



INCREASING RESILIENCY WORKSHOP #4

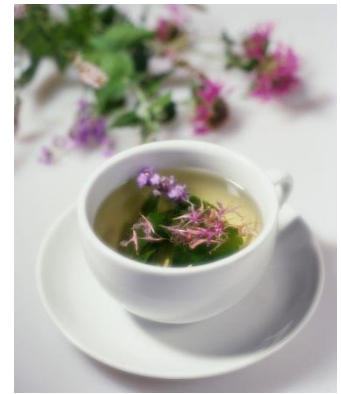
SAIL Program

INCREASING RESILIENCY

- As before, **self care** is one of the most important things to learn and practice in the healing journey.
- As the workshop continues, keep one part of your mind on observing how you're doing.
- If you need to - get up, stretch, get a cup of tea, deep breathe or practice a grounding exercise.



INCREASING RESILIENCY



- This workshop will take about 3 hours, and we will have 2 10 minute breaks in the middle of it.
- Washrooms are located outside, to the right. Get up and go at any time if you wish.
- Help yourself to coffee or tea at any time.
- You will not be asked to share any personal information.



RESPECT OTHERS



- If you meet someone you know here, respect their confidentiality outside of our agency.
- We hope that in this process, you can feel good about having been here today, and in beginning, or continuing, your healing journey.
- **Feel free to ask questions** at any time!



REMEMBER SELF CARE



- Sit where you are most comfortable.
- Feel free to bring a small comfort object, or grab a stone.
- You may ‘zone out’ or find yourself daydreaming. It’s ok.
- You can help yourself with this here also by ‘grounding’ yourself.





GROUNDING EXERCISE

- You now have a set of exercises to choose from: breath elevator, 5-5-5, and ‘grow roots’.
- Here is another one...
- Today, our topic is resiliency and we will be focussing on *growth and flexibility*...
- Place your feet flat on the floor.
- Say your own ‘mantra’:
- I am _____.
- I am _____ years old.
- I have a right to be on the planet.
- Today, I want to _____.



HEALING FROM TRAUMA

- **Learning about trauma** is important to help in the healing from it
- There are many steps to healing, helping yourself is often a forward and back process of gradually making shifts in your thinking and behaviour
- Change is hard...appreciate yourself for the task you have taken on!
- Often impacts from trauma take many forms – but work on one area (for example, de-stressing your body) often helps other areas (for example, emotions in relationships)



INCREASE YOUR RESILIENCE

- You can increase your resilience through focussing on two main areas
- **MIND** – the way you **perceive information** and think - determining how you feel
- **BODY** – the way your body is able to achieve sleep and rest, deal with stress and change its response
- Mind and body are connected.



INNER STRENGTHS AND RESOURCES

- For many survivors of abuse, healing means getting in touch with your own inner skills and strengths
- Many may think ‘I don’t have any’ but abuse teaches you self doubt and not to recognize your strengths – everyone has them (your offender(s) didn't want you to be confident)
- Some of them you’ve used **many times**



SIGNATURE STRENGTHS SURVEY

- If you visit the website www.authentichappiness.com and click on signature strengths survey, you can take a free online questionnaire and understand more about your strengths
- You can save the questionnaire and complete it over time; print out results.



LEARNING NEW SKILLS



- Abuse may have deprived you from a chance to learn and grow
- Healing may mean opening yourself to learning and practicing new skills
- You can learn at any age
- These skills might include new ways of thinking or behaving.
- They also might involve learning **self care.**



SELF CARE



- Often children growing up with abuse aren't cared for in the ways needed. We were expected to put *others needs ahead of our own*.
- As adults, we may continue to do the same thing, in a pattern of looking after **everyone else's needs first**.
- Some continue the abuse pattern through self harming or neglecting themselves.





