

The Printer-Friendly Packet of Infographics, Handouts, and Worksheets



WHY WE CREATED THIS PACKET

We understand that not everyone has the luxury of printing in full color due to ink costs, so we've created this printer-friendly packet to make the valuable content of "Healing the Wounds of Attachment Trauma: An In-Depth Guide" more accessible and convenient for everyone.

What's Inside:

This packet includes all the essential infographics, handouts, and worksheets from your treating attachment trauma guide optimized for black-and-white printing. Backgrounds have been removed and color schemes simplified to conserve your ink and make the printouts as clear as possible.

We hope this packet serves as a valuable addition to your toolkit for treating and understanding attachment trauma.



MENTAL HEALTH

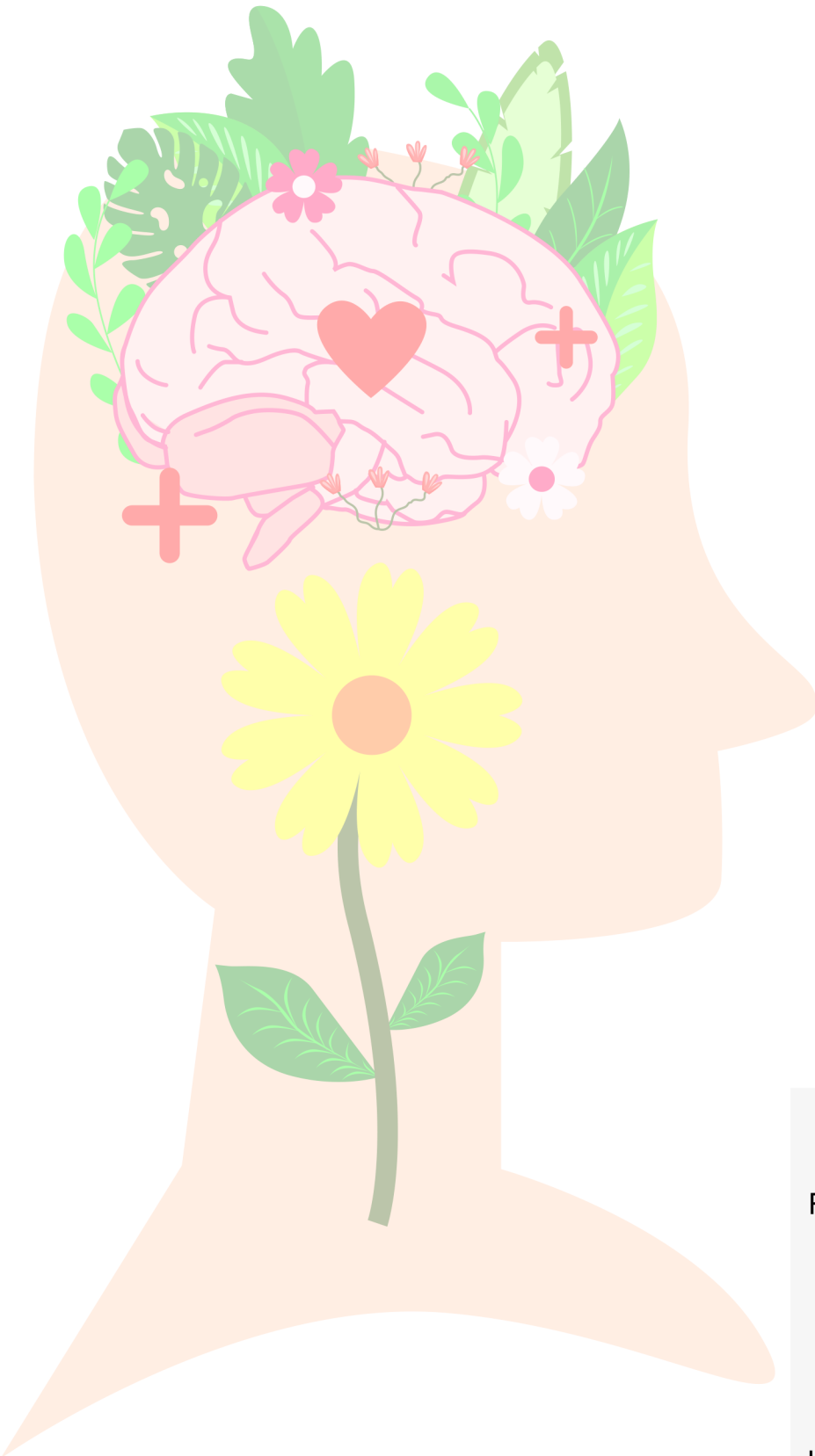
UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL WELLNESS

MENTAL HEALTH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH. IT ENCOMPASSES EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING, AFFECTING HOW WE THINK, FEEL, AND ACT. GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IS VITAL AT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE, FROM CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE THROUGH ADULTHOOD

PRIORITIZING MENTAL WELLNESS ENABLES INDIVIDUALS TO COPE WITH THE STRESSES OF LIFE, WORK PRODUCTIVELY, AND MAINTAIN MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS. IT ALSO INFLUENCES HOW WE APPROACH CHALLENGES, MAKE CHOICES, AND RELATE TO OTHERS.

EVERYONE FACES CHALLENGES THAT CAN AFFECT THEIR MENTAL WELL-BEING. RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF DISTRESS, SEEKING HELP, AND FINDING SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES ARE ESSENTIAL STEPS TO NAVIGATE THESE CHALLENGES. OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH REDUCE STIGMA AND EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS TO SEEK THE CARE THEY NEED.



THE 6 PHASES OF ATTACHING

Based on the approach of Gordon Neufeld, PhD, attachment ideally unfolds in six sequential ways in the first 6 years of life.

YEARS 0 - 1 SENSES



In the first year of life, attachment through senses is key. Babies form connections through touch, smell, taste, and sound, associating comfort and security with the primary caregivers who feed, hold, and soothe them. This sensory level of attachment provides the basis for trust and the beginning of emotional bonds.



YEARS 1 - 2 IMITATION



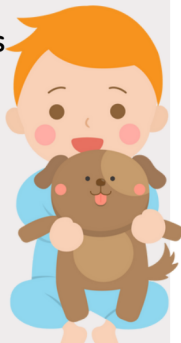
During the second year, toddlers start to mirror behaviors and emotions of those they are attached to, learning social norms and emotional responses. They may talk, walk, eat, or adopt the mannerisms of those they desire closeness with. This stage of attachment, based on imitation, reinforces their connection with caregivers and forms the basis of their own identity.



