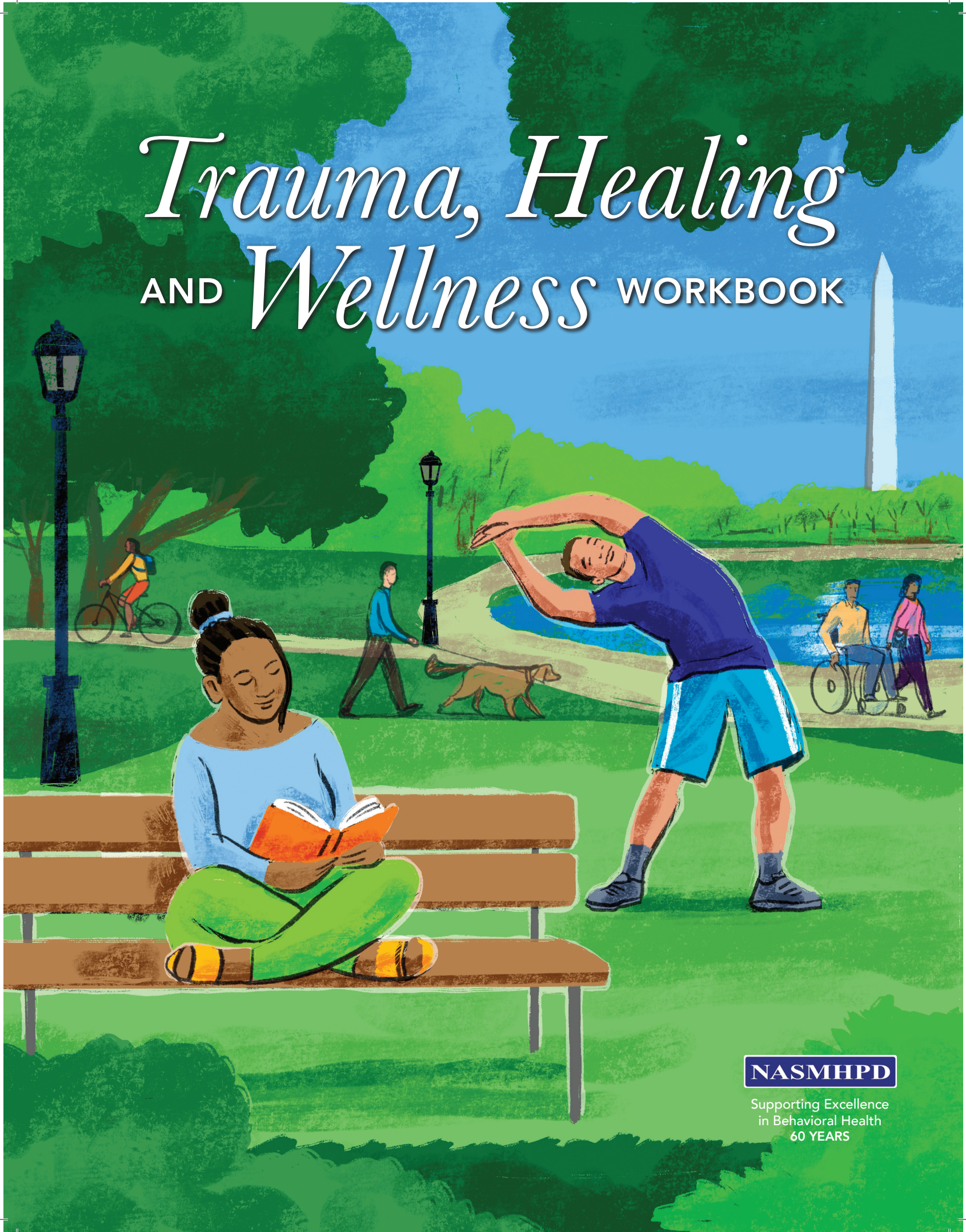



Trauma, Healing AND *Wellness* WORKBOOK



NASMHPD

Supporting Excellence
in Behavioral Health
60 YEARS



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Welcome!

We are pleased to offer you this Wellness Workbook¹, created specifically for you, an individual who has experienced trauma and is currently incarcerated. We recognize you may not have access to most of your regular coping strategies, so we are hopeful that as you use this workbook, you will find something that will pique your interest and help you develop new and life-changing wellness strategies.

Please be gracious and kind to yourself as you use this workbook; it may bring up uncomfortable or unfamiliar feelings. It is our hope that you will begin to learn how your traumatic experiences have impacted you. If this happens, don't be alarmed; we have provided numerous Wellness Strategies to help you manage them. We recognize that everything will not work for everyone; we only ask that if you don't like a Wellness Strategy after your first try, try it at least two more times before you give it up because it can feel awkward and unfamiliar.

“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars.”

Kahlil Gibran



Trauma is something that happens to you but doesn't have to define you. With hard work and consistency, you can heal and be whole. It is a lifelong journey with many ups and downs, but we believe you are worth all the best that life has to offer, no matter what you have experienced or done. It is our sincerest hope that as you use this workbook, it will be a helpful tool added to your wellness journey.

¹D.C. Department of Corrections: *Trauma, Healing and Wellness Workbook* is adapted from the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) TAMAR curriculum and D.C. *FEMA Workbook*.



Jasmine's Story

Jasmine is the oldest of four from a small southern town. At a young age, her mother became addicted to crack cocaine. This was a very challenging time for Jasmine and her siblings. They didn't often have food, lights, or water, and oftentimes, they weren't allowed to go to school.

When the truancy officers were sent out to their house, they would exchange sexual favors with her mother and never get any answers to the questions about why the children weren't going to school. Her mother was receiving public assistance from the State, and she would sell her food stamps for crack cocaine. As horrible as that was, that wasn't the only thing that her mother was selling to support her habit; she was also selling Jasmine's preadolescent body.

