

# TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

INTRODUCTORY TRAINING COURSE



Developed in partnership with Tim Fletcher Co.  
Available on the Adult & Teen Challenge Bridge Training platform.

[TIMFLETCHER.CA](http://TIMFLETCHER.CA)

*Complex Trauma is the missing piece that sheds light on all kinds of problems people face in life. Undetected, it affects every aspect of a person ...* - Tim Fletcher

## **TRIGGER WARNING**

*The material in this booklet may be triggering for some readers, especially for those who have suffered from extreme forms of abuse. Try your best to work through the material as an observer and allow yourself to work through the emotions or memories by going to a safe place in your mind.*

*If you are feeling triggered at any time, please tune out the video, leave the room or put the material down.*

*Ensure you have supports or loved ones in place as you work to process or request help with grounding techniques from your facilitators.*

THRIVING BEYOND™  
COMPLEX TRAUMA

**REACT**

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# SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

*Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.*

- Genesis 1: 26 (NIV)

## CONNECTING TO GOD AND TO EACH OTHER

Our God has designed us to be in, and have relationships with Him, ourselves, our partners, our families and the world around us. This relational intent is implemented during the time when God was creating the world in all its beauty. There is a lot to unpack in the original account of Creation, but let's begin by looking at the perfect design that came before the fall into sin.

On each day God creates the world, the words, "Let there be \_\_\_\_" repeated day after day. However, on the day man was created, God uses "us" and "our" - plural. This indicates that God is more than one person and on the day He creates man, introduces Himself as a Trinity. He is united as the Father, Son and Spirit. It also indicates how He has intended for us to live. Not alone, rather, in harmony with our own version of "Father, Son and Spirit" with others.

God created Adam and Eve as His first humans. They lived in the Garden of Eden, enjoying abundance, true connection with each other and a relationship with God. When the serpent talked Eve into eating fruit from the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil", then shared it with Adam, they broke the connection with God, themselves, each other, and with the world around them. God, in His grace, removed them from the garden, so they wouldn't eat from another tree, the "Tree of Life ". If they did, it would have resulted in a never-ending life of suffering for humanity.

All of us have an inherent need to connect deeply with others - someone we can be our authentic selves with and who will love us unconditionally. This relationship is designed to be developed with our primary caregivers. Human infants are born with a great deal of dependence and need to be nurtured for a number of years, before they are able to become independent. Bonds created in connection and nurturing is God's perfectly-designed key to happiness and joy.

Complex Trauma breaks these natural bonds at a very early age. Absent parents, lack of nurture, time, love, attention, validation, broken promises and unmet emotional needs are all themes in this environment. Children may never experience a healthy bond, yet remain hard-wired to seek it. Attempts at intimate relationships expose all our flaws and challenges us to become authentic with each other. This is scary. It's hard to take our walls down and masks off. We are designed to be in relationships, yet Complex Trauma sets us up with a distorted view of love, unrealistic expectations, lack of value and makes us unable to cope well in relationships.

This first module explains what Complex Trauma is. It ties the events that happen in this life of brokenness, back to the initial response of Adam and Eve after the fall - shame. You will see that in every event where someone suffers from the effects of brokenness, the emotional responses of pain, fear, insecurity, anxiety, depression are instinctive.

God's Word also holds the key to eternal happiness and fulfillment when we enter a healthy, loving, respectful relationship with a partner. The Trinity for us is where two walk in relationship with God and we three become One, living in deep connection with joy and happiness. Combining this information with the Living Word, will bring peace, healing and the possibility of relationship success.



MODULE

01

# WHAT IS TRAUMA?

*Complex Trauma is the missing piece that sheds light on all kinds of problems people face in life. Undetected, it affects every aspect of a person ...*

*- Tim Fletcher*

## INTRODUCTION TO TRAUMA

Carbon Monoxide is a tasteless, colorless, odorless gas that wreaks havoc on the body. The core danger that existed before we had Carbon Monoxide detectors, was that it went unnoticed. As people fought against the symptoms of this poisonous gas, it continued to do its damage. Complex Trauma operates much in the same way. Often, it goes undetected. It's poison wreaks havoc on the body, mind, heart and soul-demolishing anything in its wake. Now that we have become aware of Complex Trauma, we have been able to effectively identify detectors and address the symptoms.

The definition of trauma is an event that a person perceives as being both dangerous and beyond their ability to handle. They fear they will be hurt, die or go crazy.

We have identified two main types of trauma:

1. **Isolated** – a one-time horrific event such as a car crash or assault
2. **Complex** – repeated instances or ongoing circumstances where someone does not feel safe. The person has an inability to fully relax when they feel alone, or in keeping themselves safe in handling the world.

