thoughts. You may find that you require different types of containers for various feelings, memories, or sensations. This art experience can be used again each time you wish to modify a container or create a new one.

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 7: Containment II

Materials

Meeting A

- Grounding 1
- Grounding 2 Homework (2 pages)

Mind-body skills:

- 5,4,3,2,1 grounding technique

Meeting B

- Imagery
- Establishing a Safe Place
- Reflecting on My Safe Place

Mind-body skills:

- Visualizing a safe place

Grounding 1

Using your five senses, try different grounding techniques. There is no one size fits all. Each person, each body type is different.

Sight – Open your eyes; look around; name present-day sights; connect with them; realize that you're an adult; look at how tall you are.

Sound – Listen for present-day sounds and name them; let them bring you closer to the present; talk to yourself inside; say reassuring things.

Taste – Drink coffee or herbal tea; if possible, use tastes that you connect with being safe and being an adult. If nothing else is available, drinking a glass of water can be grounding.

Smell – If possible, use scented hand lotion or scented soap to remind you of the present.

Touch – Hold a safe object; clasp your hands together, noticing the pressure and warmth; feel textures and let them bring you closer to the present; pet your cat or dog (or parrot!); connect with a loving presence in your life and let it help you remain in the present. Resting a hand on your stomach can be grounding (feeling the rise and fall of the chest) and create a sense of containment.

Swaying side to side – The movement can be comforting and is biologically based to enhance relaxation (think of a mother rocking/swaying a newborn baby). The swaying from side to side can be done in a way that is not noticeable, like switching the pressure from foot to foot while standing.

Items to use for grounding yourself:

Sight	Sound	Smell	Taste	Touch
Watch/clock	Soothing music	Coffee	Peppermint	Lotion
Photograph	Familiar sounds	Scented lotion	Cinnamon	A pebble
Colors	Your voice	Soap	Lemon	Ice cube

Grounding 2 Homework

Use the second page to keep track of how focused or grounded you are for a whole week. Put a number from 1-10 in each box for each hour. Indicate how grounded you are. 1, 2 or 3 would show that you are not very grounded; 4, 5, or 6 would show somewhat grounded; and 7, 8, 9 or 10 would indicate mostly grounded. When the week is over and your worksheet is completed, answer the following questions:

Do you notice any patterns (days of the week, times of day) to feelings of being disconnected or numb? If so, what are they?

Are these patterns meaningful to you? Do they relate to past experiences? How so?

Do the patterns relate to present day stressors? How so?

Grounding 2 Homework (page 2)

Rate how grounded you feel on a scale of 1 being not grounded at all to 10 being very grounded.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
Noon							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
Midnight							

Mind-body skills: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grounding technique

This technique will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present. This is a calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations.

Take a deep breath to begin.

5 - LOOK: Look around for five things that you can see and say them to yourself in your mind. For example, you could say, "I see the chair. I see the cup. I see the picture frame..."

4 - FEEL: Pay attention to your body and think of four things that you can feel and say them quietly in your mind. For example, you could say, "I feel my feet in my socks, my hands in my lap, the hair on the back of my neck, and the chair I am sitting on."

3 - LISTEN: Listen for three sounds. It could be the sound of cars outside, the sound of a clock ticking, or the sound of your stomach rumbling. Say the three things to yourself in your mind.

2 - SMELL: Name two things you can smell. If you can't smell anything, then just think of and imagine your two favorite smells.

1 - TASTE: Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth or your tongue in your mouth. If you can't taste anything, then think of your favorite thing to taste.

Take another deep breath to end.

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Imagery

Recall a time or place where you felt loved, comfortable, secure or confident. Where were you? (Inside? Outside? At home? On vacation?)

What were you doing? What was going on?

Who was there? (Friends? Family? Pets?)

What good feelings were you having that day? (Excitement? Satisfaction? Joy? Awe?)

Focus on those feelings for a moment. Imagine that you have a volume dial inside. Turn the feelings up a little as you slowly breathe deeply. Focus on every detail of the image of that day. Hold those feelings for a few minutes more. Then, when you are ready, use the dial to turn them down. Allow the feelings to fade naturally. Try not to shut them off.

Use the space below to say something about the day that you pictured.

When you are stressed, anxious, or frightened, the ability to create space within yourself can help you "take a break" from life's struggles. This can be done with imagery. Why else would people hang scenic pictures at home, stack trophies on shelves, and keep calendars of beaches by desks? These things bring to mind pleasant imagery in the middle of a hard day and allow people to imagine, to picture, how they would feel if they were at the beach instead of knee deep in paper work. This can provide very real relief. This kind of imagery can reduce stress and tension in anyone.