This went on for years and when it stopped, everyone expected Jasmine to be a normal teenager because she was removed from the traumatic environment. But that's not how trauma works; just because you remove someone from a traumatic environment doesn't mean the trauma is over because trauma lives in your body.

Jasmine attempted suicide but was unsuccessful. As she grew into a teenager, she was full of rage and hatred; she was violent and angry. She didn't want to be touched. She didn't want anyone to acknowledge her beauty because the first man who raped her repeatedly told her how beautiful she was. She struggled with developing relationships with women; how could she trust them — when the person who was supposed to protect and love her abused her?

Jasmine struggled for many years emotionally, mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually because of the trauma she experienced in her childhood. She carried a duffle bag size of trauma for many years. As she began to work on herself, it slowly became a bookbag of trauma. She still has struggles today, but it no longer dictates her life. She has taken that bookbag of trauma and turned it into a bookbag of wellness.

Healing is a journey full of ups and downs, twists and turns, tries and failures, but don't give up. You are worth the fight.

1. What are some examples of things that Jasmine experienced?

2. How did it make you feel?

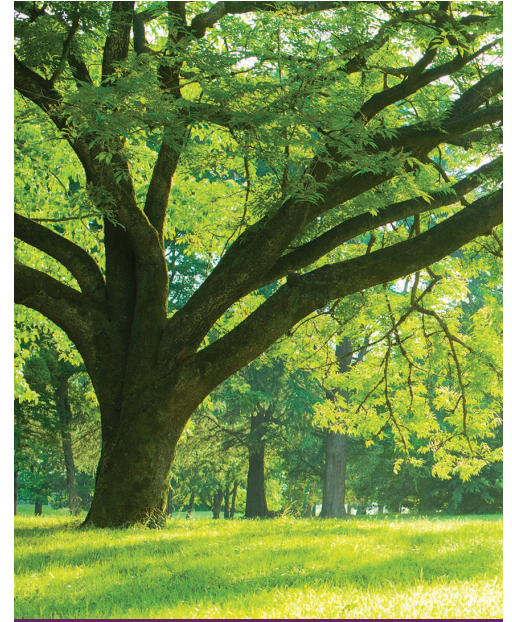
Jasmine's Story

3. What are your thoughts about her mother?

4. Do you know anyone who has a story like Jasmine?
If so, how are they doing?

5. What are your thoughts about Jasmine?

6. Has your anger ever consumed you to the point of becoming violent? How did you feel after the experience?



“You cannot heal what you do not acknowledge, and what you do not consciously acknowledge will remain in control of you from within, festering and destroying you and those around you.”

Richard Rohr



7. Do you think Jasmine felt shame? If so, why?

8. Who needs forgiveness in this story? Why?

9. How has forgiveness or the inability to forgive played out in your life?

10. What can you do to begin your healing journey?

“No matter what has happened to you, you are still a human being with feelings, emotions, and worth.”

Zachary Mallory





Michael's Story

Michael enjoyed being a musician — it was all he wanted to do since childhood. He loved being creative and working in a rock and roll band. He had many friends who thought he was funny and a good guy to be with.

But Michael struggled with his anger that could erupt into a rage at the slightest feelings of confrontation, insults, or when he saw others being picked on. He was involved in many fights in school, on the street, in barrooms, and sometimes at the gigs he performed at. He developed a reputation for being a tough guy and was asked to become a professional boxer — “You can be the next heavyweight champion of the world.” His struggles with violence increased due to his heavy drinking. The more he thought about how his parents had emotionally, sexually, and physically abused him, the more he drank, fought, and engaged in promiscuity.

Michael didn't want to hurt anyone and always felt bad after a fight. He started attending Adult Children of Alcoholics support groups and support groups for those abused as children. He was feeling better, but the rage was still festering inside. Michael became involved with martial arts to vent his anger in a healthy way. Hearing his sensei close each class by stating, "If it's not life-threatening, walk away," finally made sense — he came to understand that his fear and rage were the results of his trauma.

1. What are some examples of things Michael experienced?

2. How did it make you feel?

3. What did Michael experience?

Michael's Story

4. What are your thoughts about Michael?

5. What are your thoughts about Michael's parents?

6. Has your anger ever consumed you to the point of becoming violent? How did you feel after the experience?

7. Do you think Michael felt shame?



*“Just like there’s
always time for pain,
there’s always time
for healing.”*
Jennifer Brown



8. Who needs forgiveness in this story? Why?

9. How did forgiveness or the inability to forgive play out in your life?

10. What can you do to begin your healing journey?


*“Accepting the emotions
your feeling gives the power
back to you. To avoid is
to amplify, and to
acknowledge is to release.”*

J. Mike Fields



As you process Jasmine’s and Michael’s stories, they provide examples of traumatic events, how we experience them, and how they affect us. You may still wonder what trauma is and even deny that you have ever experienced it because some events have become normalized, such as gun violence.

Understanding Trauma: Event, Experiences & Effects



*“All the world is full
of suffering. It is also
full of overcoming.”*

Helen Keller

SAMSHA Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration defines trauma as (the three Es):

Individual trauma results from an **Event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **Experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and has lasting negative **Effects** on the person’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

Some Events are:

Childhood sexual, physical, and emotional abuse

Neglect, abandonment

Incarceration

Rape, date rape, sexual assault

Trafficking

Domestic violence

Experiencing/witnessing other violent crime

Serious injury or illness

Death, loss, grief

Institutional abuse and neglect

War/terrorism

Community and school violence, bullying

Chronic stressors like racism, poverty, homophobia, gender discrimination

Natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, hurricanes

Any misuse of power by one person over another

Experiences emphasize that everyone has an individual reaction to traumatic events. For example, two people could experience the same event, such as surviving a car accident, and react differently. One person might have trouble sleeping, and the other might always sleep.