# THE BRAIN

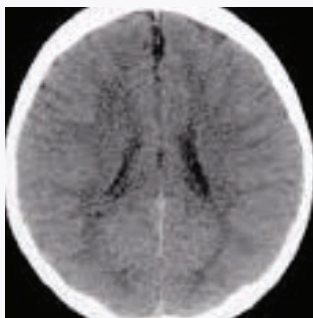
Our brains were designed to look for ways to keep us safe. As infants and toddlers, we feel our way through life, expecting others to meet our basic needs and protect us from harm.

In Complex Trauma, children have been neglected, abandoned and their needs were not met consistently. The brain uses the emotional system, known as the limbic system to develop ways for a child to survive.

The frequent chemical production of adrenaline and cortisol keeps the limbic system on hyper alert and in adulthood, the brain remains in overdrive. It develops the following defects including:

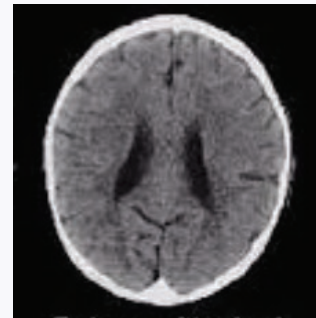
- An enlarged or hyperactive limbic system (Fight, Flight, Freeze is signalled even at the slightest thing)
- An underdeveloped prefrontal cortex
- Hyper-aware brain stem
- Malformed amygdala (in some cases, an amygdala barely exists)
- Hormone imbalances

## NORMAL BRAIN



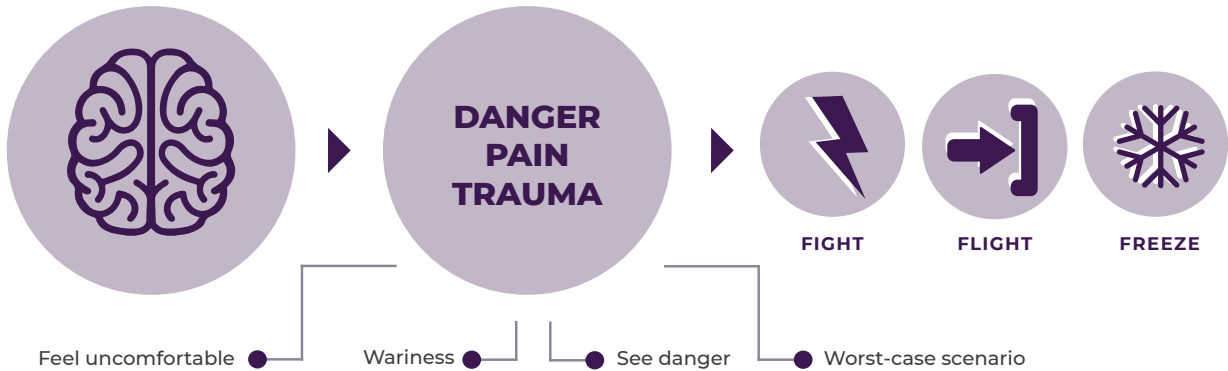
A scan of a normal three-year-old growing up in a healthy home. They are constantly learning, growing and challenged to learn new tasks. They feel safe, secure, nurtured and loved.

## EXTREME NEGLECT



A scan of a three-year-old child who has been neglected. This shows that the brain is smaller and the cell areas are bigger. The child has been neglected and not challenged to learn new tasks. They also feel unsafe, unloved and alone.

There are various forms and severities of Complex Trauma. As it becomes more severe, brain deficits and survival responses become more severe. This compensates for the person's shame. (We will learn more about shame in Section 2).



People who suffer from Complex Trauma will often deploy a child-like response to adverse circumstances. These learned, protective behaviours were developed in childhood by the emotional or limbic brain system, which served as a coping mechanism to keep them safe. The Fight, Flight or Freeze/Fawn response may have served them well in their early and teen years but are not suitable ways of coping as an adult.

**FIGHT:**

Use words and actions to combat the situation as a way to protect themselves. In adulthood, this can result in anger issues, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, difficulty with authority, or manipulation through lying. Even if the authority is safe, they may feel compelled to fight back.

**FLIGHT:**

Do anything to escape from difficult circumstances. In adulthood, this can result in an inability to stick around during conflict. They become flaky, unable to resolve issues and may physically walk or run away from responsibilities.

**FREEZE/ FAWN:**

Mentally block out what is happening and emotionally shut down. They walk on egg shells, are always on guard and can't trust anyone but themselves for safety.

In adulthood, none of their learned techniques work. They may turn to substance addictions to numb the pain.