For example, maybe you would like a tree house or a field full of wild flowers all to yourself. Then, when you are having a hard time you could think about the tree house or the field and allow yourself to imagine every detail about how that place would soothe and protect you. Pretty soon you may find that you feel a little better because you took "time out" to think about and "visit" your safe place. Safe places allow you to take a break when you need one, no matter where you are or what you are doing.

Work to create safe places that will be useful to you no matter what your state of mind. You may need several different kinds of safe or protective places. Don't forget to attend all parts of yourself as well as all feelings inside. For example, you may want to use different safe places

depending on how you feel. Be specific. Would there be plants or animals? Is it inside or outside? Is it real or imaginary? Is your safe/protected place warm or cool? What would you have there – toys, food...?

Draw your safe places. Invite all parts of your mind to participate. Remember that some places are unsafe and are not valid safe places such as: bars or other scary, potentially abusive environments. Beware of places with mostly good connotations where a trauma did occur. You may need different safe places for different times depending on your mood.

Take some time now to create a safe place or two—or more!

Establishing a Safe Place⁷

Everyone needs a place where they can feel safe. This might be a country retreat, an ocean beach, a peaceful garden, or a cozy room. But these types of places are not always available to people when they need them most. A mental haven, accessible through guided imagery, can be available to you whenever you need it. Having an inner safe place has proven effective in helping people cope with stress and increasing their sense of safety and comfort. The use of an imaginary safe place is especially helpful for people who have experienced trauma. When fear, panic, or self-destructive thoughts become overwhelming, you can use your imagination to go to a restful inner sanctuary—a personal haven from the aftereffects of trauma and other life stresses—to regain a sense of safety, to restore strength, and to achieve a renewal of spirit. This art experience helps you to create a drawing of an imaginary safe place that you can use as a tool to manage overwhelming stress.

Getting Started

1. List all the places, both real and imaginary, that have felt relatively secure and safe to you during your life. (If you have never had an experience of a safe place, don't be discouraged. Try to imagine what such a place would be like.)
2. Take your time and allow yourself to begin to see, in your imagination, a place that feels safe to you. It can be real, imaginary, or have elements of both. You are in control of this visualization: If anything appears that makes you uneasy, you can replace it with something comforting. This safe place can be located anywhere: in a room, house, building, boat, or outdoor setting. This environment may be based on one or more of the safe places you listed above, or you may want to create an entirely new safe place. Write some preliminary notes describing a safe place suitable for you.

⁷ Adapted from Cohen, B., Barnes, M., & Rankin, A. (1995). *Managing traumatic stress through art: Drawing from the center*. Lutherville, Maryland: Sidran Traumatic Stress Institute.

3. List the features that you want to include in your safe place. These might be elements that are comfortable (pillows, blankets, furniture), familiar (meaningful items from among your possessions), or pleasurable (flowers, music, books).

4. Draw your safe place using the art materials. There are many ways to represent your safe place, from different points of view (aerial or side views) to a simple diagram or a more elaborate illustration.

5. Make a "security check" of your safe place and add any features that will enhance your sense of safety and comfort. For example, if your safe place is a room, you may want to add a door that can be closed or a window with a beautiful view.

Reflecting on My Safe Place

Imagine standing in your safe place. What do you see to the left and right of you, behind and in front of you, above and below you? (You may want to make a series of sketches representing each of these different viewpoints.)

1. List each of the visual features in your safe place picture.
2. Describe the significance and purpose of each feature.
3. Place your picture a few feet away and imagine it on a large screen. First, observe the picture in its entirety; next, carefully study its details. List the circumstances in which it might be helpful to use your imaginary safe place. For example, you can visualize your safe place for brief moments when you are in public and for longer periods of time when you are by yourself.
4. Create a step-by-step plan that will enable you to mentally get to your imaginary safe place. This plan might begin with a phrase such as "going to my safe place" or it might begin with the image of a flight of stairs that can take you to your safe place.

Practice visualizing the image so that you can see all details clearly even when your eyes are closed. Find a place where you can hang your safe place artwork and look at it regularly until you can consciously use it in your daily life. You may want to create an actual safe place in your living space.

Mind-body skills: Safe Place

Practice visualizing your safe place and the objects in it. Use your senses to fully enter the safe place. Notice how it looks, paying attention to even the smallest details. Arrange and rearrange details as needed to suit your liking. Notice the sounds, or the silence. How does it feel? Stay in this place for a while and go there whenever you need to soothe and calm yourself.