YEARS 2 - 3 BELONGING AND LOYALTY



At ages two to three, children begin to understand concepts of belonging and loyalty. They develop a sense of 'us' versus 'them', gravitating towards those they are attached to. They are likely to follow and obey the rules of the people they are closest to. Their actions reflect loyalty to their caregivers, indicating a deeper level of emotional commitment and attachment.



YEARS 3 - 4 SIGNIFICANCE AND MATTERING



In the fourth year, children start seeking validation from their attachment figures, eager to matter and to be significant in their caregivers' eyes. They want to be seen, heard, and appreciated for who they are. This stage of attachment builds their self-esteem and confidence.



YEARS 4 - 5 EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

At the age of four to five, children start to share their inner world, including their hopes, fears, and fantasies. They will express love and show signs of caring and compassion. This emotional intimacy allows them to feel seen and understood on a deeper level, solidifying their bonds with their attachment figures.



YEARS 5 - 6 BEING KNOWN



In the final stage, around ages five to six, children seek to be truly known by their caregivers – not only for what they do, but for their thoughts and feelings. They may feel compelled to share their secrets with the ones they are closest to. This desire to be understood, accepted, and loved for their authentic selves marks the deepening of attachment relationships and forms a basis for future intimate relationships.



Trauma Coping Skills

Developing Resilience

- Recognize trauma and its effects
- Set small, achievable goals and celebrate when they're achieved
- Try a new hobby or revisit an old one
- Journal about personal growth reflecting on achievements
- Practice problem-solving skills



Relaxation Skills

- Find a quiet spot and practice controlled breathing.
- Systematically tense and relax muscle groups
- Take a warm bath or a short nap
- Practice controlled breathing.
- Engage in yoga or stretching
- Listen to calming music

Emotional / Physical Release

- Yell into a pillow
- Go for a run or brisk walk
- Allow oneself to cry
- Do push-ups or jumping jacks



Mindful Distraction

- Engage the brain and divert from distressing thoughts
- Listen to or play music
- Sewing, knitting, or other hands-on activities
- Garden or engage with plants
- Read a captivating book

Shifting Mindset

- Maintain a gratitude journal
- Visualize positive outcomes
- Set mindful reminders on your phone
- Challenge negative thoughts actively
- Read affirmation cards



Healthy Habits / Self-Care

- Establish a regular sleep routine
- Take short, technology-free breaks
- Cook a nourishing meal
- Take daily walks or exercises.

Grounding Skills

- Take a walk in nature
- Drink cold water or chew ice
- Touch different textures (soft, rough, cold)
- Name five things you can see, hear, and touch
- Sit and focus on breathing for a few minutes

Healthy Vs. Unhealthy Coping Strategies

Coping strategies play a crucial role in healing from trauma. However, it's essential to understand that not all coping mechanisms are beneficial. Distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy strategies is fundamental to mental health and wellness.

What Unhealthy Coping Strategies Do:

- Isolate individuals from their support system.
- Exacerbate negative emotions or symptoms.
- Offer only temporary relief, masking the root problem.
- Can lead to addiction or self-harming behaviors.
- Push unwanted feelings away, avoiding genuine emotional processing.
- Reduce one's ability to handle stress and challenges.
- Compromise overall health or the pursuit of personal goals.

What Healthy Coping Strategies Do:

- Promote genuine healing and address the root cause.
- Reduce the intensity of uncomfortable feelings, aiding in their management.
- Enhance connectivity with loved ones and a support system.
- Help work through triggers and build resilience against future stressors.
- Promote healthy ways to manage distress and feelings of overwhelm.
- Boost mental and emotional well-being.
- Minimize harmful behaviors, replacing them with constructive actions.

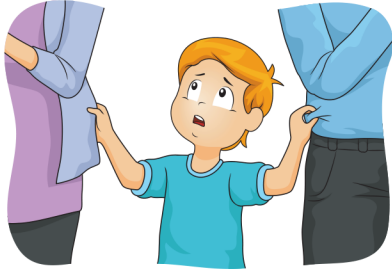
What are some unhealthy coping strategies you currently use? Think about what makes these unhealthy.

What are some healthy coping strategies that can replace your current unhealthy ones?

What are some benefits you hope to see from implementing healthier coping mechanisms?

What Causes Attachment Trauma?

Attachment trauma can arise from various experiences during early childhood and can be categorized into several types:



Neglect

Emotional or physical neglect occurs when a caregiver consistently fails to meet a child's basic needs for safety, comfort, and nurturance. This can lead to feelings of worthlessness, insecurity, and difficulties with emotional regulation.



Abuse

Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse within an attachment relationship can cause profound feelings of fear, betrayal, and powerlessness. These experiences can disrupt the development of a secure attachment and contribute to maladaptive relationship patterns in adulthood.



Loss or Separation

The loss of a primary caregiver, whether through death, divorce, or prolonged separation, can result in attachment trauma. This can cause feelings of abandonment, grief, and difficulties with trust and attachment in future relationships.



Inconsistent Caregiving

Inconsistent caregiving, characterized by unpredictable or erratic responses to a child's needs, can lead to attachment trauma. This inconsistency can create confusion and insecurity, making it difficult for the child to develop a stable sense of self and trust in others.

Understanding Types of Abuse

Abuse takes various forms, and understanding the specifics can be vital in recognizing and addressing them. Below are some common types of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Involves deliberate physical harm, violence, or threats of violence

- Hitting, slapping, punching, choking, or shaking
- Biting, scratching, burning, or cutting
- Throwing objects or using weapons
- Preventing sleep or the consumption of food/water

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Involves emotional manipulation, threats, jealousy, and controlling behaviors

- Constant criticism, belittling, or humiliation
- Manipulation, isolation, or controlling behavior
- Threatening self-harm or harm to others
- Jealousy, possessiveness, gaslighting, and accusations
- Destroying objects important to the victim

Sexual Abuse

Encompasses any non-consensual sexual behavior

- Rape, attempted rape, or forcing sexual acts
- Sexual harassment or unwanted sexual comments
- Unwanted touching, exposure, or sexual exploitation
- Coercing sexual acts through threats or manipulation
- Preventing access to contraceptives, damaging contraceptives, or forcing pregnancy

Other Types of Abuse

Financial Abuse: Controlling or restricting access to financial resources, such as controlling bank accounts, forbidding employment, forcing financial decisions, or using money to manipulate or exert control.