**WATCH THE VIDEO**

LIVE LINK - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F0nbJ6VWjE>

TYPE INTO YOUTUBE SEARCH: 60 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPLEX TRAUMA - PTSD VS CPTSD



# CAUSES OF COMPLEX TRAUMA

*That's not traumatic... I've been through much worse... I don't have trauma... Nothing really bad ever happened to me... but I had a good childhood... My parents really loved me... I don't have to look into the past, I'm not headed in that direction...*  
- RE/ACT Clients

Complex Trauma are two words that people either run from or dismiss. For some, it may bring up feelings of danger and for others, they have never considered it as applying to them. Many people view trauma as an 'isolated' incident and are unaware of how it affects every person in some way.

Unknowingly, it can shape a person's character as it becomes part of the way they have learned how to live, cope and relate to others.

Complete the following self-assessment.

**Link to C-PTSD Self Assessment - need link to LSM (if going on that route)**

## THE CAUSES OF TRAUMA:

### 1. ABUSE

- Emotional, spiritual, sexual, physical (mild to severe), cultural abuse

### 2. ABANDONMENT

- Adoption, CFS involvement, workaholic parent, divorce, death of a parent or severe illness, constant moving, bullying

### 3. NEGLECT

- Emotional or physical. Includes a lack of attachment or sense of belonging

### 4. NEEDS NOT BEING MET - (mild to severe)

Complex Trauma is about surviving in an unsafe world. Fear is the overriding emotion which creates depression, anxiety and an impulse to pull away from healthy attachments or relationships with others. These responses negatively affect how we regulate ourselves:

- **INTELLECTUALLY – HOW WE THINK**

Affects the development of the brain linked to problems with behaviour, learning, dealing with emotions, mental and physical health.

- **EMOTIONALLY - HOW WE FEEL**

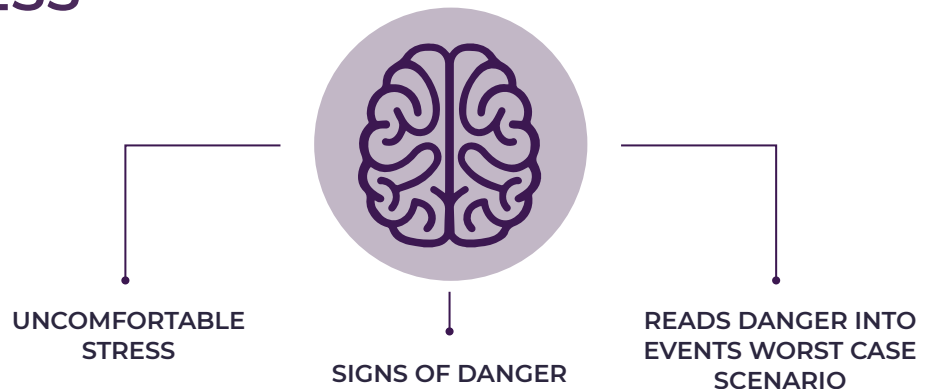
When there is no solution to painful or traumatic circumstances, children cope by trying to have their needs met by not getting hurt. This sets them up to not have their needs met in a healthy way.

- **RELATIONALLY - HOW WE RELATE**

Complex Trauma is not entirely the result of living in an environment of danger; it is living in an environment of danger with no one to help them. They feel all alone. The ones who were supposed to be there for them with helpful tools (parents or primary caregivers) weren't.

## TRAUMA & STRESS

In normal circumstances, our limbic system feels uncomfortable stress, alerting us that there is a sign of danger. Something is causes extreme distress. In a healthy environment, the issue would be resolved and the brain would return to a sense of safety and calm.



In a Complex Trauma environment, the limbic system has been trained that any uncomfortable stress is never resolved. The natural reaction is to read danger and worst case scenario into everything.

With no healthy way to resolve perceived danger, people become triggered and escalate from calm to great intensity in a nanosecond. They sabotage things when they are going well and will run from conflict, push people away and create distractions for themselves.

When we know better, we can do better. This ties in directly with the Adult & Teen Challenge Commitment to “Do no harm”. By understanding Complex Trauma, we will be able to react and respond to ourselves and others in a way that helps people find healing.

# HOW WE'RE CREATED

*Created in the image of God, man is designed to live in whole, intimate relationships with his Creator, his helper, the land and animals around him, and with others. Sin, and Complex Trauma breaks down that intimacy.* - Tim Fletcher

Humans were created with instinctive, natural and biological drives of hunger, thirst, sex, purpose, pleasure, intimacy and awe. These are requirements of our human need to survive. Knowing how to meet our needs, while remaining in control of these drives, is imperative to recovery.