Effects refer to the way people respond and behave due to trauma. As we are unique individuals, we are all uniquely affected by trauma.

Some effects of trauma can be:

We may have scary memories or dreams.

We may feel jumpy or nervous, or angry.

We may watch out for danger and worry about bad things happening.

We may have trouble sleeping and paying attention.

We may not want to talk or think about trauma(s), but traumatic memories pop into our minds anyway.

We may feel upset and have strong reactions in our bodies (heart beating fast, sweating, stomachache) when something reminds us of the trauma(s).

We may do anything to avoid a place or a person who reminds us of the trauma or bad experience.

We may feel empty and numb like we can't feel anything.

We may use substances to cope with upsetting feelings and sensations in our bodies.

We may turn to unhealthy relationships.

We may have a hard time trusting other people.

Trauma is something that happens to you and impacts each of us differently. Trauma is a wound to your soul. Trauma doesn't make you weak, it means you are human. Trauma doesn't have to define you; however, with the proper understanding and support you can heal.



“Our lives are transformed as we actively take part in fully living our lives with all the fear and heartbreak which become the keys to our healing and transformation when we live our lives compassionately.”

Thomas Moore



Understanding Stress

A person is sitting on the floor, leaning against a wall. They have their hands covering their face, suggesting a state of stress, despair, or exhaustion. The lighting is soft and somewhat dim, creating a somber atmosphere.

*“Human beings, by changing
the inner attitude of their
minds, can change the
outer aspects of their lives.”*

William James

Stress is a natural response to uncertainty and disruption, so everyone everywhere feels stress. We each experience stress in our unique ways.

As we grow up, we learn how to respond to challenges by watching those around us for cues of what is and isn't acceptable. Unfortunately, we don't always have positive examples of how to cope, so we develop negative coping skills.

In addition, our bodies have natural defense mechanisms that signal when things are out of sync and signal our body and mind so we can react to keep ourselves safe. Think about what happens when you startle a dog or cat. Their first reaction is to get into a defensive posture and hiss or bark. In an instant, they're ready to protect themselves. Humans are much the same way. We also get flooded with chemicals, like adrenaline, that assist our minds and bodies in combating the danger.

How to distinguish trauma from stress:

Trauma makes you feel like your life is in danger or you are not safe.

- > If you are walking down the street and turn the corner and there is a lion on the street, you may feel like you are in danger.
- > If you have been in a car accident, you may not feel safe driving a car.

Stress is uncomfortable, but no life-threatening danger is present.

- > If you have to study for a test, you may be nervous about passing it.
- > If you have to complete a project for work, you may feel worried about completing it.

Our Internal Alarm

Those of us who have grown up in homes with violence, abuse, or neglect may have activated this “danger” alert many times. Over time, parts of our system can get worn out and broken.

For some of us, the “alarm bell” goes off often, even when there’s no danger. Similarly, our alarm bell may signal a five-alarm fire when the situation is only a small amount of smoke. In these cases, our bodies are flooded with overwhelming amounts of “fight, flight, freeze, or fawn” reactions. We’re ready for a battle that doesn’t exist.

For others, the alarm bells might fail to ring when needed, leaving us vulnerable and unprepared to address a danger that may exist.


Our bodies deal with stress and trauma through our Stress Response known as **Fight-Flight-Freeze-Fawn (4Fs)**. This automatic response helps us cope with danger, allowing us to survive as human beings.

- 1 **Fight:** You may yell at someone or punch them for sneaking up on you.

- 2 **Flight:** You may avoid going to a party because you know your ex will be there.

- 3 **Freeze:** You may hope the danger doesn’t notice you, like how your mind goes blank when someone asks you a question.

- 4 **Fawn:** You may say yes to things that you don’t want to appease the opinion of others.



These automatic responses are just like breathing; we don’t have control over them until we learn how to manage them. Let’s discuss it more in how our brain functions.

Another way to look at our Stress Response is to see it in action in our brain. Discussing the brain can be intimidating; therefore, we will use the “**Flipping Our Lid**” model created by Dr. Dan Siegel, a clinical psychiatrist.



Make a fist with your thumb tucked inside your fingers. This represents our brain operating in a *calm and normal state*.



Now open your hand and look at your palm, thumb, and fingers.

In this model, your palm represents *automatic bodily functions* such as breathing, heart rate, sweat glands, bladder, and bowel control. It is called the primitive brain.

In this model, the thumb represents our emotions and memories. It is called the Limbic System, which is where our Fight, Flight, Freeze, and Fawn reactions to danger are triggered. These reactions can be real or imaginary.



In this model, the fingers represent our *cortex*, also known as our Rational Brain. This is the area where our logical brain works.

When our rational brain is activated, we can think, reason, and make decisions about how we are going to respond to danger; however, when we Flip Our Lid our Limbic System (thumb) is activated, and our Rational brain (fingers) is no longer functioning as it is designed. The four fingers flip up. We can be reliving our past traumatic memories and believe we are in danger, whether real or imagined.


To un-flip our lids, we can use the strategies included in this workbook to help keep us grounded, calm our bodies and mind, and feel more empowered.

Since we have learned how trauma impacts our brain, we will now learn how to identify signs of distress when our brain is activated.

Outward Signs of Distress

Often, when we experience distress, it shows up in our behavior. It's important to notice our own behavior as a signal that we may be experiencing physical, emotional, intellectual or spiritual distress. Some "behavioral cues" include:

- **Repeating old habits or patterns.** Do you find that you are tempted to start smoking cigarettes, even though you quit years ago? Picking up old habits to cope is very common and could be a signal to you that you are distressed.
- **Lashing out, yelling, throwing things.** When our internal distress levels reach a boiling point, we may be tempted to release it out of frustration. This may be a warning sign that it's time to relieve our stress in healthier ways.
- **Pacing, leg shaking, wringing our hands.** Sometimes, when our nervous system needs to release tension, it does so through our body. Be aware of these stress signals.