Digital Abuse: Using technology to harass or intimidate, including sending threatening messages, sharing private photos without consent, using technology to track or control, and creating fake profiles or spreading rumors online.

Spiritual Abuse: Occurs when religious beliefs are used to manipulate or control, such as forcing participation in or withdrawal from religious activities, using religion to manipulate, shaming based on beliefs, or restricting religious expression.

Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma occurs when the effects of trauma are passed down between generations. It's not just stories or shared memories; it's a molecular change in our DNA. Descendants inherit a heightened sensitivity to stress and altered responses to external challenges.



What is Epigenetics?

Epigenetics examines how our behaviors and environments, including trauma, induce changes in our gene functions. While the DNA sequence remains unchanged, these modifications affect if genes are activated or silenced, altering gene expression based on experiences.



Trauma's Genetic Footprint

Trauma isn't just an emotional scar; it leaves a mark on our genes. The stress from traumatic experiences can trigger epigenetic changes that modify how genes respond to future stressors. This doesn't only change an individual's physiological response but also sets a new genetic blueprint for handling challenges.

The Inherited Burden of Trauma

The aftermath of trauma doesn't end with the first affected individual. Subsequent generations can inherit these modified genes. Even if they don't face the original trauma, they're born with an altered sensitivity to stress and a predisposition to certain mental health challenges — a lingering echo of traumas their predecessors faced.



Understanding and addressing inherited trauma is the key to healing. Through therapy and supportive environments, we can mitigate its effects and pave a healthier path for future generations.

UNDERSTANDING ATTACHMENT STYLES



Secure Attachment

Characterized by a strong sense of trust, comfort, and emotional security in relationships.

Common Behaviors: Open communication, balanced independence and interdependence, empathy, and emotional support.

Thought Patterns: Positive view of self and others, confidence in the ability to manage emotions and handle challenges.



Anxious-Preoccupied Attachment

Marked by a strong desire for closeness, coupled with fears of abandonment and rejection.

Common Behaviors: Constant need for reassurance, clinginess, jealousy, and difficulty maintaining boundaries.

Thought Patterns: Negative view of self, idealization of others, worry about not being loved or valued.

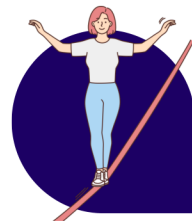


Dismissive-Avoidant Attachment

Exhibits emotional distance and self-reliance, often avoiding close relationships to maintain independence.

Common Behaviors: Withdrawal during conflict, difficulty expressing emotions, prioritizing personal goals over relationships.

Thought Patterns: Positive view of self, negative view of others, belief that emotional vulnerability is a sign of weakness.



Fearful-Avoidant Attachment

A combination of anxious and avoidant tendencies, resulting in a push-pull dynamic in relationships.

Common Behaviors: Inconsistent availability, difficulty trusting others, emotional turbulence, and self-sabotaging behaviors.

Thought Patterns: Negative view of self and others, fear of intimacy and abandonment, struggle with self-worth and identity.



FACILITATING SECURE ATTACHMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS

4 Tips to Foster Secure Attachment

Open Communication

Encourage honest conversations. Talk about your feelings, fears, and needs. This builds trust and understanding.

Physical Affection

Simple acts like hugging, holding hands, or a gentle touch can bridge emotional gaps. It reaffirms closeness and trust.

Consistent Presence

Be there for your partner. Regularly check-in and show up in moments of need. Predictability fosters trust.

Mutual Respect

Value each other's boundaries and feelings. Mutual respect is foundational for a secure bond.

BOUNDARIES IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Boundaries are guidelines for how we want to be treated and what we're comfortable with within a relationship. They are essential for healthy relationships as they promote mutual respect, understanding, and emotional safety.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Clear and Specific: Clearly communicate your needs, desires, and limits

Flexible: Be open to adjusting boundaries as situations or relationships change

Consistent: Establish and maintain boundaries in all areas of life

Mutual Respect: Both parties should respect and honor each other's boundaries

TYPES OF BOUNDARIES IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Physical boundaries: Respect each other's personal space and physical boundaries. Ask for permission before touching or hugging.

Emotional boundaries: Understand and respect each other's emotional needs. Allow each other to express emotions without judgment or criticism.

Communication boundaries: Communicate openly and honestly, but also respect each other's privacy. Avoid interrupting, talking over, or dismissing each other's opinions.

Time boundaries: Respect each other's time and commitments. Set clear expectations for when you'll spend time together and when you need time for yourself.

Consequence boundaries: Establish consequences for violating boundaries. This could include taking a break from the relationship or ending the relationship altogether.

BOUNDARIES IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

TIPS FOR ESTABLISHING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Know your values: Understand your personal values and priorities, which will help you establish appropriate boundaries.

Be assertive: Communicate your boundaries clearly and assertively, without being aggressive or passive.

Start small: Begin by setting small boundaries and gradually work your way up to more significant ones.

Consistency is key: Be consistent in enforcing your boundaries to help others understand and respect them.

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

Manage guilt: Practice self-compassion and remind yourself that setting boundaries is essential for self-care and healthy relationships.

Handle fear of rejection: Build self-confidence and focus on compatibility, understanding that healthy relationships require respect for each other's boundaries.

Deal with resistance: Stay firm and consistent in maintaining your boundaries, even when facing resistance. Seek support when needed.

Balance flexibility and firmness: Assess situations, determine if adjusting boundaries is warranted, and communicate openly with the other person about potential changes.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

www.treatingattachment.com

Feeling Tense



Restlessness



Nervousness



A tight feeling in
your chest /
sweating



Managing Anxiety



Anxiety is a common condition, but there are many ways to manage it. Here are some techniques to help you take control.

Basic Daily Habits

- **Eat Well-Balanced Meals:** Reminder to keep energy up with healthy nutrition.
- **Limit Alcohol and Caffeine:** These substances may increase anxiety in some people.
- **Get Enough Sleep:** Adequate rest supports overall mental well-being.
- **Exercise Regularly:** Physical activity is known to reduce stress and anxiety.

