

**12 TECHNIQUES TO
HELP YOU MOVE
FORWARD AFTER A
TRAUMA**

THE TRAUMA RECOVERY WORKBOOK

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Introduction

Trauma affects different people in different ways. Some people recover relatively quickly from a trauma. Within three or four months, they feel “back to normal” and do not report any symptoms or problems. Other people develop ongoing or chronic problems and may be diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD can be a very complex psychological issue and can affect people for many years.

Depending on your symptoms, your therapist may use a variety of techniques to help you overcome your trauma. Treatments typically include Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Exposure Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and many therapists today are using body-oriented techniques such as yoga, EFT tapping, mindful meditation, and more.

Most therapists will focus on techniques that help you alleviate specific symptoms, as well as techniques that address your relationships and your ability to find meaning in your day-to-day activities. Medications may also be prescribed to treat specific symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Whatever the treatment, your therapist will want you to practice new ways to handle your emotions, manage upsetting thoughts and memories, and develop positive coping behaviors to move you forward in life. And the best way to learn new psychological skills is through specific “between sessions” assignments.

This workbook contains 12 “homework” assignment worksheets to help you understand how trauma has affected you and to learn specific techniques to deal with your symptoms and immediate concerns. It does not include every technique that is available, but rather acts as a starting point for you to understand your trauma and begin the recovery process.

It is important that you communicate with your therapist about what helps and what does not. At the bottom of each worksheet, you will find a section called “Reflections on this Exercise,” which will be particularly helpful for you to summarize what you learned and let your counselor or therapist know what direction to steer your treatment.

Recovering from trauma can take time and it will certainly require some effort. Above all, I recommend that you build a supportive network of family, friends, and professionals who can help you throughout your journey.

-Angela M. Doel, M.S.

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What is the Nature of Your Trauma?

Objective

To identify the specific nature of your trauma.

What to Know

Prolonged illness, homelessness, or witnessing a terrifying event are all examples of traumatic situations. Trauma can be a single event (car accident, sexual assault, or natural disaster) or repeated events (childhood abuse and neglect). It can be chronic (combat, ongoing domestic violence, imprisonment). Some researchers believe any experience – and how it is perceived – that is stressful enough to leave you feeling helpless, powerless, out of control, overwhelmed, or profoundly unsafe can be considered traumatic.

Even though you have experienced trauma, you can move forward with your life. You can grow, become resilient, and have a meaningful life. Your life does not end because of trauma. The first step is to understand trauma and its consequences. In this worksheet, you will begin to explore your trauma history.

What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Were you directly exposed to a traumatic experience? Yes / No

If yes, explain. _____

Were you a witness to a traumatic event/experience? Yes / No

If yes, explain. _____

Were you told about it by a loved one? Yes / No

If yes, explain. _____

Were you indirectly exposed to trauma? Yes / No

If yes, explain. _____

Were you repeatedly exposed to trauma? Yes / No

If yes, explain. _____

What is the nature of your trauma? Check off the statements that apply to you.

_____ physical assault (held at gunpoint, injured in a fight, attacked with a weapon, etc.)

_____ serious illness or extended hospitalization

_____ military combat

_____ sexual abuse

_____ car accident

_____ serious work-related accident

_____ child abuse or neglect

_____ natural disaster

_____unemployment

_____ homelessness

_____ refugee situation

_____ job loss

_____ financial crash

_____ sudden and unexpected death of a loved one

Other (describe):

If you are able, describe what happened.

[illegible]

Below is a list of problems that people sometimes have in response to trauma. Write down the appropriate number to indicate how much you have been bothered by the problem in the past month.

0 = not at all bothered

1 = a little bit bothered

2 = moderately bothered

3 = bothered quite a bit

4 = extremely bothered

_____ Repeated disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of the stressful experience.

_____ Repeated, disturbing dreams or nightmares.

_____ Suddenly acting or feeling as if the traumatic experience is happening again.

_____ Feeling very upset when something reminds you of the traumatic experience.

_____ Having physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating) when something reminds you of the experience.

_____ Avoiding thinking about or talking about the experience or avoiding having feelings related to it.

_____ Avoiding activities or situations because they remind you of the experience.

_____ Trouble remembering important parts of the experience.

_____ Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy.

_____ Feeling distant or cut off from other people.

_____ Feeling emotionally numb or unable to have loving feelings for others.

_____ Feeling as if your future will somehow be cut short.

_____ Trouble falling or staying asleep.

_____ Feeling irritable or having angry outbursts.

_____ Difficulty concentrating.

_____ Being "super alert," watchful, or on guard.

_____ Feeling jumpy or easily startled.

_____ **Add up your score**

If you scored between 0-18, these symptoms following a trauma may not be impacting your daily life.

If you scored between 19-40, your trauma-related symptoms have a minimal effect on your life.

If you scored between 41-60, your trauma-related symptoms have a moderate effect on your life.

If you scored 61 points or more, your trauma-related symptoms severely impact your life.

How do your symptoms disrupt your life? How do they affect your personal, social, professional, or family life? Be specific.

Have you noticed any changes in your habits or behavior?

How long after the trauma have you had these problems? _____

What are the 2-3 symptoms you find most distressing? _____

How are you coping with your symptoms? Be specific.

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Facing a Trauma

Objective

To identify how avoiding things related to trauma has affected your life and develop ways to face your distressing thoughts and feelings.

What to Know

Did you know that approximately 61% of men and 51% of women have experienced at least one traumatic event in their lifetime, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs? There are many kinds of trauma, and no two people will react in the same way to a given traumatic event. Accidents, death, war, loss, sexual assault, and other violent acts are easily seen as major traumas, but many people experience ongoing distress related to less “obvious” traumas, including neglect, divorce, emotional abandonment, verbal abuse, chronic criticism, bullying, job loss, and so on, whose impact tends to be minimized in our culture.

Memories and feelings associated with *any* type of trauma can linger for weeks, months, years, and even a lifetime, unless they are addressed and processed. What does it mean to process trauma? Experts agree the one thing you should *not* do is avoid the thoughts and feelings associated with trauma. Facing the memories and feelings associated with trauma can be challenging and should be done cautiously and thoughtfully, but the payoff is a clear mind, lighter heart, and genuine healing – leading to a more fulfilling and authentic life.

This worksheet is designed to help you identify how trauma affects your daily life and gives you tools and resources to face your thoughts and feelings even though they may be disturbing.

What to Do

In the space below, write a summary of a traumatic situation that is currently troubling you and you find yourself not wanting to think about. Just share the facts.

