

THE MIND-BODY MAP

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA & THE PATH TO RECOVERY



When we experience a significant life event or trauma, it doesn't just impact our thoughts - it reshapes how our mind and body communicate. Healing isn't about "getting over it"; it is about helping your nervous system learn that the danger has passed and that it is safe to return to the present moment.

2 THE PATHWAYS TO HEALING

Recovery happens by addressing both the mind and the body. We cannot simply "think" our way out of a physical survival state; we have to show the body it is safe.

PATHWAY A: BOTTOM-UP PROCESSING (BODY TO BRAIN)

This involves using physical sensations to calm the nervous system so the logical brain can come back online.

Somatic Grounding

- Stomping your feet firmly into the floor to feel the support beneath you.

Breath Regulation

- Extending your exhales longer than your inhaleds to actively slow your heart rate.

Temperature Shifts

- Washing your hands in warm water or holding a cold drink to anchor your awareness in the physical present.

PATHWAY B: TOP-DOWN PROCESSING (BRAIN TO BODY)

This involves changing how we relate to our experiences and rewriting the stories we tell ourselves.

Compassionate Curiosity

- Moving away from self-blame ("Why am I acting like this?") and toward curiosity ("What is my body trying to protect me from right now?").

Naming the State

- Simply acknowledging your internal state—"I am feeling hyper-arousal right now"—reduces its emotional power.

Creating "Glimmers"

- Intentionally looking for micro-moments of safety and ease in your day to give your nervous system a break.

1 HOW THE BODY REMEMBERS

During a overwhelming event, the brain's survival center (the amygdala) takes over, pausing logical thinking to focus entirely on keeping you safe.

The Trap

- Sometimes, long after the event is over, the body stays on high alert. A sudden sound, a specific environment, or an internal feeling of stress can trick the body into reacting as if the event is happening right now.

The Physical Echo

- This survival energy can show up physically as chronic tension (especially in the shoulders, jaw, or gut), shallow breathing, digestive issues, or a constant feeling of exhaustion.

3 MY HEALING COMPASS

Recovery happens by addressing both the mind and the body. We cannot simply "think" our way out of a physical survival state; we have to show the body it is safe.



USE THESE PROMPTS TO TRACE YOUR OWN PATHWAY FORWARD:

Where do I feel stress or tension in my body right now?

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

What is one physical action that consistently helps me feel slightly more grounded? (e.g., wrap in a heavy blanket, step into the fresh air, change the lighting)

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

A compassionate reminder I can tell myself when I feel overwhelmed is:

- *"My nervous system is just trying to keep me safe, but I am secure right now."*

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