Quick Anxiety Reducers

- **Take a Time Out:** Sometimes, stepping away from a situation can make all the difference.
- **Count to 10:** A simple technique to create mental space and regain control.
- **Breathing Exercises:** Deep, controlled breaths can calm the nervous system.

Cognitive Strategies

- **Maintain a Positive Attitude:** Encourage positive thinking and focusing on gratitude.
- **Focus on Things You Can Control:** Putting energy into what you can change can be empowering.
- **Write it Down:** Journaling thoughts can provide clarity and relief.
- **Challenge Yourself to Have an Anxiety Attack:** Paradoxically, this can lessen anxiety.

Social Support

- **Call Someone You Trust:** A friend or family member can provide comfort and perspective.

Engaging Activities

- **Distract Yourself with a Repetitive Activity:** Engaging in a familiar task can be calming.

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

When feelings of anxiety or overwhelm strike, grounding techniques can be powerful tools to help you return to the present moment. One effective approach is the 5-4-3-2-1 Technique, which involves tuning into your five senses to reconnect with the here and now.

Here's how you can practice the 5-4-3-2-1 Technique:



Identify 5 Things You Can See

Look around you and notice five things you can see. Take your time to really observe these items. What colors do you see? What shapes? Describe them to yourself or even out loud if it helps.



Identify 4 Things You Can Touch

Reach out and touch four different objects around you. What do they feel like? Are they soft, hard, warm, or cool? Again, take your time and describe the sensations.



Identify 3 Things You Can Hear

Listen carefully and identify three things you can hear. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the hum of a fan, or your own breathing. Try to listen to these sounds without judgment.



Identify 2 Things You Can Smell

If you can, find two things you can smell. It might be a freshly brewed cup of coffee or the scent of a nearby plant. If you can't find anything to smell, you may also recall two of your favorite smells.



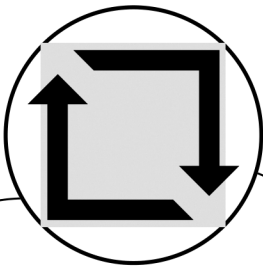
Identify 1 Thing You Can Taste

Focus on one thing you can taste. It could be the lingering flavor of a recent meal or drink, or you could take a sip of water or a bite of something if available.

Remember:

- **Take your time:** Spend a moment with each sensation before moving on to the next.
- **Breathe:** Focus on your breath as you go through these steps. If you like, you can pair each step with a deep inhale and exhale.
- **Repeat if needed:** You can repeat the exercise as many times as you like until you feel more grounded.

Breathing Techniques to Reduce Stress



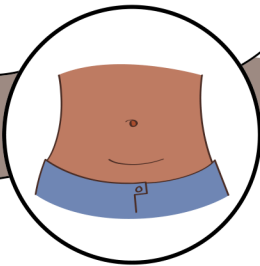
BOX BREATHING

- Slowly exhale to a count of 4, emptying your lungs completely.
- Inhale gently through your nose to a count of 4.
- Hold the breath for a count of 4.
- Exhale again to a count of 4.

4-7-8

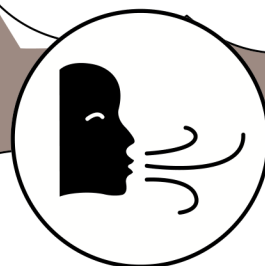
4-7-8 BREATHING

- Inhale silently through your nose for a count of 4.
- Hold your breath for a count of 7.
- Exhale completely through your mouth for a count of 8.



BELLY BREATHING

- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.
- Inhale deeply through the nose, ensuring your diaphragm inflates. The hand on your belly should rise more than the one on your chest.
- Exhale slowly through pursed lips.



PURSED-LIP BREATHING

- Inhale slowly through your nose for 2 counts (like smelling a flower).
- Pucker or "purse" your lips as if you're about to blow out candles on a cake.
- Exhale slowly and gently through your pursed lips for a count of 4.

Understanding Emotional Regulation

Each day, we move through life dealing with stress and making decisions, fluctuating between different levels of emotional regulation. The goal is to expand our capacity for resilience so that we find a balance that we can manage well.



HYPERAROUSAL

- A state of heightened reactivity. Feelings of anxiety, feeling out of control, or overwhelmed.
- Symptoms can include restlessness, agitation, and racing thoughts.



HYPOAROUSAL

- Represents an abnormal state of decreased responsiveness. Feelings of numbness, disconnection, or being in a fog.
- Symptoms can include lethargy, disorientation, and a lack of motivation or energy.

Trauma's Impact on Emotional Regulation

Stress and traumatic life events can narrow your ability to tolerate emotional distress making it more challenging to regulate emotions. Outside our window of tolerance, we can more easily slip into states of hyperarousal and hypoarousal.

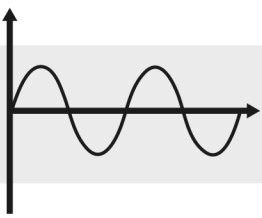
Hyperarousal Coping Strategies

- Grounding Techniques
- Breathing Techniques
- Mindfulness Exercises
- Orienting to the Present

Hypoarousal Coping Strategies

- Gentle Activation Techniques
- Sensory Engagement
- Mindfulness Exercises
- A Contrast in Temperature

Remember, the goal is not to eliminate states of hyper- or hypoarousal entirely, but rather to recognize when they're happening, manage them effectively, and gradually expand your resilience to these emotional states.




Regulating Intensity

Balancing the exploration of traumatic memories and client safety is key in trauma therapy. This process is managed within the "Window of Tolerance," a safe zone where clients can process trauma without overwhelm.

Increase Intensity

At times, clients may exhibit an emotional disconnect with their traumatic experiences, resulting in flat affect and numbness. To foster therapeutic progress, therapists may need to employ strategies to increase the session's emotional intensity and foster a connection to the trauma.


Anchoring in trauma: Referring to the traumatic event.

- 
- **Asking affective questions:** Prompting emotional recall.
 - **Requesting trauma details:** Encouraging step-by-step recounting.
 - **Exploring sensory memories:** Asking about visual, auditory, and other sensory experiences.
 - **Discussing fears:** Talking about fears linked to the trauma.
 - **Understanding physical reactions:** Discussing physical responses during the trauma.