We have identified there are 12 Needs humans require in order to become whole. If one or more of these needs were not met consistently, the brain looks for ways to meet those needs or solve problems. One solution is to use food, activities, drugs and/ or alcohol to numb the pain. If left unchecked, the 12 Needs can be overindulged because the greater number of needs not met, the greater the hole in the heart.

Unhealthy coping tools are developed when they try to find wholeness in the wrong way. Addictions or unhealthy coping mechanisms are perceived as the problem but, to the user, they're seen as the "solution".

The 12 Needs are broken into three categories: physical, emotional and spiritual.

## 12 NEEDS

### PHYSICAL NEEDS

1. Food, water, clothing and shelter
2. Physical activity, natural biological drives (sex)
3. Pleasure, hobbies, entertainment, past times

### EMOTIONAL NEEDS

4. Acceptance, respect, nurture, love, comfort, tenderness - despite different personalities, physical appearance or limitations
5. Relationships, belonging - intimacy, deeper and meaningful friendships, inclusion
6. Safety, security and fairness - modelled consistent, loving boundaries
7. Purpose, significance - a sense of value, truth about what we're good at

8. Rest - plan it into my day

9. Beauty - appreciation for art, sunrises, sunsets, flowers, etc.

## **SPIRITUAL NEEDS**

10. Awe - something that takes us out of ourselves (music, sports, travel)

11. God - a contentment must be found in understanding that we, as humans, are not able to control everything that happens. We all have a sense of purpose. We think we don't need to be connected spiritually and we feel empty and discontent, yet we all have a sense of purpose. If we avoid the God need, we can have a "hole in our heart" and never feel fulfilled.

**Observation #1** - All of these appetites provide us the ingredients of a healthy, meaningful life. If all 11 drives exist in balance, we will feel contentment and wholeness. If one of these is missing, then we do not feel whole or complete.

That creates in us a final drive.

12. Happy, joyful, content, satisfied, whole - this happens when our needs are met

Recovery happens when a person learns to meet each of the 12 Needs in a healthy way with safe people.

# SAFETY - AN ONGOING JOURNEY

*There is no better teacher than one who has gone before us and travelled the road themselves. This is why we have such a strong connection and love for Jesus.*

- Tim Fletcher

Our family of origin or caregivers designed the survival tool box we use to live, cope and relate. Trauma causes us to pick up hundreds of unhealthy tools. We have no way of knowing this as their use was role-modelled. Compare this to using an open-ended wrench. Without proper instruction, such a tool may be used as a hammer or to pry something open, but that is not what its original intent was as outlined by God. Once someone learns that an open-ended wrench is for loosening nuts, they can begin to employ the tool in the correct way. Through more skill and training, someone may learn that the wrench when turned around, or flipped over has more definite and intricate uses that come in handy for different applications. The learning journey continues, and the tools become more useful with practice.

Unhealthy tools provide short-term benefits but are unsustainable for the long run. Continued use damages ourselves, others and our relationships.

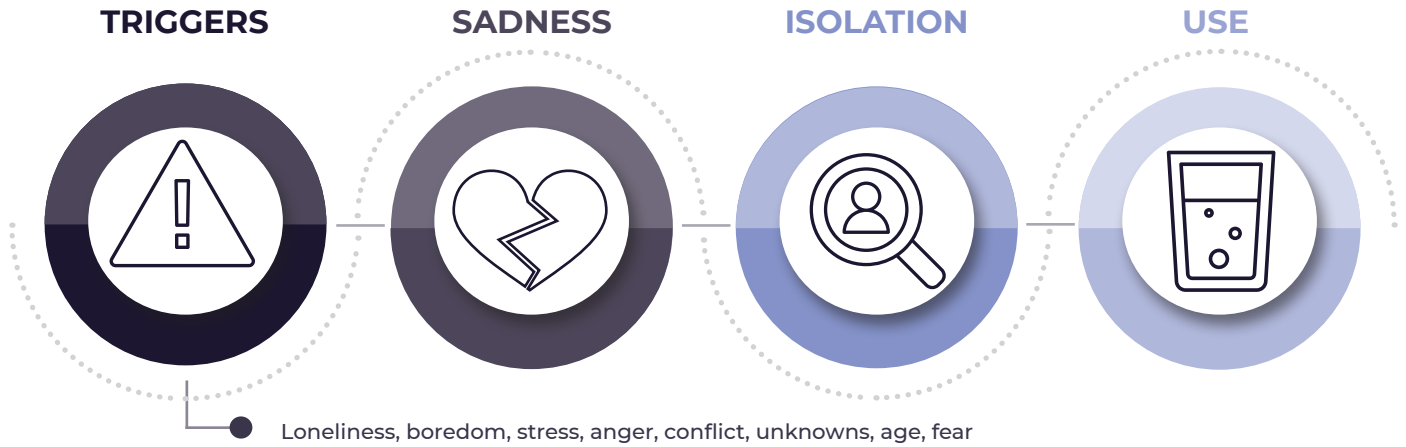
Healing requires us to examine the tools we use and honestly assess whether they serve us in building a healthy life.