What do you do to *avoid* the unpleasant feelings related to your trauma? For instance, overeating, abusing drugs or alcohol, numbing out, avoiding talking about it, getting angry at yourself, lashing out at others, and so on.

What are your *fears* when you think about remembering and working on your trauma on your own or in therapy? For instance, “I’d go crazy,” “I’d lose it,” “I’d start to cry and never be able to stop,” “I’d be so angry I’d want to kill people,” “I wouldn’t be able to function,” and so on.

Identifying and acknowledging the depth of the impact of trauma on your life is an important first step. Most experts recommend working with a therapist or counselor familiar with trauma recovery to see if you suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or another psychological disorder.

Here are some ways to cope with traumatic memories instead of avoiding them. Identify ones that might work for you.

Find someone to talk to. If you tend to avoid talking or thinking about your trauma, you might be making matters worse. Know you are not alone. It is okay to ask for help. Sharing your feelings and concerns and, if/when you are ready, your past experiences, takes courage but the

benefits are worth it. If your symptoms are severe, please find a licensed mental health professional who has experience working with trauma.

Practice mindful breathing. Pay attention in a nonjudgmental way to your breath. Notice inhales and exhales, and where you feel the air enters—the nose or mouth? Notice the rise and fall of your chest and belly. Release any worry or judgment. If your mind wanders, bring it back to the breath. There are many apps, YouTube videos, and other resources available to help you learn and practice mindful breathing. Studies show that deep, slow, diaphragmatic breathing (abdominal breathing) can “trick” the brain into thinking you are relaxed, lowering your “fight-or-flight” reactions. NOTE: If focusing on your breath is triggering traumatic memories, shift your focus to something outside yourself such as colors, sounds, or objects in the environment.

Learn meditation. There are many kinds of meditation you can learn—some involve repeating a mantra, simple sound, or phrase to yourself while sitting in a comfortable position with your eyes closed. Some people like to think the word “peace,” “calm,” or “relax.” Some forms of meditation do not require you to close your eyes, which can be uncomfortable for some people. Apps include www.insighttimer.com, www.calm.com, or www.headspace.com.

Practice yoga. Researchers found that trauma and associated memories can be stored in our bodies and cause distress. Yoga offers the opportunity to move safely and gently through various positions and stretches, which can help release stuck emotions and help you become more aware of the connection between your mind and body—leading you to feel stronger and more empowered.

Find a practitioner that is trained in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapy. This is an effective treatment in helping people process and release traumatic memories. You will work with a trained therapist who gives you specific verbal instructions, using sounds or lights, to guide you to “relocate” memories from one part of the brain to another. This process can help you experience the memories as actually being in the past, so they no longer interfere with your life.

Attend a support group for trauma survivors. Many communities offer support groups through local hospitals, mental health centers, or religious institutions. Meetups or self-help groups for survivors can also be helpful. Breaking through the isolation and feeling less alone are known to be key elements of recovering from trauma.

Are you interested in trying any of the above suggestions? Why or why not?

Choose one to try. What will you do?

Reflections on This Exercise

What did you learn from this exercise that you did not know before?

What are some remaining fears and worries about facing your trauma?

How motivated are you to work on facing your trauma? What do you think you will gain by receiving help?

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What else can you do to make progress in this area?

Talking About Trauma

Objective

To create a plan for dealing with memories and feelings associated with the trauma.

What to Know

Memories and feelings associated with trauma can linger for weeks, months, years, and even a lifetime—unless they are addressed and processed. Along with memories and feelings, there are other things you might experience related to trauma. Check off the statements that apply to you.

- ☐ anxiety, fear, or worry about your safety or the safety of others
- ☐ worry the event will happen again
- ☐ decreased attention, focus, or concentration
- ☐ change in job performance
- ☐ irritability with others
- ☐ angry outbursts or aggression
- ☐ withdrawal from people or activities
- ☐ avoidance of events or activities
- ☐ physical problems, like headaches, stomachaches, or chest pains
- ☐ constant thinking about or talking about the event and/or the details of what happened
- ☐ over- or under-reacting to bells, physical contact, doors slamming, sirens, bright lights, or sudden movement
- ☐ nightmares or disturbing memories
- ☐ sleep problems (for example, you cannot fall asleep, or you frequently wake up during the night)
- ☐ avoidance of places that remind you of the trauma
- ☐ emotional numbness – you have a hard time feeling *anything*

This worksheet is designed to help you identify how trauma affected you, and you will create a plan to help you process the thoughts and feelings associated with what happened.

What to Do

Write a summary of the traumatic situation. Just share the facts.

What triggers you or causes you to react strongly?

What feelings come up when you are triggered? For instance, sadness, fear, guilt, shame, anger, worry, and so on.

What do you do to *avoid* being triggered? For instance, lash out at others, numb out by scrolling through social media, and so on.

The next page will help you create a plan to cope when you have thoughts, sensations, and memories of the trauma.

_____’s Coping Plan

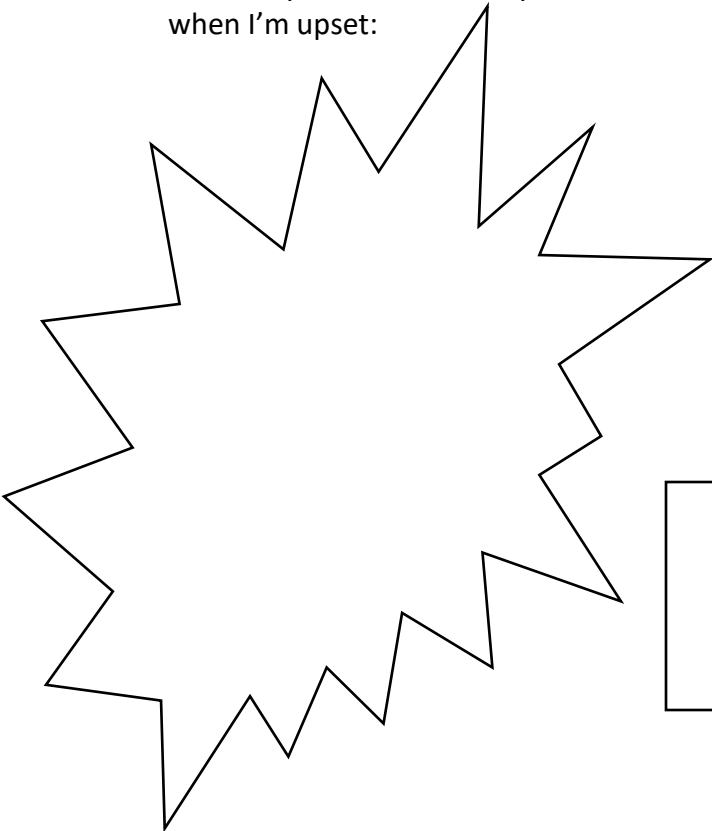
I know I’m triggered when I:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Things that help me when I’m triggered:

<div></div>

Good ways I can distract myself
when I’m upset:



Safe people I can reach out to (name, phone #):

<div></div>

How I keep myself safe:

<div></div>

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Understanding How Trauma Impacts Trust

Objective

To identify how to rebuild trust after trauma.