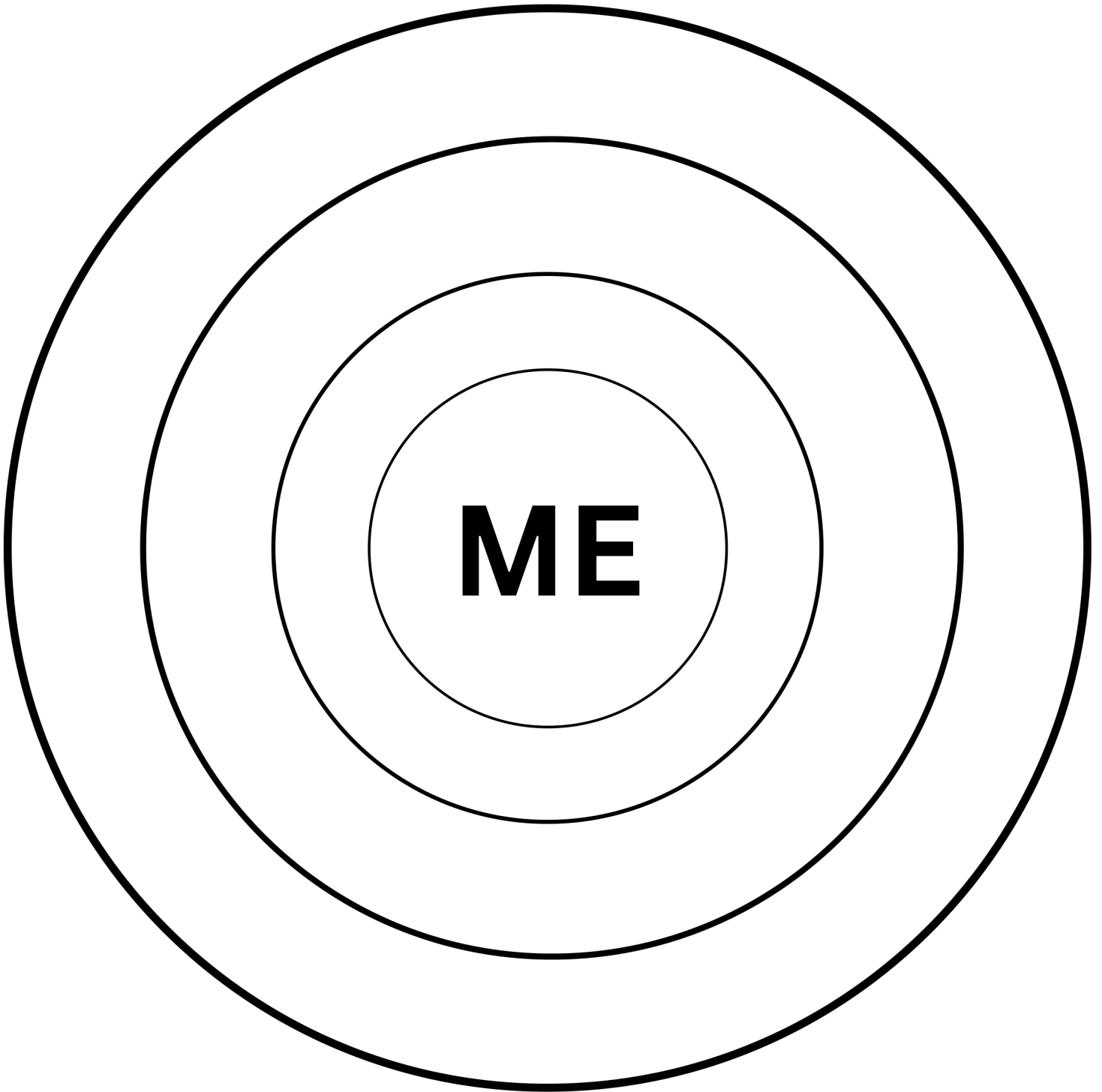
Decrease Intensity

At other times, the client's emotional response to the traumatic memories may become too intense, posing a risk for retraumatization. In these instances, therapists need to employ strategies that decrease the intensity of the session, grounding the client in the present and fostering a sense of safety.

Anchoring in the present: Shifting the focus to the present moment.

- 
- **Asking non-trauma content questions:** Discussing neutral topics.
 - **Using a calming voice tone:** Promoting calm and safety.
 - **Stopping trauma discussion:** Pausing the conversation and refocusing on the present.
 - **Repeating and rephrasing client's statements:** Creating a sense of understanding.
 - **Encouraging client to describe the current setting:** Helping reconnect with surroundings.
 - **Using relaxation and breathing techniques:** Helping manage emotional responses.
 - **Asking about non-trauma-related activities:** Shifting focus away from the trauma.

My Safety Network



Write the names of the people in your life who form your trusted network. The inner circles represents those you trust the most, while the outer circles encompass other individuals who are smaller parts of your safety network.

Take your time to reflect on each person's role in providing care and support.

Remember, building a trusted network is an ongoing process, and your own self-compassion is an integral part of your support network.

Identifying Attachment Trauma

Clients with attachment trauma may exhibit various signs and symptoms, including:

1

**DIFFICULTY FORMING AND
MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS**

2

**EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO REJECTION
OR CRITICISM**

3

**DIFFICULTY REGULATING EMOTIONS
AND COPING WITH STRESS**

4

**A TENDENCY TO IDEALIZE OR DEVALUE
OTHERS IN RELATIONSHIPS**

5

**LOW SELF-ESTEEM AND FEELINGS OF
WORTHLESSNESS**

6

**PATTERNS OF SELF-SABOTAGE IN
RELATIONSHIPS AND OTHER AREAS OF LIFE**

H.E.A.R.T

YOUR GUIDE TO BUILDING A SECURE RELATIONSHIP

Based on the works of Jessica Fern

H: Here & Present

- Prioritize regular, undistracted time giving your partner full attention
- Be present through mindfulness, remove distractions, make eye contact

E: Expressed Delight

- Regularly communicate the unique qualities you cherish in your partner and how they positively impact your life.
- Relish in the shared moments, letting your partner know how much you value the time spent together.

A: Attunement

- Actively listen, empathizing with your partner's feelings and emotions, and resist jumping to problem-solving or advice immediately.