SELF CARE

- Survivors of abuse may have been told as part of the emotional abuse they've experienced that they are '*selfish*' to think about their own needs.
- It is **IMPORTANT** to look out for yourself and your needs and to balance that with caregiving others. You have to un-learn abusive teaching.
- Self care allows you to live a good life and to be able to care for others –
- **being 'self-ful' is wise.**



LEARNING BOUNDARIES

- A boundary is an imaginary dividing line between you and another person. It helps mark what are your rights and responsibilities, and what are theirs.
- Abuse means your boundaries were trampled by someone. You may not have learned what an appropriate boundary is.
- Part of being self-ful is learning to have good boundaries with others, **learning when and how to say no.**



ABUSE IS TRAUMATIC (REVIEW)

- People who live through the trauma of abuse may develop symptoms of post trauma stress as a **reaction** to the violence they have lived and witnessed.
- Post trauma stress involves changes to many systems of the body – we are wired for survival and the experiences change our ‘wiring’.



REWIRING IS PART OF HEALING



- Through **journaling and telling the story of what happened to you**, you actually ‘rewire’ your brain differently
- Trauma memories are gradually processed by the language centers in the brain and are stored as more **regular memories**
- The emotions gradually detach...or return and then detach if you have numbered them



SYMPTOMS IN THE BODY TOO



- Post Trauma there are changes in all the systems in the body as our ‘calm down now’ signals burn out and the adrenal gland gets tired too
- Many survivors have ongoing anxiety, fatigue and/or depression
- Sleep, stomach, bowel, nerve (pain or numbness) and cardio problems all connect to ongoing stress



THE HPA AXIS

- The hypothalamus, pituitary and adrenal glands are interconnected and play a major role in controlling reactions to stress
- This 'axis' also regulates body processes including **digestion, immune system, mood and emotions, sexuality and energy storage/expenditure**
- Sexual abuse has been associated with **dysregulation of the HPA Axis** (Putnam & Trickett, 1996)



SYMPATHETIC/PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEMS (REVIEW OF NERD INFO)

- The **'threat'** activated HPA axis stimulates one of two pathways-the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) or the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS)
- Activation of the SNS stimulates energy expenditure – **fight or flight**
- Activation of the PNS conserves energy and happens if fight or flee is deemed unachievable – **freeze or immobilization** (Scaer 2001)



THE BODY BEARS THE BURDEN

- Anxiety and ongoing stress wear on the body— years of panic attacks, large startle response, heart palpitations, hypervigilance
(Rochschild 2000)
- Sleep affected-*insomnia* and sleep disorders common (who can sleep if danger is present?)
- SNS **takes energy away from normal body functions like digestion**
- GI symptoms include reflux, dietary changes (wheat/dairy) and irritable bowel disorders



TRAUMA AND THE BODY'S PNS RESPONSE

- In a PNS (freeze) response the body releases endorphins to mediate pain
- This parallels the instinctive dissociation response – the helpless person escapes **not by action in the real world but by altering state of consciousness**
- This evokes a state of detached calm – perceptions may be numbed or distorted



TRAUMA GUILT

- Many who have suffered trauma feel guilt or shame for the 'freeze' response and 'failing' to protect themselves or others
- It is important to understand these responses are **instantaneous instinctive responses to perceived threat**, not chosen by careful consideration (Rothschild 2000)



ACUTE VS CHRONIC STRESS

- With short term stress, the body (HPA axis) is designed to help the body cope efficiently, then release a 'calm down' signal when the stress is eliminated
- With chronic stress there is a **hypersensitive stress response** which may be initiated in the absence of a direct trigger, or in response to triggers of a previous stressor (e.g. trauma)



CHRONIC STRESS

- The constant triggers break down brain circuitry and body systems...
- Immune system is suppressed
- Chronic pain or fatigue – fibromyalgia associated with PTS
- Psychogenic seizures (resembles epilepsy – less common)
- MS type symptoms also common (Dr. Gabor Matè 2003)