What to Know

After trauma, it is normal to have problems with trust. Underneath trust is a belief that others are reliable and responsible. When you develop basic trust, you grow as a healthy, self-reliant person with good self-esteem. You trust yourself and others.

Over the course of your life, people hurt you, take advantage of you, and do other harmful things, all of which can lead you to disbelieve, distrust, doubt, and become cynical or skeptical. These are normal reactions but difficult to live with as you try to maintain healthy, productive relationships.

To rebuild trust, you first need to become aware of why you stopped trusting. This worksheet will help you identify how to rebuild trust.

What to Do

Think about situations with people that influenced your trust. Put a check next to the items below that apply to you. Someone:

☐ hurt or attacked you (physically and/or emotionally).

☐ stabbed you in the back when you least expected it.

☐ abandoned you in a dangerous situation.

☐ took advantage of you.

☐ cheated on you.

☐ was disloyal by showing an absence of allegiance, devotion, obligation, or faith.

☐ stole important things from you.

☐ was deceitful by deliberately misleading you.

☐ took credit for your achievements.

☐ lied.

☐ was unfaithful in different situations.

☐ was dishonest by breaking rules to gain an unfair advantage in a competitive situation.

☐ failed to help when you needed it.

☐ made mistakes.

__disappointed you.

__made promises they failed to keep.

__showed a lack of concern for your feelings and needs.

__forgot things that were important (like an anniversary or birthday).

__kept secrets.

Write down other situations that happened to you.

Choose one of the above situations, circle it, and answer the following questions.

What did you think while it was happening?

What did you feel when it was happening?

What did you do when it was happening?

What would you do now?

Name the people in your life with whom you have concerns about trust.

On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do I feel I can trust _____ : _____
(where 1 = I cannot trust this person at all, to 10 = I trust this person completely)

Why?

On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do I feel I can trust _____ : _____
(where 1 = I cannot trust this person at all, to 10 = I trust this person completely)

Why?

On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do I feel I can trust _____ : _____
(where 1 = I cannot trust this person at all, to 10 = I trust this person completely)

Why?

On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do I feel I can trust _____ : _____
(where 1 = I cannot trust this person at all, to 10 = I trust this person completely)

Why?

Describe a situation when one of the above people hurt you.

How did you feel?

Can you tell the person how deeply you were hurt? Why or why not?

If you can have a conversation with this person, let them know what you need to rebuild trust.
Write about your experience.

Can you forgive this person? Why or why not?

Can you trust this person again? Explain.

Can you forgive yourself? Some people think if they were more clever or wise, this would not have happened to them. Is this true for you? Explain.

How will you know you have changed your feelings and behaviors regarding trust? Describe.

What can others do to support you as you move toward trust and away from trauma?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Creating Your Safe Place

Objective

To decrease distress and increase relaxation using the 'Creating Your Safe Place' relaxation technique.

What to Know

This 20-minute audio will help you calm down, relax, and imagine a safe place.

[Click here to listen to this audio.](#)

Right click the link to download the audio to your computer, and from there you can transfer it to a smartphone or other audio player. Use it whenever you feel distressed.

Use the following chart to record your daily relaxation practice. Make several copies of this chart and keep a record of the time you spend practicing this technique until it becomes a habit. You want it to become routine—something you do without thinking, like brushing your teeth. It is also useful to note your general mood, both before and after, your daily relaxation exercise.

Day	Time	Minutes you meditated	Mood before	Mood after
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

Did this activity help you calm down and feel relaxed? Why or why not?

Dealing with Frequent Nightmares

Objective

To identify the possible causes of your frequent nightmares and use positive imagery rehearsal to reduce their occurrence.

What to Know

While you may think frequent nightmares are a problem that occurs mostly with children, between 2-8% of adults say that they suffer from nightmares. This can include frequently waking up during the night, usually during the second half of the sleeping period, or during naps, and recalling with vivid detail a disturbing or frightening dream. These dreams often involve scary images or themes that threaten one's survival or safety.

There are various reasons that some adults have frequent nightmares, including sleep apnea and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Certain medications, including anti-depressants and medication for high blood pressure, can trigger nightmares. Other substances such as alcohol or recreational drugs can also cause frequent nightmares. If you are currently taking medication or using substances, consult a physician to determine if nightmares are a side effect. If you experience delusions or hallucinations during the day, it is an indication you should get a full evaluation by a qualified psychiatrist to address your nightmares.

Nightmares can reflect unresolved or current stresses that occur during the day. They can also reflect recent or past trauma, in which you relive an event in your sleep, perhaps as a way for your mind to understand or come to terms with trauma. Frequent nightmares can become habitual. That is, anything the mind does repeatedly can become reinforced and strengthened, making it hard to break the pattern. The experience of ongoing nightmares can lead not only to disrupted sleep but to low energy, moodiness, depression, anxiety, and poor performance at school or at work.

This worksheet will help you identify the possible causes of your frequent nightmares and to see if positive imagery rehearsal can help reduce their occurrence.

What to Do

Indicate the overall frequency of your nightmares to the best of your ability—every night? 3-6 times/week? Weekly? Bi-weekly? Monthly?

Indicate the overall severity of your nightmares to the best of your ability, where 0 = mild, 3 = moderate, 5 = severe: _____

How have nightmares negatively affected your life? Be as detailed as you can.

What are the recurring themes or images, if any, that you experience during your nightmares?

Research have found that learning relaxation exercises, meditating, or listening to pleasant, guided imagery audio recordings before you go to sleep can help.

Newer approaches to dealing with chronic nightmares include Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT), where you think about images you would like to dream about before you go to bed. This is thought to “break the habit” of recurrent nightmares. Sometimes a nightmare can become more neutral or positive. Sometimes a nightmare can disappear forever.

Please note: If you are having nightmares because of trauma (recent or past), please work with a qualified therapist to address your concerns and decide whether IRT is an appropriate treatment for you.