We can declutter our toolbox by weeding out tools that cause us more harm than protection.

When we leave unhealthy coping tools unaddressed, it results in a lack of connection and attachment. There is no room to build healthy habits and relationships.

The journey of recovery can be compared to a major surgery. Our lives have been in such a mess, with so much damage, we need a team of professionals to operate and patch up the wounds, knowing we have a long road of rehabilitation ahead. It may feel like a war at times as we take on unhealthy brain-wired patterns and change to living a healthier life. We need to have the right supports in place to move forward.

A new brain circuit (or tool) may take awhile to engrain into our new habits and it feels unnatural to do so. It can take two to five years before we don't have to think about how to do it. The key is to stop the old circuit and learn new habits and behaviours.



Recovery is a hard road. We may have to leave toxic people behind. They make the journey difficult and aren't interested in changing. They will want to pull us back into the old way of life and they will wear us down.

This course is merely an introduction to healthy tools and how to replace the old ones. For more education, Tim Fletcher's LIFT Online Learning Programs offer additional resources.

## WATCH THE VIDEO

LIVE LINK - <https://youtu.be/9mDvdaWaKFI> (Time: 02:04 - 18:01)

TYPE INTO YOUTUBE SEARCH: RECOVERY DANGERS - PART 8/10 - AFTER FAILURE

# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. As an adult, do you feel that all your needs are consistently met?

2. Which ones are missing in your life? Why have these needs gone unmet?

3. As a child did you go into fight, flight or freeze mode in order to deal with pain, fear or other uncomfortable emotions?

4. What was your most common response?

5. What circumstances caused you to fight, flight or freeze?

6. Share an example of how you can use these above experiences to connect and empathize with clients?

7. What were your thoughts on the explanation of our perfect design, orchestrated by our amazing Creator?

8. Is there anything you wish you learned more about?

# SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

*You have made known to me the Path of Life;  
You will forever fill me with Joy in Your Presence.*

*- Psalm: 16:11*

We are created to live in the presence of God.

God enjoyed intimate, quality time with Adam and Eve as He walked and talked with them In the Garden of Eden. They enjoyed the paradise that Eden offered. (Eden means “paradise” or “peace, shalom”).

When Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, this intimate relationship was broken. Adam and Eve hid in shame.

Hiding is the first reaction people instinctively have when something within a relationship is broken. Children cover from their parents, run away or fight back in shame. It is up to the parents to find ways to restore that feeling of intimacy and connection, not the children. God shows us how this is done throughout the Bible.

God placed a cherubim at the entrance to the garden to keep a distance between Adam and Eve and himself. This separation would not last eternally. When Jesus died on the cross, we read in Matthew 27:51 that after Jesus “gave up His Spirit”, “And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.”





### How is this connected?

When the temple was built, God instructed King Solomon to weave a curtain that was three stories high, and 30 feet wide. It was designed to separate the people from the “Most Holy Place”. Intricately woven on this curtain were large cherubim, just like the ones placed in the Garden of Eden.

The tearing of the curtain, upon Jesus’s death, showed a restoration of God’s intimate relationship with His people. The curtain was torn from top to bottom, which symbolized the tearing of one’s robes. This was customary in biblical times when the father would tear his own clothes after the death of one of his sons. God’s own Son had died, but not in vain. This death meant God could dwell again among His people and give them peace, “shalom”, in this life.

David foreshadows this relationship restored when he sings Psalm 16:11, “on You have made known to me the Path of Life; You will forever fill me with Joy in Your Presence”. What a beautiful lesson for us today!

Relationships are broken in Complex Trauma, it happens all the time. Healthy parents and caregivers must always remain focused on what restoration looks like for the person who is sitting in their grief, guilt and shame. It begins with being confident in our belief that restoration is possible through Jesus.

The path to success is not about world conquest as some would believe. It’s about sacrifice, shown ultimately in the death of Christ. We, as image-bearers, have one of the most humbling and rewarding callings. We are a mirror and offer the tools for healing and restoration to ourselves, others, and ultimately, God.