YOU CAN **HELP YOUR BODY HEAL TOO**

- You have to **teach your body to calm**
- De-stressing can include many strategies
- Just a few include **grounding yourself, learning to breathe, mindfulness, yoga, exercise and self care**
- You can *lower anxiety* to help yourself sleep
- **Diet and vitamin supplements** are also key – see a homeopath or naturopath if you can for assistance with this



MEDICATIONS, DIET AND VITAMINS

- Reduce and **eliminate caffeine** and heavy reliance on **sugars and carbs**
- Eat **lots of vegetables**, drink herbal teas
- **Vitamin B** (B5, B6 and B12 stress level dosages) can be very helpful
- **Adrenal supplements** can be helpful
- **Anti-depressants** can support HPA axis
- Always check with your dr./pharmacist before taking something new...



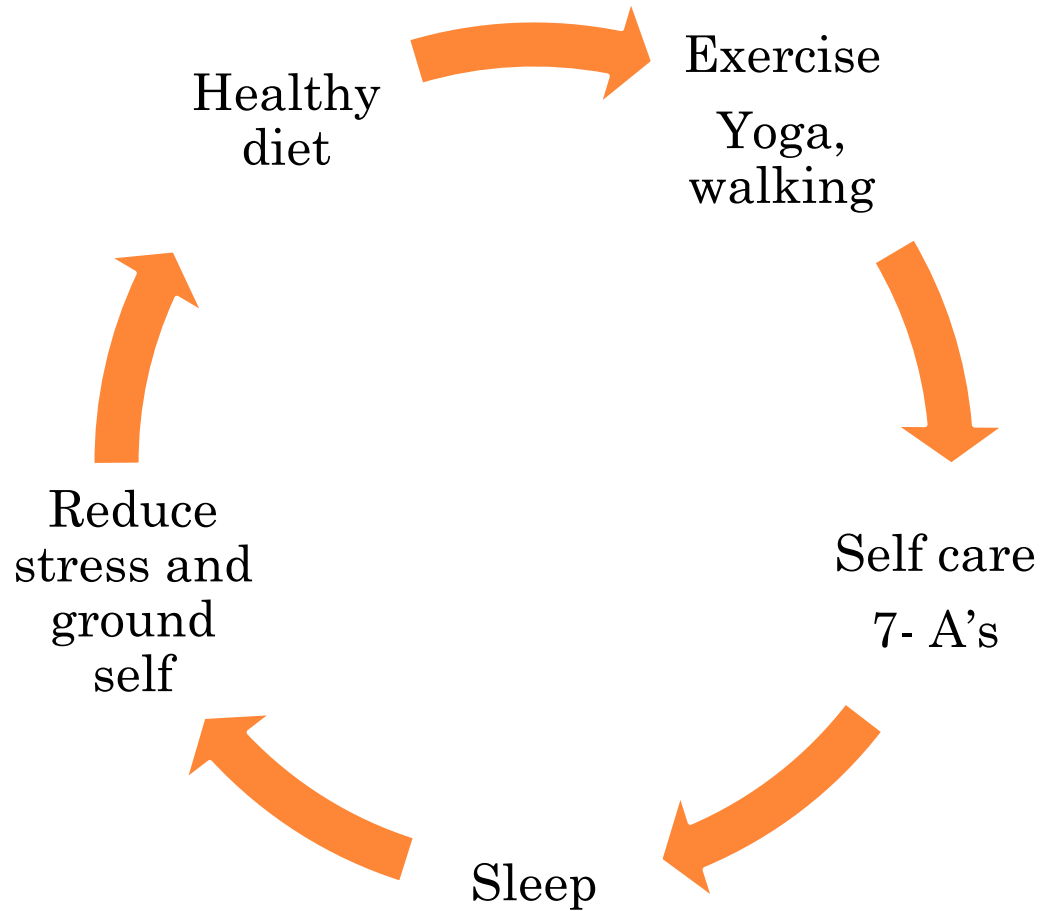
FOOD SUPPLEMENTS



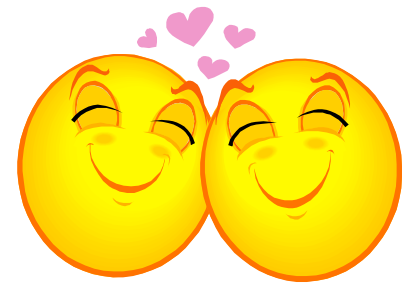
- 5-HTP contains tryptophan, which is found in turkey and warm milk, the sleepytime foods
- 5-HTP **cannot** be combined with anti-depressants, but taken as an alternative
- St. John's Wort is also an herbal form of anti-depressant, **cannot** be taken with them
- Melatonin can be found at the health food store, this is what your body produces for sleep, and can be taken in 1, 3 or 5 mg. dosages, can cause increased dreaming...but help with sleep
- Check with a **naturopath or homeopath** for other remedies



BROKEN RECORD – PRACTICE EVERY DAY



SEXUALITY CAN BE REWIRED TOO



- Many survivors of sexual abuse struggle with sexuality
- If you lived with a violent partner you may not have been able to fully ‘consent’ to sex
- **Communication and trust** with your partner is vital to being able to overcome past abuse teachings regarding sexuality
- Sexuality is a piece of work to do later on in healing – tackle other things first



7 – A'S IN HEALING



- There are seven areas important for healing from past trauma and its legacy of emotions bottled up and ongoing stress.
- These areas are: **acceptance, awareness, anger, autonomy, attachment, assertion, and affirmation** (Dr. Gabor Maté)
- Work in **each** area is part of healing



ACCEPTANCE



- This area involves readiness to accept and acknowledge reality – the reality of the abuse you've experienced, the pain it caused and its impacts on you