If you would like to practice IRT by yourself, try the following:

Choose one recurring nightmare that you would like to work with to start your IRT practice. Do not choose one that involves reliving a traumatic event. Instead, think of one that is troubling but not terrifying. Focus on one nightmare at a time until it is resolved. Continue the practice for at least a week *after* each recurring nightmare goes away.

What nightmare would you like to work on to start? Describe it.

Create a different ending to the story of your nightmare. Rewrite your dream! Make the ending calm, peaceful, positive, or neutral, as opposed to another violent or negative ending.

Before you fall asleep every night, rehearse or visualize the same dream with your new ending. Record your experiences below. You may repeat this process with additional nightmares.

Reflections on This Exercise

Use a journal or sketch pad to keep track of your ongoing IRT work or other tools you are using to cope with frequent nightmares. Write your ideas here.

Which of the nightmares you are working with were the easiest to resolve or diminish in intensity or frequency?

Whom can you talk to about the nightmares that might be more difficult to resolve on your own? Write down the names of friends, trusted mentors, or mental health professionals who might help.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Understanding the Window of Tolerance

Objective

To expand your window of tolerance and identify ways to manage hyperarousal and hypoarousal.

What to Know

You can more easily cope with stressors and triggers when you can manage your emotions. If you struggle to manage the anxiety, anger, or pain brought on by everyday stressors, it is helpful to understand “the window of tolerance,” a concept originally developed by Dr. Dan Siegel. This refers to the optimal zone of arousal for you to function in a healthy manner day-to-day. If you learn to successfully operate within this window, you can begin to effectively manage and cope with emotions.

If you have a history of trauma, it can be even more difficult to stay present and calm – and you may have a very narrow window of tolerance. Daily stressors and triggers may frequently push you out of your window of tolerance. Minor stressors may cause you to get angry, numb out, or feel anxious – leading to hyperarousal or hypoarousal. Your window of tolerance might close altogether when you are:

- hungry or dehydrated
- exhausted
- feeling lonely or isolated
- in physical pain
- threatened
- scared
- reminded of painful memories

What is Hyperarousal? Known as the “fight, flight, or freeze response,” it is a heightened state of activation and energy. Your nervous system kicks into high alert even when there is no danger. You may be triggered by a perceived threat, traumatic memories, or certain emotions. Check off any of the following symptoms of hyperarousal you have experienced.

- ☐ angry outbursts
- ☐ feeling out of control
- ☐ impulsive or risky behavior
- ☐ overwhelming anxiety
- ☐ problems sleeping
- ☐ inability to focus or concentrate

- ☐ racing thoughts
- ☐ emotional overwhelm
- ☐ feeling unsafe
- ☐ panic
- ☐ tight or tense muscles
- ☐ defensiveness
- ☐ inability to make meaningful connections with others
- ☐ desire to run away
- ☐ lashing out at others
- ☐ other? _____

When do you find yourself hyperaroused?

What is Hypoarousal? Known as the “shutdown” or “collapse” response, this state can be triggered by feeling threatened, recalling traumatic memories, or experiencing emotions associated with past trauma. Check off any of the following symptoms of hypoarousal you have experienced.

- ☐ binge watching shows
- ☐ depression
- ☐ lack of feelings, energy, and feeling “dead” inside
- ☐ feeling disconnected
- ☐ inability to say “no”
- ☐ ashamed
- ☐ binge eating episodes
- ☐ numbness or emptiness
- ☐ spacing out
- ☐ inability to be present or stay present with your feelings
- ☐ excessive drug or alcohol use

- ____ staring blankly
- ____ inability to speak
- ____ feeling like you are outside your body or that your surroundings are “unreal”
- ____ socially withdrawn
- ____ other? _____

When do you find yourself hypoaroused?

When you are in your window of tolerance, you may feel pressure or stress, but it does not bother you. You will know you are in your window when you can:

- effectively cope with what is happening in the moment.
- control your impulses.
- connect with others.
- tolerate your emotions.
- self-soothe in healthy ways.
- think and feel at the same time.
- adjust your reactions to fit situations.
- learn and process new information.

When do you find yourself in your window of tolerance?

Depending on whether you are experiencing hypo- or hyperarousal, you can use different strategies to suit your needs.

When you are hypoaroused, try:

- physical movement.
- describing three things you see in your surroundings in full detail.
- smelling essential oils or other strong aromas.
- painting, drawing, or engaging in other artistic activities.
- mindfully eating crunchy food.
- stretching or doing yoga.
- using a heavy weighted blanket.

- doing any activity that fully engages your senses.

When you are hyperaroused, try:

- using diaphragmatic breathing (slow, deep breaths).
- shaking or stomping out excess energy.
- doing heavy work like lifting objects or pushups.
- exercising.
- playing a team sport.
- drinking from a straw.
- meditating.
- using any healthy strategy to release anger.

To expand your window of tolerance and increase your capacity to experience emotions, you first must recognize when you are experiencing emotions outside your tolerable zone. Then you can identify how you feel and how your emotions impact your body. You can begin to manage your window of tolerance by:

- becoming aware of how you feel and symptoms you are experiencing.
- learning techniques for regulating intense emotions.
- using strategies to tolerate discomfort and distress.

What to Do

Over the next two weeks, use the following techniques (or any of the strategies described above) when you find yourself outside your window of tolerance.

- Breathwork
- Guided Imagery – imagine yourself on a swing, paying attention to the feeling of movement
- Positive Containment Imagery – place the intrusive thoughts or images in a chest or other container and lock it securely until you are ready to process them
- Safe Place Imagery – imagine yourself in a real or imaginary place where you feel calm and content

Note the date and whether you were hyper- or hypoaroused. Use a rating scale from 0-10 to rate your level of hyper/hypoarousal before and after you use a tool or technique, where 0 = extremely hypoaroused, and 10 = extremely hyperaroused. Describe your feelings and how they are impacting your physical body. Describe the technique you use or activity you engage in to move back into your window of tolerance. Finally, describe whether the technique or tool was effective.

Date	Hyper- or hypoaroused?	Feelings	Impact on body	Level before	Technique used	Effective? Y / N	Level after

Did this exercise help you expand your window of tolerance and identify ways to manage hyperarousal and hypoarousal? Why or why not?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Understanding Your Boundaries

Objective

To identify your boundary issues and use strategies to feel more empowered by setting limits, protecting yourself when you are vulnerable, and taking safe risks.