MODULE  
**02**

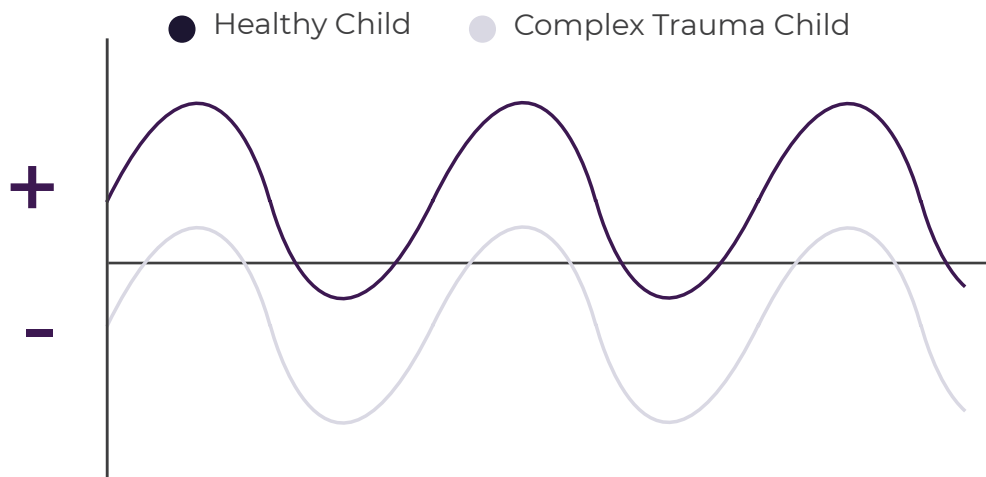
# HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS US

*Trauma is not what happens to you; but what happens inside you as a result of what happened to you.*

- Gabor Maté

Trauma is described as an:

- **Event** - one-time or ongoing
- **Experience and Emotion** - something happened and made us feel something inside
- **Response** - what did the person do? Fight, Flight or Freeze?



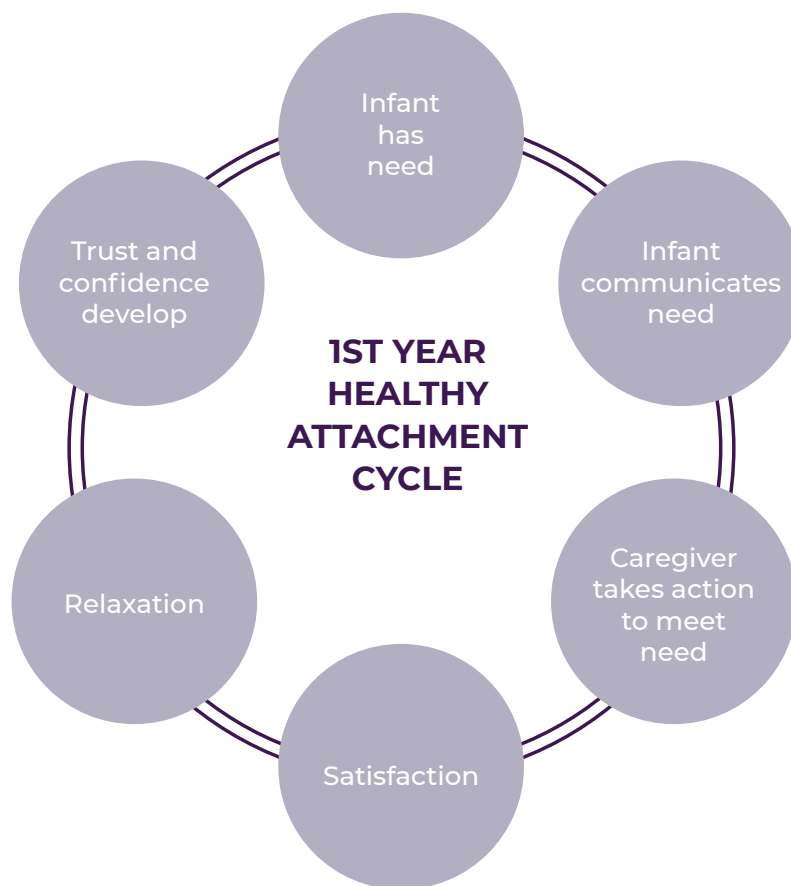
In a healthy home, children have many positive experiences as they are encouraged to try things, be creative, grow and expand. This natural loving cycle may have a few negative dips in the experience but the parents teach the child tools and offer resources to handle problems and circumstances.

In a Complex Trauma home, a child encounters more negative experiences than positive. The positive ones are few and far between and the negative ones are met with little to no resolve. This negative pattern is first changed with awareness.

# HOW WE DEALT WITH IT AS CHILDREN

Children who grow up in healthy environments feel supported. They are taught boundaries and have safe, healthy adults who support a learning environment, while showing unconditional love.