As you read these examples, think about what you've been thinking or feeling over the past few days or weeks.

Physical Distress

Imagine you're walking down the street. When you turn the corner, you see a lion staring at you. Right away, your body starts pumping out chemicals that will allow you to do what's needed to survive. And that's good when there's a lion. Our brains have the same reaction to any kind of "danger," real or perceived though, and all those chemicals can cause all sorts of physical discomforts, including:

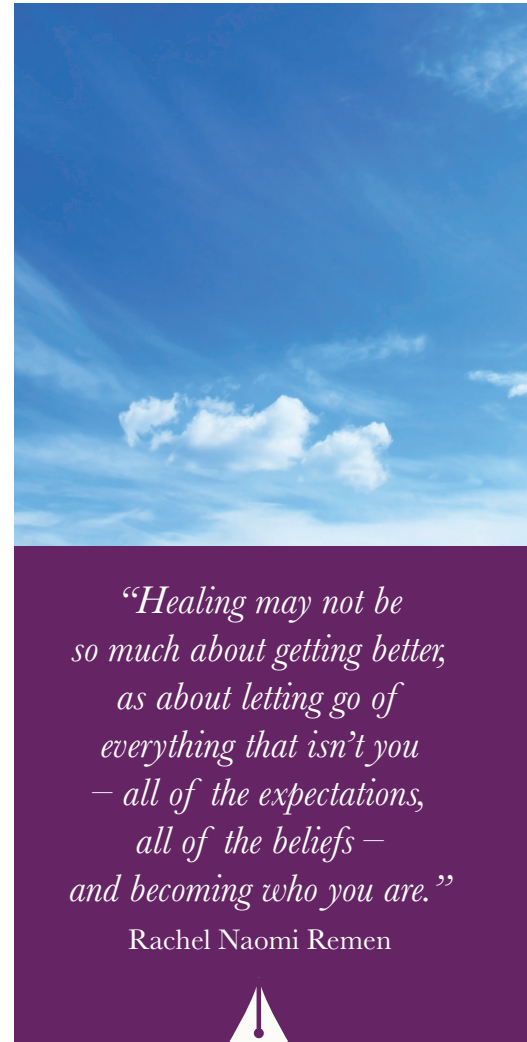
- Sweaty palms
- Restlessness

- Heart fluttering (palpitations)
- Digestive issues like diarrhea, constipation or nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Dizziness or headaches
- Aches and pains (old injuries will often ache again)
- Tingling in fingers or toes
- Muscle tension or pain

CAUTION!

Sometimes, we can mistake physical discomfort as caused by trauma reminders or stress, but it can be physical symptoms of a medical condition. **Tell the staff where you currently reside if you have any of the above symptoms.** Before you assume it’s a trauma reminder or stress, have it checked out!

Think about your body. Describe any physical sensations you have been experiencing over the past few weeks.



“Healing may not be so much about getting better, as about letting go of everything that isn’t you – all of the expectations, all of the beliefs – and becoming who you are.”

Rachel Naomi Remen





Breathing

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

- First, breathe as you normally do.
- What parts of your body move as you breathe? Notice what it feels like.
- Now, sit and place your hand on your stomach.
- With your mouth closed, breathe in for four seconds or until you feel your whole chest fill with air all the way down to your belly.
- Hold in the air for four seconds.
- Slowly blow all the air out until it's all gone.
- Try these three or four times.

What, if anything, did you notice differently about how you feel?

Intellectual Distress

When our inner sensors tell us that something isn't right and we may be in danger, our brains work differently, too. We can think of our brains as being three brains in one. Part of our brain is dedicated to our survival — it runs our heart, breathing, etc. A second part of our brain is called our “emotional brain.” This part of the brain rules our emotions and holds our memories. Sometimes, our emotions will have words connected to them; sometimes, they're just feelings without words. Our third brain is where we do the complex thinking needed for decision-making, using judgment, navigating social relationships, etc. It's this third brain that we rely on most to guide us through the complex nature of living with others in the world. But in times of stress, our third brain steps aside a bit to allow the survival brain to be more in charge. This can lead to thinking problems, including:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty with decision-making
- Retaining information
- Hard time processing information
- Less patience with others
- More difficulty managing relationships that are complicated

Think about your *own thinking* lately. What kinds of thoughts have felt challenging?

“Remembering that we can live only one day at a time removes the burdens of the past from our backs and keeps us from dreading the future, which none of us can know anyway.”

This Is Al-Anon





Wellness Strategy

Why this may help: We all would like to think that we have a lot of control over a lot of things. We don't! We have even **less** control when we're in places where others make most of the rules, such as prisons, mental health facilities, residential settings, etc.

For those of us with trauma histories — most of us — it can feel scary to lose our inner sense of control. A lot of times, though, our distress isn't about the realities around us but our inner confusion about where we do and don't have control. Trying to be in control of those things over which we have no power can lead to inner turmoil. One way to help is to figure out what we **do** and **don't** have control over. This exercise may help to decrease some of the inner racing thoughts or obsessive thoughts.

A Take a moment to consider all the things that are contributing to your feeling overwhelmed, e.g., limited time to yourself, ongoing worry about someone you care about, not enough finances for your bills, safety in the facility, your health, stability upon release, etc.

If it helps, write them down below.



B Add each “overwhelmed event to your Spheres of Influence in the following way:

If you have **control** over the event (you can resolve it on your own), write it below.

If you have **partial control** or can **influence** the event (you can resolve part of the item or influence the outcome through your actions or behavior), write it below.

If the items are **completely outside of your control** or influence (there is nothing you could do or say that could directly impact these events), write it below.

If you think of other things that **overwhelm** you as you do this exercise, write them below, as you did above.



“You’re afraid of surrender because you don’t want to lose control. But you never had control; all you had was anxiety.”