What to Know

Setting interpersonal boundaries is an important part of establishing your identity and it is an essential aspect of mental health and wellbeing. Boundaries are like a semipermeable membrane, and you create them by the limits you set, based on what you will tolerate. You set limits around people and time, that is, limits around who you allow into your life and limits around what takes up your attention and time. Boundaries can be physical or emotional, and they can range from loose to rigid, with healthy boundaries falling somewhere in between. If you lack appropriate boundaries, you may struggle with telling others how you feel (fear of rejection or ridicule), worry how others perceive you (desire to people-please), strive to make everyone happy (at work, school, home, and so on). You may even stay in unhealthy relationships, where you feel trapped, overwhelmed, or manipulated.

Mental health depends on understanding your boundaries with everyone in your life. After trauma, boundaries may shift and change.

Boundaries let others know what is and what is not okay or acceptable, so you feel respected and safe. This worksheet will help you identify your boundary issues and learn strategies for feeling more empowered by setting limits, protecting yourself when you are vulnerable, and taking safe risks.

What to Do

Are you aware of some looseness in your boundaries? If so, describe.

Perhaps your boundaries are too rigid, leaving you isolated and cut off from others. Are you aware of some rigidity in your boundaries? If so, describe.

Describe a time when your boundaries were either too loose or too rigid.

You can start to be proactive in setting boundaries. Healthy boundaries can be flexible when needed. They are fluid, able to adjust to change and unexpected events. Here are some strategies you can use.

- Learn ways to say NO.
- Learn ways to say YES.
- When it is MAYBE, take some time to consider your thoughts and feelings before you respond.
- Know how you expect to be treated.
- Understand that the timing of your responses is important.
- Say, in different ways, that you will not tolerate poor treatment.
- Be clear and firm about how you prefer to be treated.
- Be respectful, thoughtful, and responsible when setting boundaries.
- You can say, "I don't want to talk about it right now," "I don't need your feedback," "I need time for myself," or, "I prefer not to go out after work for a drink."
- Respect other people's boundaries, even if you do not agree with them.
- If your boundaries are incompatible with people you are close with, find a compromise.

The following are statements that reflect a positive approach to personal boundaries. Rate each statement from 1 to 3, with 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, and 3 = always. If a statement does not apply to you, write NA.

- ___ I trust others by observing their behavior over time.
- ___ I look to myself first to fulfill my personal needs.
- ___ I share my thoughts and feelings with people I trust.
- ___ I seek emotional intimacy with the people who care about me.
- ___ I seek physical intimacy only in trusting and caring relationships.
- ___ I make my own decisions about my relationships.
- ___ I focus on my own needs and goals without being influenced by others.
- ___ I consider the consequences of my decisions and how they affect others.
- ___ I do not allow people to take advantage of me.
- ___ I maintain my personal values no matter what other people say or believe.
- ___ I can take care of myself when I feel emotionally vulnerable.
- ___ I am aware when someone infringes on my rights.
- ___ I can say 'no' if I feel that someone is asking for something I do not wish to give.

- ____ I am aware of the personal boundaries of others and respect them.
- ____ I don't take advantage of others.
- ____ I don't change my opinions or do something against my values to get someone to like me.
- ____ I don't allow people to take advantage of my time or money.
- ____ I trust the decisions I make about my relationships.
- ____ When in doubt, I seek advice from people I trust, but I still make up my own mind.
- ____ I have a clear idea about who I am and what I want from life.
- ____ I recognize that people are not "mind readers" and I clearly communicate my needs and feelings.
- ____ I can be assertive and still consider the rights and needs of others.

____ **Total score**

If your score is 40 or less, you probably need to work on your boundaries.

If you scored 41 or above, you may need to work on some areas, but in general you have healthy boundaries in place.

Review your answers and pick one area of your personal boundaries you would like to work on. In the space below, describe an incident that illustrates this problem.

Now describe how you would behave differently in this situation to reflect healthier personal boundaries.

What else can you do to strengthen your boundaries?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Coping with Memory Problems Following Trauma

Objective

To use strategies for accessing memories and monitor your “memory bugs.”

What to Know

You may be haunted by recurrent, involuntary, intrusive, and distressing memories of a traumatic event. The memories might be even more upsetting than the event itself. Becoming aware of your memory issues, knowing they will go away, and having the patience to work through them allow you to move forward with your life.

Experiences result in two types of memory. One is conscious and includes verbally accessible sensory information. The second type is unconscious and is automatically retrieved when you are in a situation like the trauma.

Researchers have identified several types of memory problems following a trauma:

- **Hypermnnesia** is a vivid or almost total recall of the past. You may display an extraordinary ability to recall details about specific events.
- **Hypomnesia** (amnesia) refers to difficulty remembering the past. Lacunar amnesia is the loss of memory about one specific event.
- **Retrograde amnesia** (RA) is a loss of access to memories of events that occurred or information that was learned before the trauma.
- **Anterograde amnesia** is a loss of the ability to create new memories after the event that caused amnesia. Long-term memories from before the event usually remain intact.
- **Dissociative amnesia** involves the inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness.
- **Confabulation** is the production of fabricated, distorted, or misinterpreted memories without the conscious intention to deceive.
- **Allomnesia** is an illusion of memory, or distorted memories, of something in the past that really happened, but it is distorted.
- **Pseudomonas** (hallucinations of memories) refers to memories of something that did not happen.
- **False memory** is a phenomenon where you recall something that did not happen, or your memories are very different from the way it happened.
- **Flashbacks** (involuntary recurrent memory) are vivid experiences in which you relive some aspects of a traumatic event or feel as if it is happening right now.

In the weeks after a trauma, intrusive memories are common. Over time, intrusions become less frequent and distressing.

Memory has many functions, and it is vital for maintaining your identity. Memory issues related to trauma are often reflected in your perception of your identity. This worksheet will help remind yourself who you are by remembering your life before the trauma.

What to Do

The following are a series of activities that include strategies for coping with memory problems.

When you experience memory problems, go to a safe place, and ask yourself the following questions. Write down your answers in the left column. After you answer all the questions, take a break, and then answer the same questions thinking of your present circumstances.

1. What adjectives would you use to describe yourself? Write at least ten positive or neutral adjectives.

Before the Trauma	After the Trauma

2. What activities did you enjoy? What activities didn't you enjoy?

Before the Trauma	After the Trauma

3. Where did you like going? What places did you avoid?

Before the Trauma	After the Trauma

4. What did you like to eat?

Before the Trauma	After the Trauma

5. How did you spend your free time? Whom did you spend your time with?

Before the Trauma	After the Trauma

Pick five ordinary objects (photos, pencils, mugs, books, and so on) in your home. For each object, write a short account of how you got it and who gave it to you (or, maybe, you bought it yourself). Remember the details. Where do memories of this object take you? Do you have any other associations when you look at the object? What are they? How do your thoughts make you feel? What bodily sensations do you have? Do this activity once per week, using a different set of objects each time.