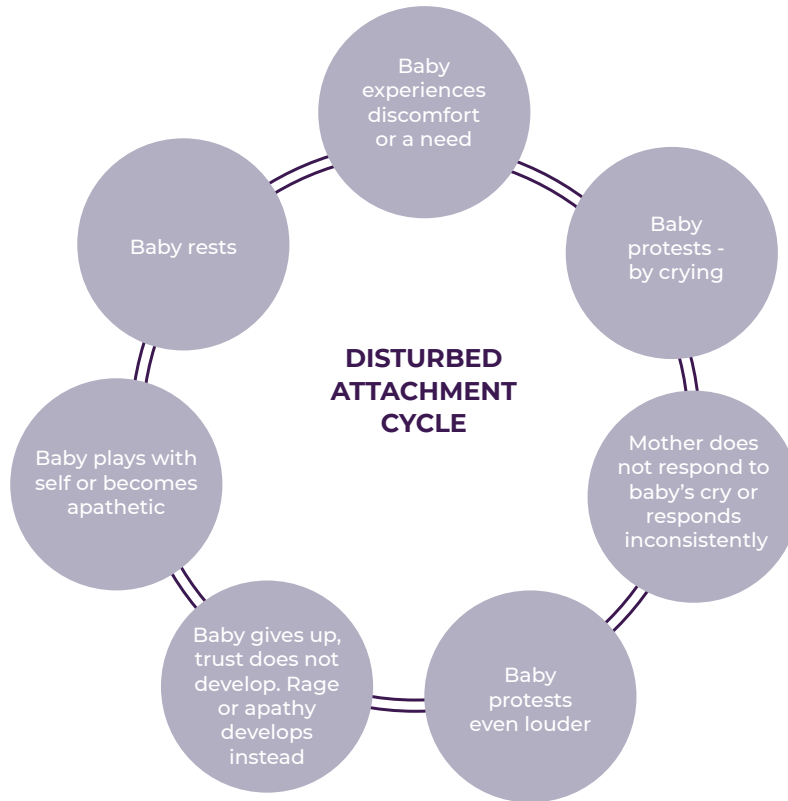
A healthy home teaches a child they have value for who they are and they are lovable.



The baby living in the healthy attachment cycle, with their needs met consistently, grows up trusting their caregivers will keep them safe. They are free to be authentic and experience unconditional love.

Growing up in an unstable environment, or with unhealthy caregivers, makes a child think there is something inherently wrong with them. They learn not to trust, to not be authentic, to earn love, and to not connect with others. They believe they are unlovable and anyone who gets to know them will eventually hurt or abandon them.

As infants, when they have a need, such as feeling hungry, cold, or thirsty, their stress response system becomes activated - baby cries. The same response occurs when infants are not feeling connected, are unable to connect with safe people, or are not having their 12 Needs met.



Internal systems become out of balance. Our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health is affected negatively and this impacts relationships and connection. Our brain knows the parameters of healthy and unhealthy. Our brain and body know balance. They require homeostasis in order to connect to each other to maintain a sense of well-being.

An unhealthy home teaches children they don't have value and are not good enough to be loved. There are three emotions that are predominate in unhealthy families - mad, sad, glad.

A misuse or overuse of negative emotions will bring out negative behaviours.

## WATCH THE VIDEO

LIVE LINK -<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZBucZXh9Ko> ( Time: 01:42 - 08:53)  
TYPE INTO YOUTUBE SEARCH: RE-PARENTING - PART 9 - HURT

# CHARACTERISTICS DEVELOPED TO KEEP US SAFE

*Not being aware of what's going on inside of us is one of the most dangerous things for a person with trauma in recovery.*

- Tim Fletcher

## Common questions about recovering from trauma:

- Does it still affect the person months and years later?
- Does the stress response of that event continue to be their response years later?
- Do the things they did to survive (their adaptations) continue to be their main ways of coping today?

The characteristics developed in childhood to stay safe, become the way we move through life. They were good for survival, as children, but these maladaptive behaviours hinder us from thriving, ongoing healing, developing healthy coping skills and relationships.

The survival characteristics developed in Complex Trauma teach our brain to believe lies through sensory and memory.