Elizabeth Gilbert





Now that you have listed your overwhelming events add them to your Spheres of Influences circles below.



Within my control:



Outside of my control:



What I can influence:

For the items you have **control** over, take action, however small, on at least one as soon as you can — it will help you feel better.

For the items you have **partial control** or influence over, write down steps you can take and when you might be able to do that.

Finally, and most importantly, **let go of everything else!** Strike through each of these items on your “Sphere of Influence.” This does not negate your love or concern for the event or person but recognizes that you can’t control or change the situation. Stressing about these items is a waste of precious energy and keeps you in a heightened stress state (remember our stress response). It is important to understand that this task is not easy but necessary.

Here is a familiar quote that may help. Feel free to replace the word “God” with whatever you are comfortable with.

God grant me the *Serenity*
to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things
I can, and
Wisdom to know the difference.

*“Every step taken in
mindfulness brings us
one step closer to healing
ourselves and the planet.”*

Thich Nhat Hanh



Emotional Distress

Those who are separated from friends and family in jails, prisons, hospitals, shelters, or other facilities may feel additional levels of emotional disconnection and distress during these times. As a result, you may be feeling:

- Constant worry or anxiety
- Overwhelmed
- Difficult relaxing
- Confusion
- Feeling powerless
- Mood swings
- Feeling hopelessness
- Irritability or short temper
- Fear and worry about your health
- Fear and worry about the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Worsening of chronic physical health conditions
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

Think about *your own emotions*. What kind of emotions have you been feeling? Have you noticed other things that let you know that you're feeling emotional stress?



5-Minute Journaling

Why this may help: Thinking in writing has this magical quality of clarifying your thoughts. Research has shown that writing out our thoughts or feelings — the essence of journaling- can help clear our thoughts, leading to better decision-making. Personal writing can also help with coping, especially during stressful events like dealing with incarceration, and can help relieve anxiety.

What you write, you control. Getting thoughts from the inside of your mind to paper can help you tap into what lies beneath — what is important to you, what is really fueling the distress, and potential ways you may want to move forward.

People have been journaling for centuries, and journals vary dramatically from person to person. What you may find useful in a journal is personal and unique to you. The hard part of learning if or how journaling may feel helpful is simply getting started if you haven't journaled before.

Journaling is not your performance for history. It is your reflection. It's you working through your problems. It's you figuring things out and clearing your head. Write about the maddening, frustrating people you encountered today. The comment, the look, the news headline that made you furious. Write about the wounds you still carry from childhood. The person who didn't treat you right. The terrible experience. The parent who was just a little too busy or too critical or a little too tied up dealing with their own issues to be what you needed. The sources of anxiety or worry, the frustration that routinely pops up at the worst times, the reasons you have trouble staying in relationships, whatever problem you are dealing with, take them to your journal. You'll be shocked at how good you feel after.

*“Anything that’s human
is mentionable, and
anything that is mentionable
can be more manageable.
When we can talk about
our feelings, they
become less overwhelming,
less upsetting, and
less scary. The people we
trust with that important
talk can help us know
that we are not alone.”*

Fred Rogers



Perhaps the best way to try it out is to start small and just focus on your thoughts.

- Put aside 5 minutes each morning and evening to journal.
- Start by asking these two simple questions each morning and evening:
 - What am I feeling right now?
 - Do I know why?
- Write down any thoughts or feelings that you become aware of. Just write them down without censoring or judging them — they just are.
- Keep writing for 5 minutes. If you to stop, stop. If you want to keep writing and other themes to your writing, feel free to do that.



*“You cannot find peace
by avoiding life.”*

Michael Cunningham





A large white rectangular area with horizontal lines, serving as a writing space. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the rectangle. The background of the page is a light beige color with a repeating pattern of stylized, light-colored leaves.

Spiritual Distress

Our spiritual well-being is important to our physical and emotional well-being. When we're feeling stressed, there's a good chance that our spirit may be as impacted as our body and mind. This is true whether you meet your spiritual needs through religious participation or any other ways, such as visiting nature, meditating, etc. In these times, it's common to experience a spiritual vacuum with the following feelings or thoughts:

- A weariness of the heart
- A sinking feeling that nothing really matters
- Questioning beliefs that were once unquestionable, like "Does God even exist?"
- Wondering about the meaning or purpose of life
- Wondering about your own value in the world
- A sense of deep grieving

Spirituality is often a sense of connection to a bigger, individually defined picture that gives meaning and purpose to a person's life.

Another aspect of spirituality is forgiveness or lack thereof.

Forgiveness is an individual journey and decision. It is a process.

Forgiveness doesn't mean that you must reconcile with the one who hurt you. Forgiveness simply means that you will not allow the bad decisions of others or yourself to continue dictating your life.

Be gracious and kind with yourself as you take this journey.

Think about *your own* spiritual center. What questions are you asking yourself that indicate that your spirit is feeling overwhelmed?



Filling Your Heart

Why this may help: Heart weariness can leave us feeling empty, depleted, or exhausted. When we're in this space, our defenses can be lowered, giving our negative thoughts more volume in our heads. Sometimes, the only way to quiet those voices that bring us to darkness and despair is to intentionally sit down and think about those things that are meaningful to us and "heart-warming."

Below, there is a heart waiting to be filled. Close your eyes for a moment and start to think about those things that bring you joy in life. Here are some general themes to prompt ideas:

- People you love and hope to see or talk to
- People you love and feel committed to, even if your efforts must be delayed due to incarceration, emotional struggles at the moment, etc.
- Things you have done that you are proud of
- Hopes and dreams for the future
- Places you've been that bring you peace, like the ocean or the mountains or a special trip you got to take.

Remember, you deserve to feel ok. You deserve love. You deserve to forgive yourself. Fill Your Heart.