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 8: Physical and Emotional Abuse

Meeting A

Mind-body skills:

- Mindful listening

Meeting B

Mind-body skills:

- Find your center

Mind-body skills: Mindful listening

Find something in the room to listen to and focus on the sound as you breathe. If the sound goes away, pick another sound to focus on. Just as we did with the breath, if you get distracted by thoughts, just pull yourself back to the sound you were focusing on. See if you can just listen and refrain from analyzing the sound, such as whether you find it pleasant or unpleasant or wondering where the sound is coming from. Practice for a few minutes. How do you feel?

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Mind-body skills: Find Your Center

Sit upright in a comfortable position and take several deep breaths. On the next exhale, lean as far to the right as you can without falling over. Inhale and return to center. Then, exhale and lean far to the left. Inhale to the center. Slowly start to repeat, leaning less and less every time. When you finally reach the middle, your center, take several deep breaths and notice what it feels like to be in balance. How do you feel?

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 9: Sexual Abuse

Materials

Meeting A

- Characteristics Often Seen Among Men Sexually Abused as Children

Meeting B

- Facts and Myths about Males Sexually Abused as Children

Mind-body skill

- Body wake-up exercise

Characteristics Often Seen Among Men Sexually Abused as Children

Aggressive behaviors

Controlling behaviors

Highly sexualized language and behaviors

Confusion over sexual identify

Inappropriate attempts to assert masculinity

Vulnerability toward compulsive behaviors

Homophobic concerns

A greater difficulty than women dealing with shame

A greater reluctance than women to seek treatment/help

Strong tendency to minimize abuse experiences

Greater tendency to dwell on revenge against the perpetrator and in a more violent way

Experience sexual dysfunction

A feeling he let down not only himself, but his gender too, by not preventing the abuse from occurring

Intense feelings of being different from others

Sense that he is the only one this has happened to

Suicide ideation and attempts

Impaired ability to trust or to feel close

Nightmares

Flashbacks

Sleeping disorders

Mind-body skill: Body wake-up exercise

You can do this simple exercise when you feel tired and need to be awake.

Sitting down comfortably, start by rubbing your hands together to create warmth and then place your warm hands over your eyes.

Rub the hands together again and then place the warm hands on both temples; then rubbing again, placing the hands on both sides of the neck; rubbing hands again and then placing hands on the shoulders.

Next, brush away the stress in your left arm by using your right hand. Starting at the shoulder and brushing down the arm, thinking about brushing out all the stress in the arm. Repeat this exercise for the right arm. Repeat the same process for both legs by starting at the hip and brushing the stress out and down the legs.

Now, start again with arms and knead from shoulder to hand. Begin with the left arm and then right arm. Repeat the same for the legs by kneading each thigh with both hands as if you were kneading bread. Repeat the same for the calf muscles in the lower legs. When you have completed the calf muscles, place your hands on your toes and run your hands up the front of your legs, the abdomen, chest, neck, and head. Extend both arms to the sky.

Sweep arms down to the toes again and repeat the massage up the body a second time.

How does your body feel? Do you feel more energized?

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Facts and Myths about Males Sexually Abused as Children⁸

Cultural myths surrounding the sexual abuse and assault of boys and men can be serious obstacles to understanding and healing, so it's important to learn just how wrong they are. Before exploring the myths, though, here are some key facts:

Facts

1. Boys and men can be sexually used or abused, and it has nothing to do with how masculine they are.
2. If a boy liked the attention he was getting, or got sexually aroused during the abuse, or even sometimes wanted the attention or sexual contact, this does not mean he wanted or liked being manipulated or abused, or that any part of what happened, in any way, was his responsibility or fault.
3. Sexual abuse and assault harms boys/men and girls/women in ways that are similar and different, but equally harmful.
4. Boys can be sexually abused by both straight and gay men and women. Sexual abuse is the result of abusive behavior that takes advantage of a child's vulnerability and is in no way related to the sexual orientation of the abusive person.
5. Whether he is gay, straight or bisexual, a boy's sexual orientation is neither the cause nor the result of sexual abuse. By focusing on the abusive nature of sexual abuse rather than the sexual aspects of the interaction, it becomes easier to understand that sexual abuse has nothing to do with a boy's sexual orientation.
6. Girls and women can sexually abuse or assault boys and men. The boys and men are not "lucky," but exploited and harmed.
7. Most boys and men who are sexually abused or assaulted will not go on to sexually abuse or assault others.