Object 1: _____

Object 2: _____

Object 3: _____

Object 4: _____

Object 5: _____

Choose two or three close friends and ask them to tell you all about you. Summarize their answers below.

Visiting places from earlier in your life can help you retrieve memories you have not recalled for many years, vividly and in detail. For each place you visit, write about it. Focus on your senses (smells, sights, sounds, colors). Compare your perception of the place now with how you remember it.

Place: _____

Place: _____

Place: _____

Think about a time in your life and concentrate on your sensations and experiences.

Talk to parents, siblings, old friends, and former teachers about ideas and attitudes you had.
Write down their responses.

Person you talked to: _____

Person you talked to: _____

Person you talked to: _____

If you are ready, visit the place(s) associated with the traumatic memory. Write about the visit.

Finally, monitor your memory bugs. A memory bug, or a memory leak, is a disturbance or glitch, a short-lived fault, in your memory. Every time you experience a memory problem write it down on the following chart for 21 days. At the end of the exercise, review the entries and see if you can spot patterns.

Date and time	Memory glitch	Situation	Thoughts	Emotions	Physical sensations

Date and time	Memory glitch	Situation	Thoughts	Emotions	Physical sensations

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Understanding and Treating Depersonalization

Objective

To understand how depersonalization is affecting your life and identify techniques to address it.

What to Know

Depersonalization occurs when you perceive yourself as ‘unreal,’ and you may experience this if you are anxious or stressed. Chronic depersonalization can occur if you experienced trauma, or if you have been exposed to prolonged stress or anxiety. It can also be a symptom of several other disorders. It is characterized by a change in the perception or experience of the self, where you feel detached from—as if you are an outside observer of—your mental processes or body (e.g., feeling as if you are in a dream).

If you experienced intense stress or trauma, you may experience one or more of the following:

- a split between your mind and body—sensations, feelings, emotions, or behaviors feel like they are not your own
- feeling stiff, like a robot or machine; feeling waxy and disoriented in space and time
- detachment within your personality, as if different parts of you do not fit with each other
- feeling like you are watching your life being lived without you taking part in it
- feeling you have changed so much that this new person is not you
- your name might seem strange, not belonging to you when somebody calls you
- using the stereotypical perception of the self as an example of some defining social category, e.g., soldier, truck driver, or housewife
- not understanding your symptoms—they do not make sense

What to Do

Read through the following statements and mark each statement with either “Yes” if it is true for you, or “No” if it is not true for you. For each statement you marked “yes,” choose the appropriate number in the Frequency and Duration columns.

	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = often, 3 = very often, 4 = all the time	Duration 1 = several seconds, 2 = several minutes, 3 = a few hours, 4 = one day, 5 = several days, 6 = more than one week
1	I feel hollow and empty inside.				
2	I’ve lost my sense of myself.				

3	I feel like I'm observing myself from the outside, looking in.				
4	I feel like an automaton or robot.				
5	My head feels empty, without thoughts.				
6	I stopped laughing, crying, and feeling pain as I used to.				
7	My body feels very light.				
8	I don't feel anything in dangerous situations.				
9	I pay a lot of attention to my bodily sensations and/or my thoughts.				
10	My body and mind seem disconnected.				
11	I don't enjoy anything, have no favorite foods, music, or activities.				
12	Parts of my body are not mine.				
13	Suddenly, I feel strange and detached.				
14	I feel flat and lifeless.				
15	My belly is tight.				
16	Familiar voices feel unreal.				
17	I feel parts of my body getting larger or smaller.				
18	I hallucinate.				
19	I am suicidal.				
20	I feel like hurting other people and being vengeful.				
21	When I look at my reflection in the mirror, I see another person.				
22	My perceptions of time and space have changed.				
23	I have sleeping problems or nightmares.				
24	I fear I might be going crazy.				

25	I don't feel any affection toward my family and friends.				
26	I feel like I'm outside my body.				
27	I must touch myself to feel real.				
28	I feel I have a physical illness that is untreated.				
29	I don't understand myself.				
30.	I am so alert, like I have overdosed on caffeine.				

If you answered YES to statements 2, 3, 6, 10, 13, 16, 22, 25, 26, and 28, give yourself 10 points for each answer.

If you answered YES to statements 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 29, and 30, give yourself 20 points for each answer.

If you answered YES to statements 8, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 27, give yourself 30 points for each answer.

Add up your score: _____

Now, for each frequency and duration mark, add as many points to the score as the number you put down in frequency and duration columns. For example, if you answered YES to statement 25, that is 10 points, you marked frequency as 3, and duration as 2. In total that is $10+3+2=15$ points for statement 25. Do this for all 30 statements.

Total Score: _____

If your score is equal to or less than 200, then your trauma may be classified as MILD.

If your score is between 200 and 300, then your trauma may be classified as MEDIUM.

If your score is higher than 300, then your trauma may be classified as SEVERE.

Please note this questionnaire is neither the only one nor the best. Please consult other questionnaires.

Treatment for Depersonalization

Treatment depends on the underlying cause(s), and whether your depersonalization symptoms are physical or psychological. If depersonalization is a symptom of neurological disease, then diagnosis and treatment of the specific disease is the first approach. Contact your physician. Also, if your score indicates your trauma is severe, please seek help from a mental health professional as soon as possible.

If your depersonalization is mild to medium, you may try some of the following strategies and activities.

1. Stay grounded. During depersonalization, you might experience a wide range of thoughts and feelings. Some odd, while some will feel familiar and connected to the events of your daily life. Some will be unfamiliar, upsetting, or strange to you. Mastering, containing, regulating, and communicating your feelings in an appropriate way might take time and learning, but once these skills are acquired, you will feel empowered and no longer disconnected.

2. Nurture yourself. What are your physical and emotional needs? When things are difficult, imagine you are taking care of someone important to you. Eat, sleep, exercise, and fulfill all your needs and wishes. A spiritual practice may help to sustain you daily.

3. Maintain your boundaries. Boundaries maintain your personal integrity. You might already know you have the right to say “no” when your boundaries are crossed. There are probably things you do not want to do, experience, or communicate at that moment and at that place and time. Respectfully, kindly, and firmly say, “No.” Others might invade your space with the best of intentions, but you do not have to accept this. You dictate your space and determine what goes in and out of that space. When you maintain your boundaries, you can cope with different people and situations more effectively—feeling you have more power and control in situations.