*"The most valuable
possession you can own
is an open heart.
The most powerful
weapon you can be is
an instrument of peace."*

Carlos Santana





Wellness Strategies

This section is to provide additional wellness strategies that can be utilized anywhere. There will be links to videos, songs, and strategies. Please try them all to see what is beneficial for you, understanding that you may not like everything and that is OK. Some of these will be new and can feel awkward, so we recommend you try each strategy at least three times before deciding if you don't like it.



Wellness Strategy: Breathing

Why Breathing May Help

Breathing is often a way to trigger our own internal “relaxation response.” The great thing about breathing is that we do it all the time and can do it anywhere. The way we breathe, though, can either add to our sense of stress or diminish it by switching off our “fight or flight” response. When we feel stressed, we often “shallow breathe” in our chest. This can add to light-headedness, dizziness, and other physical discomforts. Deep breathing, on the other hand, can often center us and help us feel more grounded.

For a small group of people, breathing exercises can cause greater anxiety, so always trust your response. If you’re feeling more anxious, stop and try something else!

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

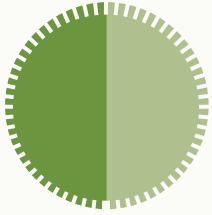
*“Breathe. Let go.
And remind yourself that
this very moment is
the only one you know
you have for sure.”*

Oprah Winfrey



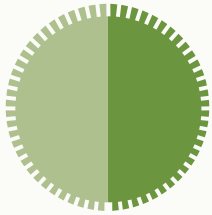


Wellness Strategy: 90 Second Stress Break



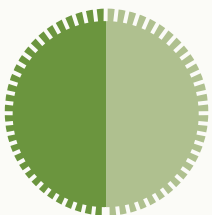
First 30 Seconds:

- > Notice your breathing.
- > See if you can make your exhale longer than your inhale.



Second 30 Seconds:

- > Keep breathing slowly and deeply.
- > In through your nose, out through your mouth.
- > Notice any muscles in your body that are tense.
- > On each exhale, see if you can relax the tense places.



Last 30 Seconds:

- > Keep breathing slowly.
- > Say something positive to yourself with each breath, such as: “I got this.” “Keep going.” “I can do this.”
- > When the 90 seconds are up, go about your day!

Why using your senses helps: Often, emotional distress comes from getting caught in our “emotional brain.” When we’re caught in our emotional brain, we’re often disconnected from our thinking brain which helps us to understand our emotions or cope with our emotions. Using our senses can help us tap back into our upper brain to help us deal with emotions that may be overwhelming us.

*“It’s not enough to have lived.
We should be determined
to live for something
May I suggest that it be
creating joy for others,
sharing what we have for
the betterment of person-kind,
bringing hope to the lost
and love to the lonely.”*

Leo Buscaglia





Wellness Strategy: Our Five Senses

This technique will take you through your five senses to help you practice mindfulness. Mindfulness means staying in the present, which helps relieve anxiety because we aren't focused on the future and can stop dissociation because we aren't reliving the past. This is a calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations.

Take a deep breath to begin.

- LOOK** Look around for five things that you can see and say to yourself in your mind. For example, you could say, "I see the chair. I see the cup. I see the picture frame."
- FEEL** Pay attention to your body and think of four things that you can feel and say them quietly in your mind. For example, you could say, "I feel my feet in my socks, my hands in my lap, the hair on the back of my neck, and the chair I am sitting on."
- LISTEN** Listen for three sounds. It could be the sound of cars outside, the sound of a clock ticking, or the sound of your stomach rumbling. Say the three things to yourself in your mind.
- SMELL** Name two things you can smell. If you can't smell anything, then just think of and imagine your two favorite smells.
- TASTE** Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth or your tongue in your mouth. If you can't taste anything, then think of your favorite thing to taste.

*"If you rely only on your eyes,
your other senses weaken."*

Frank Herbert





Wellness Strategy: Listening to Music and Videos

Why Listening To Music And Videos Helps

It can decrease anxiety, provide opportunities for movement, may decrease pain, and improve mood. Music can also activate the release of endorphins, which are chemicals in the brain that can create feelings of euphoria.

- These 10 Truths Clear Up Trauma-Driven Thinking and Empower You to Heal [complex PTSD]
YouTube (15:07 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=em2lgMTCJKQ>
- How to heal trauma with meaning: A case study in emotional evolution — BJ Miller – Big Think
YouTube (4:47 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQAqBkKJRbs>
- You Can Heal Intergenerational Trauma — Dr. Thema Bryant
YouTube 12:47 minutes - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzGgIUSQr1g>
- How To Recover From Trauma Without Medications & Without Going To Expensive Therapist — Dr. Gabor Maté
YouTube (8:34 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqyNf2lKog>
- Step Inside the Circle — Compassion Prison Project
YouTube (6:51 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVxjuTkWQiE>
- How art and music helped me overcome my Complex PTSD — Deena Lynch – TEDxUQ
YouTube (17:22 min) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEFO_8517-g
- Songs of Life, Love, Loss & Hope — Set 1 – Healing Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health
YouTube (20:10 min) <https://youtu.be/2sOd1-EvpRI>
- Songs of Life, Love, Loss & Hope — Set 2 – Healing Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health
YouTube (26:52 min) <https://youtu.be/jc0GLP91vWE>
- 6 ways to heal trauma without medication — Dr. Bessel van der Kolk – Big Think
YouTube (8:53 min) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoZT8-Hql64>

*“Music can heal the wounds
which medicine cannot touch.”*

Debasish Mridh





Wellness Strategy: EFT-Tapping

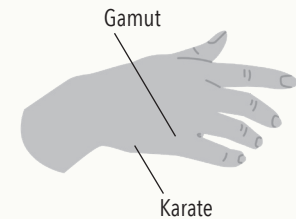
Why Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT-Tapping) Helps

It accesses your body's energy and sends signals to the part of the brain that controls stress. It can create balance in your energy, reducing anxiety.