Myths

1. **Boys can't be sexually used or abused, and if one is, he can never be a "real man."**
What happens to any of us as children does not need to define us as adults or men. It is important to remember that 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before age 18, and that those boys can grow up to be strong, powerful, courageous and healthy men.
2. **If a boy experienced sexual arousal during abuse, he wanted and/or enjoyed it, and if he ever did partly want the sexual experiences, then they were his fault.** Many boys and men believe this myth and feel lots of guilt and shame because they got physically

⁸ Source: <https://1in6.org>

aroused during the abuse. But that doesn't make it true. Boys are not seeking to be sexually abused or exploited.

- 3. Sexual abuse is less harmful to boys than girls.** The long-term effects of sexual abuse and assault can be quite damaging for both males and females. The harm caused by sexual abuse or assault mostly depends on things not determined by gender, including: the abuser's identity, the duration of the abuse, whether the child told anyone at the time, and if so, whether the child was believed and helped.
- 4. Most men who sexually abuse boys are gay.** Studies about this question suggest that men who have sexually abused a boy most often identify as heterosexual and often are involved in adult heterosexual relationships at the time of abusive interaction. There is no indication that a gay man is more likely to engage in sexually abusive behavior than a straight man and some studies even suggest it is less likely.
- 5. Boys abused by males must have attracted the abuse because they are gay or they become gay as a result.** It is common for boys and men who have been abused to express confusion about their sexual identity and orientation. Some guys who identify as heterosexual fear that due to their experiences as boys, they must "really" be homosexual. They may believe this would mean that they can't be a "real man," as defined by the larger society. Men who identify as gay or bi-sexual may wonder if their sexual orientation was influenced in any way by the abusive experience or was the cause of their orientation.
- 6. If a female used or abused a boy, he was "lucky," and if he doesn't feel that way there's something wrong with him.** Being sexually used or abused, whether by males or females, can cause a variety of other emotional and psychological problems. However, boys and men often don't recognize the connections between what happened and their later problems. To be used as a sexual object by a more powerful person, male or female, is never a good thing, and can cause lasting harm.
- 7. Boys who are sexually abused will go on to abuse others.** This myth is especially dangerous because it can create terrible fear in boys and men. They may not only fear becoming abusers themselves, but that others will find out they were abused and believe they're a danger to children. Sadly, boys and men who tell of being sexually abused often are viewed more as potential perpetrators than as guys who need support.

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 10: Trauma and Addiction

Materials

Meeting A

- Coping

Mind-Body Skills

- Breathing through Cravings

Coping

Write or draw about your own experience of coping.

1. How did you cope in the past?
2. How do you cope these days?
3. How has your coping affected your life?
4. What positive coping skills have you developed or wish to develop?

Mind-body skills: Breathing through cravings

Explain that this breath can be helpful if you are experiencing any kind of addictive or compulsive craving. Sit comfortably anywhere with your spine straight but not rigid. Take the deepest breath you can and hold it without straining until you need to exhale. You can exhale through your nose or mouth. Repeat this seven times. After you are done, sit quietly with your eyes closed for just one minute and feel the shift in your body and mind.

Meeting A Reflection

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Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 11: Addressing Tobacco Use

Materials

Meeting A

- Using Tobacco

Mind-Body Skills

- Breathing through Cravings

Using Tobacco

Write or draw about your own experience/history of using tobacco.

1. How would you describe your relationship with tobacco (including cigarettes, cigars, dip, e-cigarettes)?
2. If you have used tobacco, how did you get started?
3. How would you describe the effects or impact of using tobacco?

Mind-body skills: Breathing through cravings

Explain that this breath can be helpful if you are experiencing any kind of addictive or compulsive craving. Sit comfortably anywhere with your spine straight but not rigid. Take the deepest breath you can and hold it without straining until you need to exhale. You can exhale through your nose or mouth. Repeat this seven times. After you are done, sit quietly with your eyes closed for just one minute and feel the shift in your body and mind.

Meeting A Reflection

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Meeting B Reflection

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Module 12: Boundaries and Safety

Mind-body skills

- The 5-step Self-holding Exercise

The 5-step Self-holding Exercise

It doesn't matter which hand (right or left) goes in which position. Experiment to find out what feels right for you.

Make sure to do the Felt Sense to the best of your ability as you do this exercise. That means, feel and notice all the sensations as they pass through you, like watching a stream and noticing the colors, shapes, energy, sounds and motion.