R: Rituals & Routines

- Establish and honor daily rituals of connection, especially during departures and reunions, reinforcing the bond's importance.

T: Turning Towards after Conflict

- Recognize and respond positively to emotional bids for connection, and consider timeouts during intense discussions to recalibrate.



CREATING SAFETY AND SECURITY IN RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHEET PART 1

Feeling safe and secure in a relationship is crucial for collaboration and intimacy. Use this worksheet to identify what you need to feel safe and secure in your relationship, and what your partner can do to help.

Step 1. Identifying What You Need

What are some things that make you feel safe and secure in a relationship?

(Examples: open communication, physical touch, quality time, feeling heard and understood)

Are there any specific triggers or situations that make you feel unsafe or insecure in your relationship?

(Examples: being criticized, feeling ignored, feeling controlled)

What can you do to help prevent yourself from feeling unsafe or insecure in your relationship?

(Examples: setting boundaries, communicating your needs, taking time for self-care)

What can your partner do to help prevent you from feeling unsafe or insecure in your relationship?

(Examples: respecting your boundaries, listening actively, showing affection, etc.)

CREATING SAFETY AND SECURITY IN RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHEET PART 2

Step 2: Identifying Coping Strategies

What are some coping strategies that work for you when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed?

(Examples: deep breathing, meditation, physical exercise, journaling, talking to a trusted friend)

What can you do to calm yourself down once you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed in your relationship?

(Examples: taking a break, going for a walk, practicing mindfulness)

What can your partner do to help calm you down once you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed in your relationship?

(Examples: providing a listening ear, offering a hug, suggesting a relaxing activity)

CREATING SAFETY AND SECURITY IN RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHEET PART 3

Step 3: Reassuring Connection

What can you do to reassure yourself of the connection you have with your partner?

(Examples: reminding yourself of positive experiences, expressing gratitude, spending quality time together)

What can your partner do to reassure you of the connection you have with them?

(Examples: showing affection, expressing appreciation, being attentive to your needs)

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT PARTNERS: A WORKSHEET FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE IN RELATIONSHIPS

Sometimes attachment trauma can cause us to hold ourselves and our partners to impossible standards of perfection in our relationships. This can lead to feelings of anxiety, overwhelm, and constant striving for something unattainable. Use this worksheet to explore where you may be expecting perfection in your relationship and how to be kinder to yourself and your partner.

Step 1: Identifying Expectations of Perfection

In what ways do you put pressure on yourself to be perfect in your relationship?
(Examples: always being available, never making mistakes, always saying the right thing, etc.)

In what ways do you expect perfection from your partner in your relationship?
(Examples: always being attentive, never making mistakes, always knowing what you need, etc.)

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT PARTNERS: A WORKSHEET FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE IN RELATIONSHIPS

Step 2: Exploring Feelings of Imperfection

How do you feel when you fall short of your expectations for yourself in your relationship?

(Examples: ashamed, guilty, inadequate, etc.)

How do you feel when your partner falls short of your expectations for them in your relationship?

(Examples: taking a break, going for a walk, practicing mindfulness)

What do you typically do when you feel this way?

(Examples: engage in self-criticism, lash out at your partner, withdraw from the relationship, etc.)

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT PARTNERS: A WORKSHEET FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE IN RELATIONSHIPS

Step 3: Cultivating Self-Compassion

What messages can you give yourself to show more kindness and compassion to yourself and your partner when things don't go perfectly in your relationship?

(Examples: "I am doing the best I can," "It's okay to make mistakes," "I accept myself and my partner as perfectly imperfect," etc.)

What strategies can you use to practice self-compassion in moments when you are feeling imperfect or when your partner is feeling imperfect?

(Examples: taking a deep breath, practicing mindfulness, journaling, reaching out to a trusted friend, etc.)

By identifying expectations of perfection, exploring feelings of imperfection, and cultivating self-compassion, you can begin to let go of unrealistic standards and improve the overall quality of your relationship. Use this worksheet as a starting point to have a conversation with your partner about the importance of accepting imperfections and practicing self-compassion.

GUIDING CLIENTS THROUGH THE LABYRINTH OF SHAME



NORMALIZE THE EXPERIENCE OF SHAME

Emphasize that shame is a universal human emotion, not a sign of personal failure. "It's a part of the human journey, not a mark of your worthiness."

1

2

HELP CLIENTS EXTERNALIZE THEIR SHAME

Help clients visualize their shame as a separate response rather than a core part of their identity. "Let's think of your shame as a separate entity. It's not who you are, but something you're experiencing."

TRACE THE SHAME BACK TO ITS ROOTS

Encourage exploration of early experiences that may have shaped their feelings. "Your shame stems from past events, not from your inherent value as a person."

3

4

VALIDATE CLIENTS' EXPERIENCES AND EMOTIONS

Reinforce the authenticity of their emotions, making them feel seen. "Your emotions are genuine, and I recognize the weight they carry for you."

TEACH CLIENTS SELF-COMPASSION PRACTICES

Counteract self-criticism by promoting acts of self-kindness. "When shame arises, comfort yourself as you would a dear friend."