1) Make a “set up” statement:

Say out loud while tapping with fingertips on the Karate Chop Point (side of hand), “Even though (whatever the problem is), I deeply and completely love and accept myself.”

- Repeat this statement three times while tapping on the Karate Chop Point.
- Then say a reminder phrase (a few words that helps to remind you what you are tapping about) while tapping six or more times on each point.



2) Tapping Points

Top of head – make a small circle on top of your head

Above eye – where eyebrow begins by the nose

Side of eye – on the bone

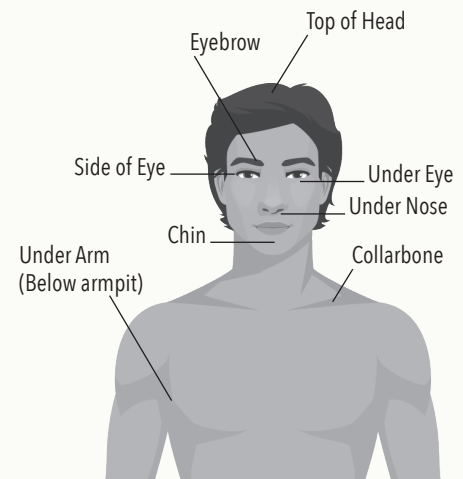
Under the eye – on the bone

Under your nose

Under your lip – in the crease

Under collarbone – 1” under, whole hand

Side – hand width under armpit, saying: “Letting it all go now.”



After the first round, if not completely resolved, say “Even though I still have some of this (whatever the problem is), I deeply and completely love and accept myself.”

Then, “This remaining problem”

With this you are acknowledging the improvement.

Repeat the whole cycle as many times as necessary until you feel relief.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Anger — QuickTapping with Brad Yates
YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0noj7PSu0Q>
- Anxiety — Tapping with Brad Yates
YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6kq9N9Yp6E&t=87s>
- Self-Soothing: 10 Ways to Calm Down and Find Balance
<https://psychcentral.com/anxiety/self-soothing-methods>
- Tapping/EFT Instruction Sheet
<https://eftinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/EFT-International-Free-Tapping-Manual.pdf>

“It is important for people to know that no matter what lies in their past, they can overcome the dark side and press on to a brighter world.”

Dave Pelzer





Wellness Strategy: Reading

Why Reading Helps

Engaging in reading can aid in adding a new medium that helps with healing from trauma. It creates an openness for new experiences, improves cognition, and offers opportunities for mindfulness, giving your brain a break from anxiety.

WEBSITE RESOURCES:

- Aces Connection
<http://www.acesconnection.com/>
- Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families
<https://adultchildren.org/>
- The Bristlecone Project – Male Survivor Stories
<https://1in6.org/about-bristlecone/>
- The Center for Self-Leadership (Internal Family System)
www.selfleadership.org
- David Baldwin's Trauma Pages
www.trauma-pages.com
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing International Assoc.
www.emdria.org
- 1In 6 - Sexual Abuse & Assault of Boys & Men – Confidential Support for Men
<https://1in6.org/>
- Jim Hopper's Trauma Website
www.jimhopper.com
- Jimmy Santiago Baca, Writer/Poet, Formerly Incarcerated – Powerful Story of Hope and Healing
<https://www.jimmysantiagobaca.com/>
- RAINN – The Nation's Largest Anti-Sexual Violence Organization
<https://www.rainn.org/>
- SAMHSA - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
<https://www.samhsa.gov/>
- Step Inside The Circle – Compassion Prison Project
<https://compassionprisonproject.org/sitc/>
- Surviving Spirit, Newsletter & Resources for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health
www.survivingspirit.com

BOOK RESOURCES:

- Adult Children of Alcoholics by Dr. Janet G. Woititz EdD
<https://www.amazon.com/Adult-Children-Alcoholics-Janet-Woititz/dp/1558741127>
- Allies in Healing: When the Person You Love Was Sexually Abused as a Child by Laura Davis
<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/allies-in-healing-laura-davis?variant=32132836065314>
- The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma by Bessel van der Kolk, MD
<https://www.besselvanderkolk.com/resources/the-body-keeps-the-score>
- Childhood Disrupted: How Your Biography Becomes Your Biology, and How You Can Heal by Donna Jackson Nakazawa
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/23492704-childhood-disrupted>
- Complex PTSD: From Surviving to Thriving by Pete Walker
https://www.pete-walker.com/complex_ptsd_book.html
- The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse by Ellen Bass & Laura Davis
<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/3090406>
- Getting Through the Day: Strategies for Adults Hurt as Children by Nancy J. Napier
<https://www.amazon.com/Getting-Through-Day-Strategies-Children/dp/0393312429>
- Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World by Dr. Richard F. Mollica
<https://www.amazon.com/Healing-Invisible-Wounds-Recovery-Violent/dp/0826516416>
- In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction by Gabor Maté, MD
<https://drgabormate.com/book/in-the-realm-of-hungry-ghosts/>

*“Shame dies when stories
are told in safe places.”*

Ann Voskamp



- Journey Through Trauma: A Trail Guide to the 5-Phase Cycle of Healing Repeated Trauma by Gretchen Schmelzer PhD
<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0735216835?tag=randohouseinc17368-20>
- Living Without Depression and Manic Depression: A Workbook for Maintaining Mood Stability by Mary Ellen Copeland
<https://www.amazon.com/Living-Without-Depression-Manic-Maintaining/dp/1879237741>
- The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression by Andrew Solomon
<https://www.amazon.com/Noonday-Demon-Atlas-Depression/dp/1501123882>
- Scared Sick: The Role of Childhood Trauma in Adult Disease by Robin Karr-Morse with Meredith S. Wiley
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/12937524-scared-sick>
- Trauma: The Invisible Epidemic: How Trauma Works and How We Can Heal From It: Paul Conti MD, Paul foreword by Lady Gaga
<https://www.amazon.com/Trauma-Invisible-Epidemic-Works-Heal/dp/1683647351>
- Trust After Trauma: A Guide to Relationships for Survivors and Those Who Love Them by Aphrodite Matsakis, PH.D
https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/91514.Trust_After_Trauma
- Victims No Longer: Men Recovering from Incest and Other Sexual Child Abuse by Mike Lew
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/687223.Victims_No_Longer
- What Happened to You? - Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing by Oprah Winfrey and Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.
<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250223210/whathappenedtoyou>

“Healing requires from us to stop struggling, but to enjoy life more and endure it less.”