4. Be aware of your thoughts and emotions. Learn how your sensory self responds to different situations. Label those experiences. Remember your past experiences with each emotion. Know what triggers them. Are you satisfied with your reactions and experiences? Are you frustrated you cannot adequately express yourself? What else do you need to learn?

5. Create a strong support system. These are the people who know, encourage, and nurture you. They like you for who you are, and they are willing to help you become your best self—people you can turn to just to listen and be there for you. They are the opposite of people who put you down, discourage you, manipulate you, and encourage you to be impulsive, revengeful, or hopeless.

6. Create a psychological toolbox. Where can you keep your coping tools? It can be a box with pictures, drawings, poems, inspirational messages, or special memories. This is a storage place for your life management tools and strategies you develop and use to cope with past challenges. Be patient, and over time your personal “toolbox” will contain a lot! In very challenging times, you may need to seek professional help to gain a broader perspective and add more strategies to better manage a certain situation. Anything that helps you grow and become more grounded is always a welcome addition to your toolbox.

Selfie Diary

This activity can also help you overcome depersonalization. Take a selfie of yourself every day for at least ten consecutive days.

Selfie Day	Date/Time	Where were you?	What were the circumstances? Describe the situation in which you took the selfie.	When I took the selfie, I thought and felt:
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

If possible, print out your selfies and paste them on the following pages in the order in which they were taken.

<p><i>Paste selfie day 1 here.</i></p>	<p><i>Paste selfie day 2 here.</i></p>
<p><i>Paste selfie day 3 here.</i></p>	<p><i>Paste selfie day 4 here.</i></p>
<p><i>Paste selfie day 5 here.</i></p>	<p><i>Paste selfie day 6 here.</i></p>

<p><i>Paste selfie day 7 here.</i></p>	<p><i>Paste selfie day 8 here.</i></p>
<p><i>Paste selfie day 9 here.</i></p>	<p><i>Paste selfie day 10 here.</i></p>

Now, look at your selfies. Choose the one you like the most and describe it.

I took this selfie on _____ (morning/afternoon/evening/night) while I was
 _____. I remember feeling _____.

Looking at this selfie, I see myself as _____ and I
 feel _____. I choose this selfie as my favorite because
 _____.

Now, choose the one you like the least and describe it.

I took this selfie on _____ (morning/afternoon/evening/night) while I was
 _____. I remember feeling _____.

Looking at this selfie, I see myself as _____ and I

feel _____. I choose this selfie as my favorite because _____.

Continue taking selfies (one a day!). Copy the table and paste sheets and fill in the information about each selfie. On every tenth day, write two short descriptive paragraphs, one for your favorite selfie and one for your least favorite.

Vigorous Physical Activity

Another approach to dealing with depersonalization is engaging in vigorous physical activity for which you are medically fit. Do this every other day for at least ten days or until you have done five activities. It is important to keep regularity in the rhythm of your activities. It does not have to be the same activity each time. After completing each activity, fill in the following chart.

Activity Date	Type of activity and how long?	After completing the activity, my body and my muscles feel:	After completing the activity, I think and I feel:
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Answer the following questions.

Which type of activity made you feel most yourself? _____

Which type of activity made you feel like a stranger? _____

What sensations did you experience during this activity? _____

Did you do the activity alone or you were with someone? _____

If you had company, how did the presence of the other person(s) make you feel? _____

Which of the activities you did would you consider doing on a regular basis? Why? _____

If you did the same activity every time, why? _____

What other activities would you consider doing? _____

Bathroom Exercise

To address symptoms of depersonalization, experts suggest you take a shower or bath every day for at least ten consecutive days. While doing so, pay attention to your thoughts and feelings before and after bathing. Every time you towel yourself dry, report to yourself out loud which part of your body you are towelings. For example, "I am towelings my left leg." Pay attention to body sensations as you are doing this. Describe the sensations, including what you are thinking and feeling. Write this information down in the following chart.

	Before taking the shower/bath			After taking the shower/bath		
	Bodily sensations	Thoughts	Feelings	Bodily sensations	Thoughts	Feelings
Day 1						
Day 2						
Day 3						
Day 4						
Day 5						
Day 6						
Day 7						
Day 8						
Day 9						
Day 10						

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Learned Optimism Following Trauma

Objective

To practice strategies for becoming more optimistic, including applying the “ABCDE” technique.

What to Know

Optimism is an attitude characterized by hope and confidence in success and a positive future. It is the belief, faith, and self-assurance that more good things than bad things will happen in your life. When difficult things happen, optimists accept the challenge and choose to identify both resources and skills that can help them cope.

People who experience trauma and believe they have the skills to cope have a more positive outlook on life. Positive morale leads to perseverance, effective problem-solving, and healthy coping.

Learned optimism refers to developing the ability to view the world from a positive point of view. By challenging negative self-talk and replacing pessimistic thoughts with more positive ones, you can learn to become more optimistic.

- **Failure and success.** Optimists take failures and setbacks in stride. Pessimists tend to see everything – especially a challenging or negative event – as a conspiracy against them. While an optimist will always think of at least one positive reason why they should do something, a pessimist thinks of ten reasons against doing it.
- **Permanence.** Optimists believe negative or difficult events are temporary rather than permanent. They bounce back quickly from failure. Pessimists may take longer to recover – or they may never recover – and generalize while pointing to permanent causes.
- **Pervasiveness.** Optimists know how to handle helplessness, while pessimists believe that a problem in one area of life means their whole life will be ruined. Optimists allow positive events to generalize to other areas of their lives.
- **Personalization.** Optimists are confident and think critically, exploring what can be done for the better and how things can improve. Pessimists blame themselves and resort to helplessness.

This worksheet will help you practice strategies for becoming more optimistic.

What to Do

Here are some ideas to practice being more optimistic.

1. **Create a “movie” of your best life.** Include specific details, like how you look, how you feel, how you behave, where you live, and what you are doing. Spend time in your safe place every day and play this movie in your mind. This simple mental training exercise might boost your mood and influence the way you think and feel about yourself and the possibilities for your life.
2. **Self-nurture with the Inner Advocate.** As your Inner Critic starts talking, let out your Inner

Advocate, a powerful ally who believes in you, promotes you, supports you, protects you, and empowers you. Talk to yourself in the second person. Say things like, “You can do this. You are a good person. You easily make friends,” and so on. You might recall a role model who inspired you. Ask yourself, “What would ____ do and say?”