- Acceptance may mean accepting some painful emotions and truths, but not letting it define the **truth of the future that is possible**





MY ACCEPTANCE

- I accept that I cannot change the past
- I accept the impact I endure from _____
- I accept that I have changed as a result of _____
- I accept that some of these changes are _____
- I accept that **as an adult I can have choices I didn't as a child**





MY ACCEPTANCE

- I accept that I can explore further choice
- I accept that *my choices* will impact my future
- I accept that the future does not have to be like the past



AWARENESS



- Awareness means being able to tune back into ourselves and make connections between how we feel and events around us, learning how to **actively listen to internal cues**.
- When you are living with constant abuse you have to shut down those signals of fear or stress to get through it.
- Often addictions develop as a way to assist with numbing out.



AWARENESS

- If you have learned to dissociate from abuse, it takes time and work on healing to get awareness back.
- Learn to **GROUND** yourself frequently.
- Learning to trust yourself and your intuition can take time too, you may struggle with self doubt.
- Learning to **trust appropriately** helps this area.



MY AWARENESS



- I can learn to feel again and trust my feelings
- I can decide my feelings aren't right or wrong, they just are
- I can awaken
- I can learn to understand and heed the messages my body sends me
- I can be aware at my own speed and in my own time



MY AWARENESS

- I can remember the bad times and the good; it is my life and truth
- I can learn to **notice myself**...when I'm tired, when I'm stressed...
- I can develop my emotional radar (or my **BS detector**)
- I can trust my awareness will increase at pace with my **strength**



ANGER

- Laura Bass and Ellen Davis, authors of 'The Courage to Heal' have called anger the **'backbone of healing'**.
- Anger is the emotion that enables us to stand up for our rights and our place in the world. It lets us say 'how dare you' or 'you had no right'.



ANGER

- Many survivors try to stop the feeling of anger, associating anger with abusive behaviours or fearing rage.
- Anger is just an emotion, and there is a choice with behaviour to express it.
- You can **learn** conflict resolution skills.
- Anger released from the body has a **relaxing effect on stress** systems.