5

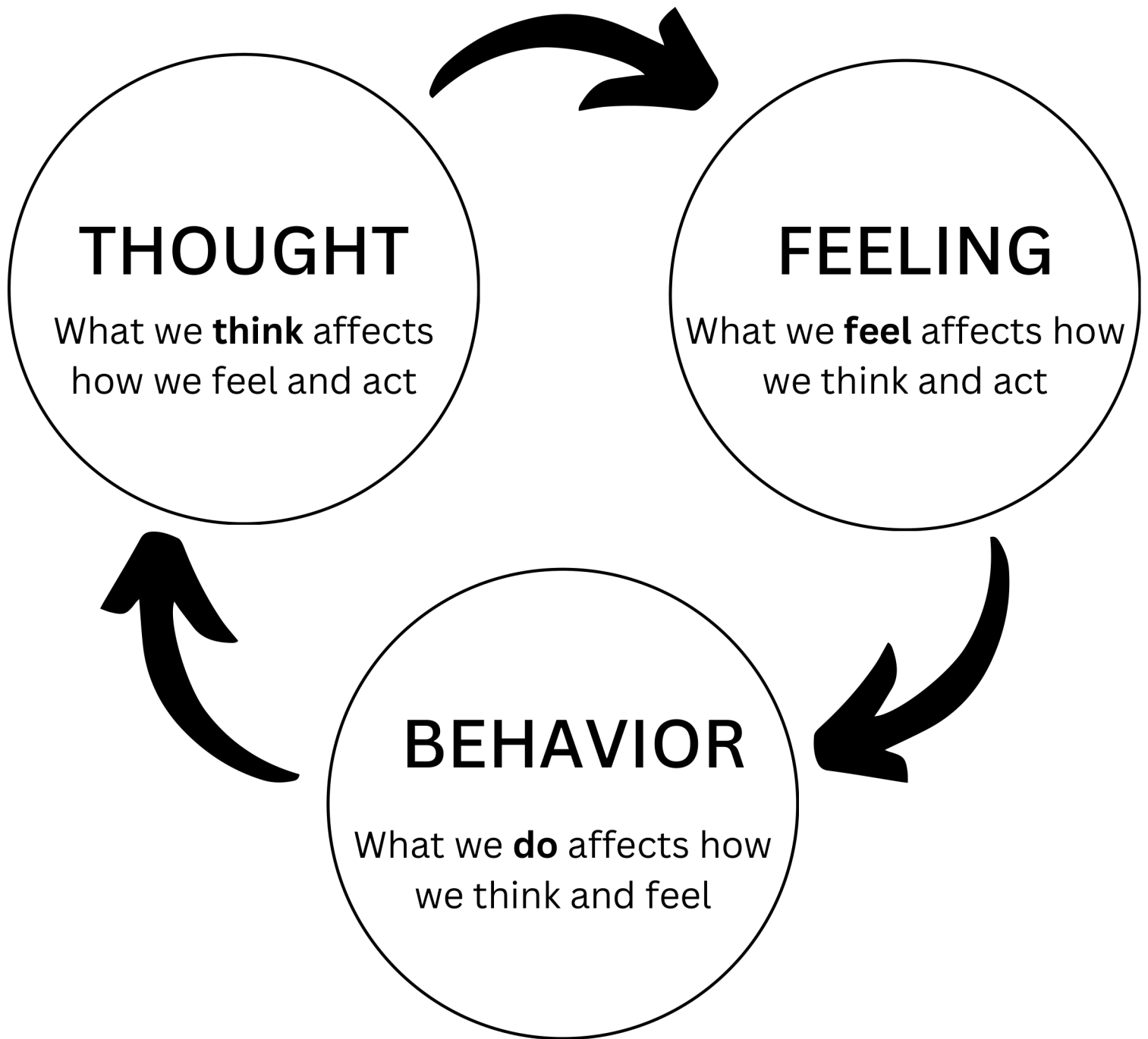
6

FACILITATE MOURNING THE LOSS OF A SECURE CHILDHOOD ATTACHMENT

Address and process the emotions tied to early life experiences. "It's natural to grieve the nurturing moments you didn't have, and acknowledging this is a step towards healing."

WHY THOUGHTS MATTER

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY



CBT works on the understanding that our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are interconnected. Negative or distorted thoughts can lead to negative feelings, which in turn can result in harmful or unproductive behaviors. By identifying and challenging these thoughts, CBT can lead to changes in feelings and behaviors.

The Power of Choice for Trauma Survivors

Trauma can disrupt an individual's sense of self and control over their environment, but regaining that control can be the first step towards healing and empowerment.

Every decision made builds resilience, creating a buffer against challenges and laying a foundation for enduring strength and growth.



Anchoring in the Present

Making decisions, even minor ones, draws our focus to the present moment, acting as grounding anchors. This active decision-making promotes mindfulness, counteracting feelings of dissociation and reconnecting us with reality.

Rebuilding Self-Trust

By honoring our inner voices and making conscious choices, we reclaim our autonomy and rebuild trust in ourselves. Each decision, from picking a book to selecting a meal, is a celebrated win, diminishing self-doubt and bolstering belief in oneself.



Affirmation of Self

Choices reflect our unique identity, even aspects overshadowed by trauma. By asserting our preferences, we affirm our self-worth and begin crafting new, empowering narratives for our journey.



The 8 Phases of EMDR Therapy

1

Client History & Planning: Gather client's history, including attachment trauma, to formulate a tailored treatment plan.

2

Preparation: Build rapport, inform client about EMDR, and teach emotion regulation techniques for session distress.

3

Assessment: Identify a target memory linked to trauma with its negative beliefs, emotions, and sensations.

4

Desensitization: Guide client with bilateral stimulations on target memory, assessing distress until it reduces significantly.

5

Installation: Replace target memory's negative beliefs with positive ones, reinforcing with bilateral stimulation.

6

Body Scan: Focus on residual sensations from memory, using bilateral stimulation to alleviate somatic distress.