1. HEAD SIDES. Place your hands on either side of your head. Think about how you are creating edges for your thoughts. You are creating the sides of a container that contains your thoughts. Feel the sensation between your hands.
2. HEAD FRONT-BACK. Place one hand on your forehead and one hand on the back of your head. Feel the container around of your thinking. Feel the sensation between your hands.
3. FOREHEAD-HEART Place one hand on your forehead and one hand on your heart. See if you can sense some sensations between your hands.
4. HEART-STOMACH. Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. It can be over or near your belly button. Feel the sensations between your hands.
5. SOLAR PLEXUS-BASE OF HEAD. Place one hand on your solar plexus (the point above your belly and right below your rib cage) and the other hand behind the base of your head (halfway covering the base of your head and halfway onto your neck). The middle of your hand should be over the deepest indentation.

How do you feel by the end of this sequence?

The 5 Step Self-Holding Exercise

for Self-Regulation of PTSD Symptoms



www.springshare.com
ask for self-healing

Meeting A Reflection

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Meeting B Reflection

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Module 13: Intimacy and Trust⁹

Mind-body skills

- Mindfulness of emotions

⁹ Adapted from Harris, M. (1998). *Trauma, Recovery, and Empowerment: A Clinician's Guide for Working with Women in Groups*. New York: The Free Press.

Mind-body skills: Mindfulness of emotions

This is one of the most important emotion regulation skills. People tend to become stuck when attempting to process painful emotions. Instead of simply letting them go, we often hold even tighter to them, obsessing over every little bit of our emotional experience and wondering why it's happening to us. Believe it or not, accepting that we are feeling emotions we would rather not feel can be the key to letting go of them.

When we accept that we are suffering, we stop running from the difficult emotions and turn to face them – and when we do, we might see that it wasn't the big bad monster we thought it was, but a smaller and more manageable beast. Follow these steps to work on your ability to let go of painful emotions:

- Bring to mind a recent or past situation that brings up difficult emotions (anger, fear, jealousy, guilt). Do NOT pick a deeply traumatic experience. Pick something that will be manageable to work with.
- Acknowledge that the emotion exists.
- Try to experience your emotion as a wave, coming and going. You may find it helpful to concentrate on some part of the emotion, like how your body is feeling or some image about it. For example, you could use this imagery: "I try to imagine an ocean wave flowing through me, but not so big that it knocks me over."
- Don't try to push the emotion away. This makes it bigger and increases our suffering. Don't reject the emotion.
- Don't judge your emotion. It is not good or bad. It is just there. There are no bad emotions, just emotions. Anger, fear, sadness are all painful emotions, but they are not bad. Everyone has them, and they are just as valid as the happy emotions.
- At the same time, do not hang onto your emotion. Don't rehearse it over and over to yourself. Don't escalate it or make it bigger. Sometimes when we feel a very painful emotion, like anger or a deep grief, we hold onto it, or we intensify it, making it stronger and stronger, in our efforts to deal with it or to give it our full attention. Try not to do this. Just let it be however it is. This can result in a lessening of the pain.
- You are not your emotion. Your emotion is part of you, but it is not all of you. You are more than your emotion.
- Having the emotion does not mean that you have to act. You may just need to sit with the emotion. Depending on the situation, acting can intensify and prolong the emotion.
- Practice accepting your emotions. This can be a difficult concept. Why would we want to accept painful emotions? We can learn to accept our emotions just the way we can learn to accept anything else about ourselves or our experience that we cannot change:

our age, our height, freckles, the weather, the size of our feet, allergies, etc. Acceptance and approval are two different things. You don't have to like your freckles, but they are there and you can't change that, so if you just accept them, you will feel better than if you keep fighting the idea that they are there.

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 14: Sexual Communication, Negotiation, and Consent

Materials

Meeting A

- Communication Scenarios

Meeting B

- Consent Questions
- Summary of Prevention

Mind-body skills:

- Working with anger

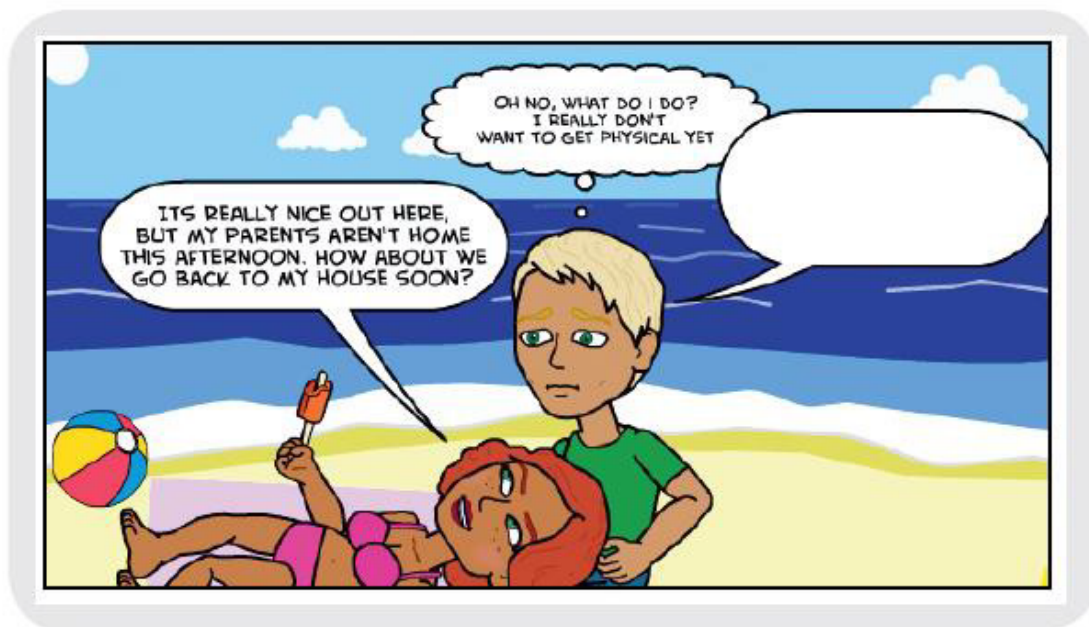
COMMUNICATION SCENARIOS

Fill in the empty speech bubbles using assertive communication.

- SCENARIO 1 -



- SCENARIO 2 -



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- SCENARIO 3 -



- SCENARIO 4 -



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- SCENARIO 5 -



- SCENARIO 6 -



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Mind-body skills: Working with anger

This technique can help you deal with the experience of anger.

- First, sit in a comfortable position and notice the places where your body is touching the chair.
- Draw in a few deep breaths, completely filling up your lungs and quickly exhaling.
- Think back to a time that you recently experienced anger, preferably a mild or quickly addressed episode. Allow yourself to experience the anger you felt in that moment.
- Disregard any other feelings that come up with this memory, like guilt or sadness.
- Turn your attention to how you are experiencing anger in your body. Notice whether any parts of your body are manifesting your anger, with sensations like warmth or cold, the intensity of these reactions, and whether they change as you observe them or move through your body.
- Bring compassion to the anger. This can be a difficult step, but remind yourself that anger is a natural human emotion that affects us all at one point or another. Try to hold your anger “like a parent holding a child,” with love and understanding.
- Say goodbye to your anger. Gradually bring your attention back to your breath and rest here for a while, until your emotions have subsided or settled down.
- Reflect on the experience. Notice the sensations that this exercise brought up in your body, notice if they changed through the process. Take note of whether you applied compassion to your anger, and if so, how you did it. Think about what happened to the anger when you showed it compassion.

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Consent Questions

Discuss or journal on any of the following questions.

1. What is consent? Why does it matter?
2. Have you ever talked about consent with your partners or friends?
3. Do you know people or have you been with people who define consent differently that you do?
4. Have you ever been unsure about whether or not the person you were being sexual with wanted to be doing what you were doing? Did you talk about it? Did you ignore it in hopes that it would change? Did you continue what you were doing because it was pleasurable to you and you didn't want to deal with what the other person was experiencing? Did you continue because you didn't want to second guess the other person? How do you feel about the choices you made?
5. Do you think it is the other person's responsibility to say something if he or she isn't into what you're doing?
6. Are you clear about your intentions? Have you ever tried to talk someone into doing something about which he or she showed hesitancy?
7. How might someone express that what is happening is not okay?
8. Do you only respond to verbal signs, or are you sensitive to other signs?
9. Have you ever asked someone what kinds of signs you should look for if he or she has a hard time verbalizing when something feels wrong?
10. Do you think consent can be sexy?
11. Do you check in as things progress, or do you assume the original consent means everything is okay?
12. Do you think about people's abuse histories?
13. Do you ever get yourself into situations that give you an excuse for touching people you think would say no if you asked? Examples might include dancing, getting drunk around them, falling asleep next to them?
14. Do you think it is possible to misinterpret silence for consent?
15. Do you make people feel they are not "fun" or "liberated" if they don't want to try certain sexual things?
16. Have you ever used jealousy as a means of control?
17. Do you think it's okay to initiate something sexual with someone who is asleep?