Darina Stoyanova





Wellness Strategy: Forgiveness

Why Forgiveness Works

It helps you to not allow past decisions to continue dictating your social, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual future self.

We spoke briefly about forgiveness earlier. It is important to make amends and forgive others, but we often forget the most important person we need to forgive, which is ourselves. Self-forgiveness can be a long and difficult journey, but it's necessary and worth it. No matter what you have done or said, you owe it to yourself to forgive yourself. It is important to let go of the shame, the what-ifs, guilt, and resentment.

Forgiving yourself increases your confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. It can decrease anxiety and help you begin to see yourself in a positive light and recognize that you are human, and mistakes happen, but those mistakes don't have to define the rest of your life.

For this wellness strategy, we'd like you to write a letter to yourself. We ask that you talk to yourself, but like you are talking to someone you care about. Write about your mistakes, how these mistakes affect you and others, how you plan on correcting these mistakes, and what you can do moving forward to become a better person and not repeat the same mistakes.

You don't have to use them, but here are some prompts to assist you as you write your letter of forgiveness:

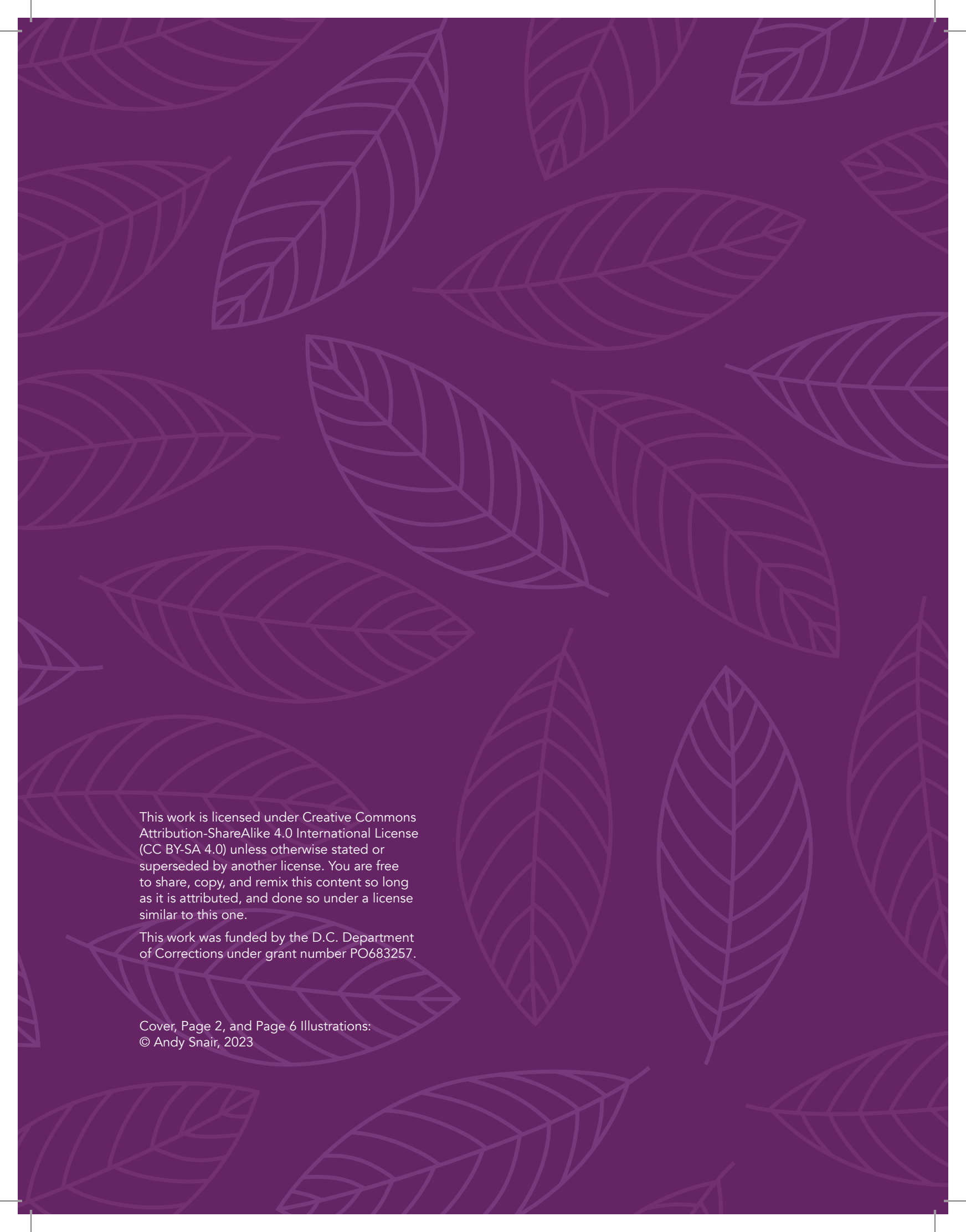
- What mistakes have you made that you feel guilty or ashamed of?
Try not to make excuses or criticize yourself, just acknowledge them.
- How have these mistakes impacted your life?
- What is a reason you have been unable to forgive yourself?

*“Healing takes courage,
and we all have courage,
even if we have to
dig a little to find it.”*

Tori Amos







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