Approaches We May Use in Trauma Therapy

An integrative approach drawing from trauma-focused, body-based, relational, cognitive, and parts-oriented perspectives

1.



Sensorimotor Psychotherapy

A body-centered approach that helps us notice physical sensations, movement impulses, posture, and survival responses. It can support greater awareness, regulation, and choice.

May help with:

- tracking body cues
- working with freeze, fight, flight, or shutdown
- building safety and regulation

2.



Parts-Oriented Work

This approach helps us understand protective responses, inner conflict, and different parts of the self without reducing the person to one model. Depending on what is useful, the work may draw from IFS-informed, TIST-informed, Sensorimotor, attachment, and other trauma-informed perspectives.

May help with:

- self-critical or protective parts
- inner conflict
- compassion and self-leadership

3.



EMDR

EMDR is an evidence-based psychotherapy that can help people process distressing memories so they become less emotionally overwhelming and disruptive in the present. It may also support changes in trauma-linked beliefs, emotional responses, and patterns of responding.

May help with:

- trauma memories
- disturbing triggers
- trauma-linked beliefs and emotional responses

4.



Nervous-System & Polyvagal-Informed Concepts

This aspect of therapy helps clients increase awareness of physical sensations, patterns of activation, and the ways the nervous system responds to stress, danger, connection, and overwhelm. We may explore how body-based cues relate to emotional activation and use this understanding to support greater regulation, steadiness, and choice.

May help with:

- noticing physical sensations linked to emotional activation
- recognizing activation, overwhelm, or shutdown
- understanding patterns of regulation and dysregulation
- building greater steadiness, awareness, and choice

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5. Relational, Attachment & Cognitive Work



Trauma can shape what we expect from closeness, conflict, boundaries, safety, and ourselves. Relational and attachment-informed work can help us notice these patterns, while cognitive approaches can help examine trauma-linked beliefs and develop more flexible ways of responding in the present.

May help with:

- trust, boundaries, and relationship patterns
- trauma-linked beliefs and meaning
- self-trust, flexibility, and safer connection

6. How These Approaches Can Work Together

In trauma therapy, these approaches may be integrated rather than used in isolation. These elements may overlap, occur in a different order, or be emphasized differently depending on the person.



Notice body cues

→



Understand protective parts

→



Process painful memories

→



Build safety, choice, and connection

7. What to Expect



We move at a pace that feels manageable.



The goal is not to overwhelm you.



Treatment is individualized to your needs and readiness.



Healing often includes both understanding and lived experience.

Educational Use Only

This resource is intended for general psychoeducation and is not a substitute for individualized mental health care, diagnosis, or treatment. The approaches described here are not appropriate for every person or every concern. Treatment at Cordillera Counseling Services is individualized and may draw from one or more approaches depending on a client's needs, goals, preferences, readiness, and clinical presentation.

References to specific therapeutic models are for educational purposes and do not imply affiliation with or endorsement by their respective organizations or training institutes.