18. How do you react if someone becomes uncomfortable with what you're doing, or if he or she doesn't want to do something? Do you get defensive? Do you feel guilty? Does the other person end up having to take care of you and reassure you, or are you able to step back and listen, to hear and support the other person and take responsibility for your actions?
19. In telling your side of the story, do you attempt to change the way the other person views a situation?
20. Do you ever talk about sex and consent and abuse when you are not in bed?
21. Do you ever try to make bargains ("If you let me X, I will do Y for you")?

Summary of Prevention

1) Safest Behaviors

- Not having sex is the best way to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Not sharing injection drug needles

2) Safer Behaviors

- Hugging
- Massaging
- Mutual masturbation
- Clothed sex where no body fluids are shared
- Negotiated safer sex before you start to become sexually aroused

3) Safe Behaviors

If you are having sex or injecting drugs:

- Use condoms each and every time you have sex and use them properly.
- Use spermicidal jelly or cream with the condom.
- Use dental dams.
- Clean "works" with bleach
- Do not share your "works" with anybody.

4) NOT Safe Behaviors

- Unprotected sex; not using a condom or a latex barrier when you have vaginal, anal (up the butt), or oral sex
- Sharing unclean needles or "works"
- Having sex when you or your partner is high on alcohol or drugs

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 15: Parenting

Meeting A

- Guided Forgiveness Meditation Script

Meeting B

- Guided Self-compassion Break
- Letter to a Child

Mind-body skills

- Forgiveness of Self and Others Practice
- Self-Compassion

Guided Forgiveness Meditation

Introduction

This Forgiveness Meditation practice has three steps. We begin with those whom we have caused harm, intentionally or unintentionally. Next, we turn our attention to those who have similarly caused us harm, intentionally or unintentionally. And, finally, we turn our attention to self-forgiveness, for ways we may have harmed ourselves, intentionally or unintentionally. It may be best to start with someone who may be easiest to forgive or be forgiven and over time move to working with the more difficult people. You can repeat this process with the same or different people as often as you wish in the future.

Meditation

Now, we'll begin practicing a guided forgiveness meditation. Remember it's a practice. It's best not to force yourself to forgive that which you do not feel ready or safe to forgive at this time. Simply acknowledge whatever comes up for you with a non-judgmental attitude, as much as you can. Let whatever emotions arise come and go. You can always come back to the breath or the feel of the body sitting as an anchor. Go at your own pace.

Begin settling into a comfortable seated posture, on a chair or a cushion. Becoming aware of the fact that you are breathing. Becoming aware of the movement of the breath, as it comes into your body and as it leaves your body. Not manipulating the breath or controlling it but simply being aware of how it feels.

Now, when you are ready, expanding your awareness beyond the breath to include the entire body. Simply noticing sensation in the body internally or externally. Bringing your attention now to the thoughts as they come and go. Seeing each thought as it comes up in the mind as a thought, a passing event. And, when you are ready bringing the awareness to emotions that arise in the body and mind. Perhaps frustration, restlessness, peacefulness, sadness, joy, or fear. Now, simply noticing how the body, mind, and heart are feeling right now.

Returning to the body breathing. Noticing where you feel the breath moving in and out of the body. Letting the awareness ride the waves of the breath. Now, beginning to take a gentle journey of awareness through the body. Inviting the possibility of letting go and relaxing the body. Allowing a kind attention to sweep through the body. Letting go, letting be. Allowing whatever is present to be just as it is. (pause)

Now, bringing to mind someone whom you have harmed either intentionally or unintentionally. Bringing to mind someone where it feels unresolved or burdensome for you. Seeing who comes to mind, taking a few moments to visualize or imagine this person, noticing the details of their appearance.

And when you are ready, gently say this person's name to yourself and ask forgiveness for how you have harmed this person intentionally or unintentionally. Saying, this person's name and then, saying forgive me, forgive me... forgive me for any actions I did, whether intentional or

unintentional, that caused you harm... Continue with or without the name, as if speaking to the person directly.

Trusting yourself to ask for forgiveness in a way that feels right for you, without getting lost in the content of the story of whatever may have happened. Take your time. Repeat a few times at your own pace, "May I be forgiven?"