7

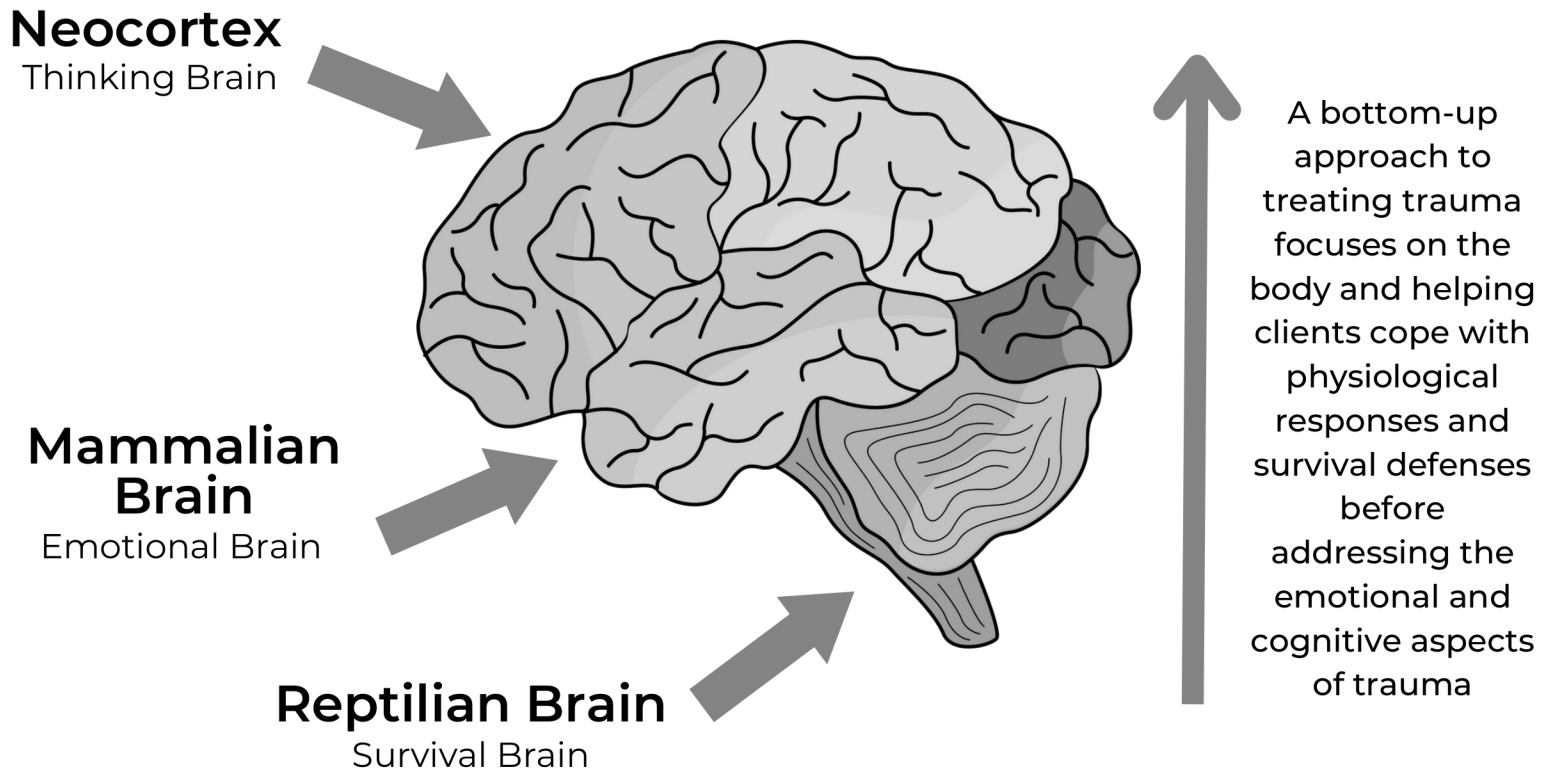
Closure: Ensure client's emotional stability post-session, offering extra support as necessary.

8

Reevaluation: Review progress in follow-up sessions, addressing lingering trauma-related concerns using the eight-phase process.

A Bottom-Up Approach to Treating Trauma

Understanding and healing trauma requires a comprehensive approach. The Bottom-Up method focuses on the foundational neurological and physical responses before addressing higher-level cognitive functions. It includes approaches such as Somatic Experiencing, Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, Mindfulness and Meditation Practices, Yoga Therapy, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), among others.



How Does It Work?

Addressing the Reptilian Brain: Focus on safety and stabilization through grounding techniques, body awareness, and breath work.

Engaging the Mammalian Brain: Addresses emotional dysregulation through body-based therapies, helping to process emotional memories and feelings tied to trauma.

Integrating with the Neocortex: Once the underlying physiological and emotional systems are more regulated, therapists may shift to engage cognitive functions, utilizing cognitive-behavioral techniques to reshape thoughts and beliefs related to the trauma.

"Bottom-up regulation involves recalibrating the autonomic nervous system . . . we can access the ANS through breath, movement, or touch."

~ Bessel van der Kolk, MD

The 5 Tasks of Attachment-Based Family Therapy (ABFT)

Process and Outcome Goals for Each Task

Task	Relational Reframe	Adolescent Alliance Building	Parental Alliance Building	Resolving Attachment Ruptures	Promote Autonomy and Parental Support
Typical Duration	1 session	2–4 sessions	2–4 sessions	1–3 sessions	4–8 sessions
Process Goal	Attributional shift in how family members perceive the problem and solution.	An understanding of the adolescent's attachment narrative, encompassing their thoughts, feelings, and memories.	Transformative shift in the parents' working model of the adolescent and their own roles as caregivers.	Facilitate open conversations that tackle and heal attachment ruptures.	Parents adeptly assist adolescents in resolving external problems, such as those related to school, work, or depression.
Outcome Goal	Families come to an agreement to engage in relationally focused therapy.	Adolescent rekindles a valuation of attachment, expressing a renewed willingness to renegotiate and foster it.	Parents experience a resurgence in their caregiving motivation and acquire valuable emotion-coaching parenting skills.	Family members develop a revised, healthier perspective of self and others, leading to renewed interpersonal trust.	Both parents and adolescents confidently navigate and negotiate normative challenges pertinent to adolescent development.

Coping Strategy Toolbox

This worksheet is designed to help you identify and explore coping strategies that can support you in times of stress or emotional difficulty. Together with your therapist, you'll be able to create a personalized toolbox that you can refer to whenever you need it.

Section 1: Identifying Coping Strategies

What strategies have worked for you in the past? List them below, along with a brief description of how you've used them.

1. Strategy: _____

◦ Description: _____

◦ When Used: _____

2. Strategy: _____

◦ Description: _____

◦ When Used: _____

3. Strategy: _____

◦ Description: _____

◦ When Used: _____

Feel free to add more as you think of them or as you discover new strategies that work for you.

Section 2: Therapist Suggestions

Your therapist may have additional strategies to suggest. They will fill out this section.

1. Strategy: _____

◦ Description: _____

◦ When Used: _____

2. Strategy: _____

◦ Description: _____

◦ When Used: _____

3. Strategy: _____

◦ Description: _____

◦ When Used: _____

Discuss these strategies with your therapist to understand how they might work for you.

Section 3: Implementation Plan

Choose at least one strategy from above (either one you identified or a therapist-suggested strategy) and create a plan to implement it in real life.

• Chosen Strategy: _____

• Why I Chose This Strategy: _____

• When I Will Use It: _____

• How I Will Remember to Use It: _____

• Possible Obstacles and How I'll Overcome Them: _____

You can revisit this section as you try different strategies to find what works best for you.



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Your journey towards understanding and healing is important to us. If you have any questions or would like to get in touch, please don't hesitate to reach out at support@treatingattachment.com.