3. Write down your daily “done wells.” Recognize what you did well every day and congratulate yourself. Take a few moments every day to write about what you did well. Get in the habit of rewarding yourself, which reinforces optimism.

4. Nurture a healthy body. Optimism is easier when you feel good. Factors that interfere with having a healthy body include lack of sleep, poor eating habits, self-destructive behaviors, too little exercise, and too much stress. If you know your priorities and goals, be disciplined and “train” for them like a professional athlete. Be sure to include rest days!

5. Look for improvement and take small steps. For example, running around the block may seem small when your goal is to finish a marathon, but it is a small step in the right direction.

6. Minimize difficulties to progress. Become aware of the obstacles you may encounter. Sort them into categories: internal, external, people, situations, and so on. Do not ignore obstacles, simply look at them from a different perspective. Change your strategy and discover what you need to overcome them.

7. Focus on solutions. If you start to obsess about a problem, stop, take a break, do a U-turn, and replace problem-focused thinking with solution-focused thinking.

8. Use the ABCDE Model. According to Martin Seligman, anyone can learn optimism. He developed a simple method to respond to adversity.

Adversity – the challenging event

Belief – how you interpret the event

Consequences – the feelings and actions that result from the beliefs

Disputation – find evidence to argue or debate your interpretation of the event

Energization – follows a successful dispute

Here are the steps to follow:

- understand your current reaction and interpretation of an adverse event
- keep a journal for two days in which you note adverse events and the beliefs and consequences that followed
- return to the journal to highlight pessimism so you can dispute it
- dispute your interpretation by creating “counterevidence” to the negative beliefs
- successful disputation usually leads to energization, when you actively celebrate the process

Describe an adverse situation you recently experienced. Be specific and stick to the facts.

What were the very first words you said to yourself? What did you think?

How did it make you feel? What did you do? Be specific.

Match the consequences with the beliefs. Do they match?

There may be evidence that contradicts your beliefs. Write them down.

Describe the adverse event from a different angle. Are there discrepancies with your first description?

What positive effects did disputation have on you? Make a list.

What will you do the next time you find yourself in a similar situation?

Now, choose one of the eight suggestions described above. For two weeks practice the activity and note your experiences every day. Fill in the following chart with the date, what you did, and how you felt afterward.

Date	What you did	How you felt after

Reflections on This Exercise

Did this exercise help you become more optimistic? Why or why not?

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not at all helpful, to 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Understanding Post-Traumatic Growth

Objective

To complete an inventory identifying aspects of your post-traumatic growth (PTG).

What to Know

As you recover from trauma, you have choices. Researchers have discovered four options you face following trauma: succumbing to adversity, surviving with diminished quality of life, becoming resilient, and thriving. The concept of thriving promotes growth beyond survival, or Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG). PTG is a process of significant and often positive shifts in thinking, feeling, behaving, and relating to the world, including increases in:

- self-efficacy
- optimism
- community connectedness
- spirituality
- faith
- compassion
- family closeness
- material gain

It is the characteristics of the subjective experience of the event – rather than the event itself – that influence PTG. The following are key areas of PTG.

1. Greater appreciation for life. You may treasure moments of peace or connection you previously took for granted. You might have a renewed sense of priorities and develop an improved capacity to focus attention and resources on your most important values.

2. Strengthened spiritual beliefs. The social support received from others who share similar beliefs can help you recover. Spiritual beliefs can help you restructure your worldview.

3. Enhanced relationships. You might become warmer, more vulnerable, and closer to others. Belonging to a group, sharing, and communicating may open new doors. You may be more empathic and willing to invest more energy into your relationships.

4. Increased personal strength. Mastering adaptive coping skills can change your perception of events. The ability to accept situations that cannot be changed may open you to new experiences.

5. Discovering new options. Armed with new skills, you can find the determination to go on. Learning adaptive problem-solving skills can help you face new possibilities.

6. Increased creativity. You might find it easier to try new, creative ways of doing things. You can become more playful and appreciate different art forms. Creativity makes life more fun. You might write letters, keep a diary, draw, or sing.

This worksheet will help you identify aspects of your own PTG.

What to Do

For each statement, rate the degree to which this change has occurred in your life. Mark the statements on a scale of 1-7, where 1 = minimal/not important, to 7 = maximum/very important.

- _____ 1. I have discovered new interests.
- _____ 2. I am more optimistic than before.
- _____ 3. I have learned how to change what needed to be changed.
- _____ 4. My priorities have changed.
- _____ 5. I appreciate my own life.
- _____ 6. I can achieve closeness and intimacy with people.
- _____ 7. I am more spiritual or religious.
- _____ 8. I feel more compassion and empathy toward others.
- _____ 9. I see opportunities.
- _____ 10. I am stronger than I was.
- _____ 11. I have new meaning and purpose in my life.
- _____ 12. I am more creative in things I do.
- _____ 13. I know I can count on certain people when I need help.
- _____ 14. I discovered my strengths and passions.
- _____ 15. I identified new values.
- _____ 16. I am more aware of my worth.
- _____ 17. I believe there are good people in this world.
- _____ 18. I am more playful.
- _____ 19. Other people have noticed I am changing for the better.
- _____ 20. I know what is important in life and what is not.
- _____ 21. I have more faith than before.
- _____ 22. I trust my curiosity to lead me.
- _____ 23. I am more lighthearted than before.
- _____ 24. I care about people, animals, and the planet.

- _____ 25. I use my imagination much more than before.
- _____ 26. I don't see the world as black and white; I see options.
- _____ 27. I put more energy into my relationships.
- _____ 28. I want more meaning and less "stuff" in my life.
- _____ 29. I see much more potential in my life.
- _____ 30. I have become a realistic dreamer.

The questions above refer to the six key categories of PTG. Add your score for each key area.

PTG	Question #	Total Points by PTG Topic
Appreciation of Life	2, 4, 15, 20, 23	
Spirituality	7, 11, 21, 24, 28	
Other People	6, 8, 13, 17, 27	
Myself	5, 10, 14, 16, 19	
Possibilities	1, 3, 9, 26, 29	
Creativity	12, 18, 22, 25, 30	

Copy the statements you marked with less than 4 in the left column of the table below. In the right column, write what you can do to improve your score.

Low-score statements	What actions can you take to improve your score?

Review the statements you marked with 5 or above. In the table below, copy these statements in the left column. In the right column, write a short description of how each changed your life.

High-score statements	How did this change your life?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____
 (1 = not at all helpful, to 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