What's most important are not the words but the 'felt sense', as much as you can, letting it come from your heart, with the intention for healing; asking for and opening to receiving forgiveness. (pause)

Taking a few moments to transition, to let go of the images or thoughts. Noticing how you are feeling now. Bring the awareness to the body, the breath. Taking a few easy, deep breaths. (pause)

Now, bringing to mind someone who has caused you harm, intentionally or unintentionally. Noticing the details of the person's appearance, noticing what feelings arise for you as you bring the person to mind. When you are ready, begin to offer that person forgiveness. Saying to the person in your own mind, using that person's name, I forgive you. I forgive you for the ways you have harmed me, intentionally or unintentionally. I forgive you, I forgive you. Repeat at your own pace a few more times. As before, trusting yourself to forgive in a way that feels right for you, without getting lost in the content of the story of whatever may have happened. (pause)

Now, letting go of the images or thoughts. Noticing how you are feeling. Bringing the awareness back to the breath, the body. Taking a few easy deep breaths. (pause)

Now, imagining or visualizing yourself. Noticing the details your appearance. Bringing to mind anyone or any situation for which you wish to forgive yourself for ways you have harmed yourself. When you are ready, using your own name, say, "I forgive you. I forgive you. May I forgive myself?" Again, trusting yourself to forgive in a way that feels right for you. (pause)

When you are ready, letting go of the images or thoughts. Noticing how you are feeling.

Bringing your awareness back to the body, to the breath. Taking a few easy, deep breaths.

Now, taking a few more moments to offer gratitude to yourself for taking this time for yourself. For taking care of your own heart, for lightening the burdens, the hurts you have accumulated in your life. Remembering, that this is a practice of letting go and moving in the direction of more peace, happiness and freedom. Breathing in stillness for as long as you wish, and when you are ready, gently open your eyes and slowly returning to the present, to this moment, this place, to resume your day.

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Guided Self-compassion Break

When you notice that you're feeling stress or emotional discomfort, see if you can find the discomfort in your body. Where do you feel it the most? Make contact with the sensations as they arise in your body.

Now, say to yourself, slowly:

1. "This is a moment of suffering."

That's mindfulness. Other options include:

- This hurts.
- Ouch!
- This is stressful.

2. "Suffering is a part of life."

That's common humanity. Other options include:

- I'm not alone. Others are just like me.
- We all struggle in our lives.
- This is how it feels when a person struggles in this way.

Now, put your hands over your heart, or wherever it feels soothing, feeling the warmth and gentle touch of your hands.

Say to yourself:

3. "May I be kind to myself?" Another way of saying this is, "May I give myself what I need?"

See if you can find words for what *you need* in times like this.

Options may include:

- May I accept myself as I am?
- May I learn to accept myself as I am?
- May I forgive myself?
- May I be strong?
- May I be patient?
- May I live in love?

If you're having difficulty finding the right words, imagine that a dear friend or loved one is having the same problem as you. What would you say to this person? If your friend would leave with just a few words in mind, what would you like those words to be? What message would you like to deliver, heart to heart?

Now see if you can offer the same message to yourself.

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Letter to a Child

Write a letter to your child about what kind of parent you wish you had been, what you do/did well, and how you want to be different from now on.

Additional options:

Write a letter to your child yet to be conceived about the kind of parent you hope to be.

Write a letter to your parent(s) (or other parental figures) about what they do/did well and what you wish they had done differently.

Meeting B Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Module 16: Closing Ritual

Meeting A

- Life Story

Meeting B

- Group poem: Resilience

Life Story

Use the following pages to draw or write about a “life story” using the suggested questions:

1. Without going into detail, what do you think were the traumatic experiences that had a negative effect on you and your life? (for example, the death of a loved one, abuse)

Life Story (continued)

2. What have you done in your life that you are proud of?

Life Story (continued)

3. Have drugs and/or alcohol had some part in your life? If so, how?

Life Story (continued)

4. How do you understand that you got here? What led up to being in this place at this point in your life?

Meeting A Reflection

Use this page to record your thoughts about what occurred during this session. Feel to write, draw, or otherwise express your feelings.

Group Poem: Our Resilience

TAMAR concludes with a group poem meant to acknowledge our strengths, our resilience, and how we have grown together in this group.

Instructions: It is said that “what does not kill us makes us stronger.” Please use the space below to reflect on your resilience. Questions include: what does resilience mean to you? What do you see as your strengths or your gifts? How have you learned and grown from your experiences in this group? After you are done, underline a phrase or a sentence that you would like to contribute to the group poem. Your facilitators will provide further instructions.

Meeting B Reflection

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