MY ANGER



- I am entitled to be angry because _____
- I can release anger safely by _____
- Anger helps me to _____
- I can see where anger has changed the world _____
- I am working on changing the world by _____
- I would like to say _____



MY ANGER



- I would like to _____
- If I chose to, I could report

- I like imagining _____
- The best revenge is living well, so I

- I am going to release anger by



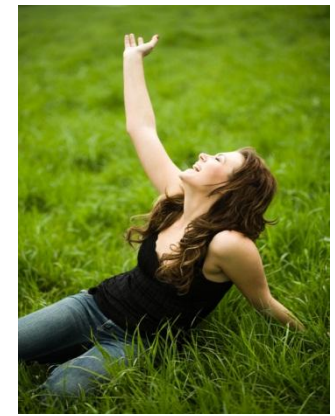
AUTONOMY (FREEDOM)



- This healing area means being **free to choose what you want for your life.**
- You are no longer trapped in a situation of abuse – for some it takes time to realize that. Fear can have a long shadow.
- You do not have to rely on others for your survival. **You are an adult with options.**



MY AUTONOMY



- I have the right to determine what I will do
- I am not here only to serve others and their burdens
- I can learn how to have good boundaries with people
- I can learn to back pushy people off
- I can learn how to meet my own needs
- I can learn and respect my own limits if I practice





MY AUTONOMY

- I can make my limits known to others
- I can respect the limits of others
- I realize that I am my own gatekeeper
- I won't be able..., I'm sorry but..., unfortunately,...no can do
- I will but...(put your conditions here)



ATTACHMENT



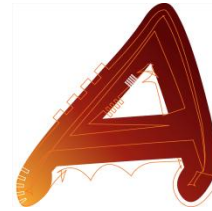
- Forming, valuing and maintaining **relationships that enrich your life** is another healing step.
- The attachment with someone who cares for and respects you will enable further growth.
- Attachments which are meaningful do not necessarily involve a 'romantic' partner. Pets can help here!



MY ATTACHMENTS

- I often think about
- I dearly love
- I am truly fond of
- I always have a laugh with
- I feel at peace with
- I share a common bond with





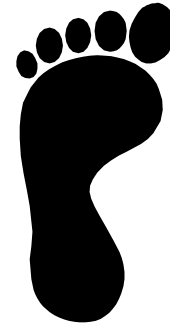
ASSERTION

- Abuse may have taught you to feel empty and silence yourself, or learn to be invisible.
- Assertion means you can **BE**. You **ARE**. You **EXIST AND HAVE A RIGHT TO EXIST**.
- Assertiveness skills can be practiced and refined.
- Assertion helps you end silence and stand your ground too.
- Your assertiveness helps you **take back power that is yours**.



MY ASSERTION

- I have a right to be...
- I have a right to expect...
- I deserve dignity...
- I am worthy...
- I can balance my life with...
- I am able to...



MY ASSERTION

- I have strengths and can...
- I can believe in...
- I can trust myself to...
- I expect courtesy...
- I believe in my worth therefore...
- I will not let anyone...



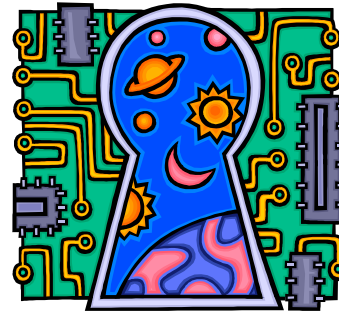
AFFIRMATION



- Affirmation is moving toward something you value. You realize you are whole and life is yours.
- It is finding **in** yourself something you want to bring forward – your creative self...your adventurous self... and so on.
- It is also affirming connection with the **universe** – the connection with life.



MY AFFIRMATIONS



- My inner voice says I want to
- My inner voice says I need to
- I feel most connected with the universe when I
- I feel most connected with humanity when I



THE SEVEN A'S

- Acceptance
- Awareness
- Anger
- Autonomy
- Attachment
- Assertion
- Affirmation



CONGRATULATIONS

- You are now a graduate of SAIL Program
- – Stage 1 !