Based on experience, these things seem to be the truth:

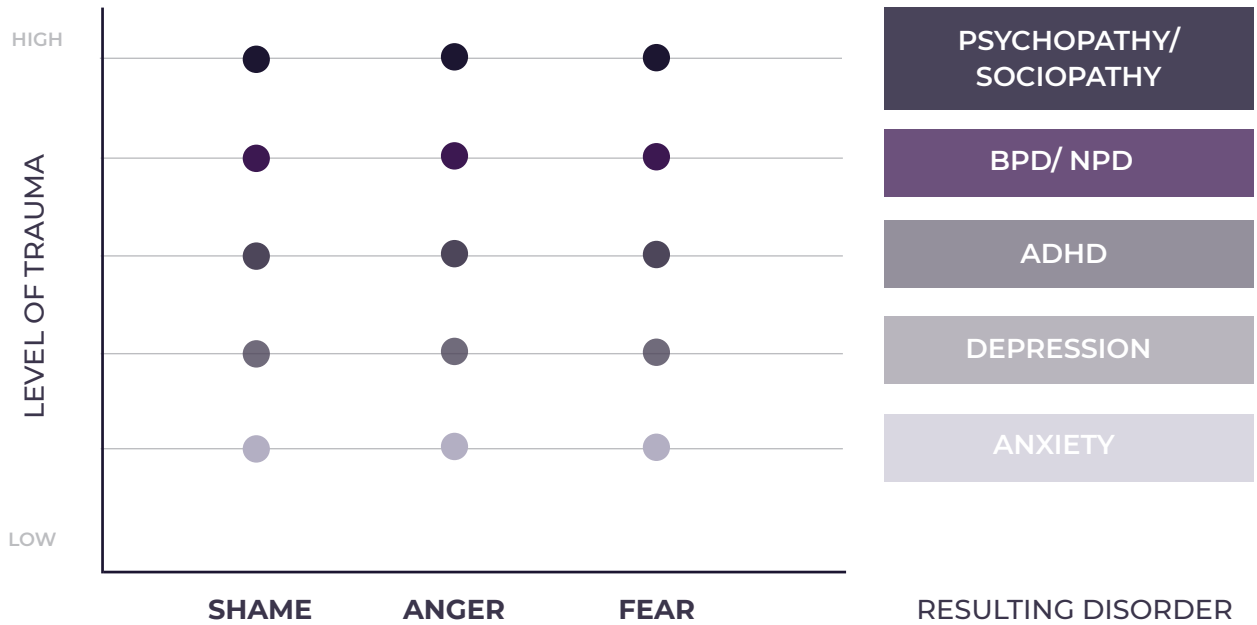
- People can't be trusted
- It is selfish to have needs
- Have shame surrounding their authentic self due to rejection. They don't want to connect because they believe it will cause pain in the end

Maladaptive ways of coping and relating are unhealthy behaviours that become the faulty programming of our subconscious brain.

It affects the autonomic nervous system, immune system, mental health, brain development, physical health, emotions, thinking, coping and relationships, all in a negative way.

Brain chemicals such as dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins are lacking and out of balance. These chemicals create feelings of love, happiness, pleasure, connection and well-being.

Unfortunately, for those living in danger, the main brain chemical produced becomes cortisol. This is a fear-based oxytocin. An over production of these chemicals is a result of the majority of emotions experienced being negative or painful. This causes deficits in mental health. The more severe trauma that was experienced, the greater in severity the mental health challenges will be.



# 60 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPLEX TRAUMA TEST CHECKLIST

## WAYS OF LIVING

The following 29 questions give us an idea of how Complex Trauma affects the way we LIVE.

1. **Change in Priorities.** When you enter a public space or a friends house, do you look for the nearest exit or have to sit in a spot to look out a window to look out for danger?

- Not true       True       Always       Never       Yes  
 A little true       Very true       Don't know       Sometimes       No

2. **Fear of Getting Hurt.** Do you avoid certain people, going to places or engaging in circumstances for fear of being hurt?

- Not true       True       Always       Never       Yes  
 A little true       Very true       Don't know       Sometimes       No

3. **Fear of Change.** Do changes in your routine or family upset you?

- Not true       True       Always       Never       Yes  
 A little true       Very true       Don't know       Sometimes       No

4. **Fear of the Unknown.** Do you believe it is better to stay in an unhealthy or abusive situation rather than leave and face the unknown?

- Not true       True       Always       Never       Yes  
 A little true       Very true       Don't know       Sometimes       No

5. **Fear of Failure.** Do you fear failing and avoid it at all costs?

- Not true       True       Always       Never       Yes  
 A little true       Very true       Don't know       Sometimes       No

6. **Fear of Success.** When things are going well, do you feel uncomfortable and expect something bad to happen?

- Not true       True       Always       Never       Yes  
 A little true       Very true       Don't know       Sometimes       No

**7. Afraid to Hope.** Whenever parents or teachers make promises, are you afraid to hope they may come true?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**8. Afraid to Care.** Do you ever convince yourself you don't care, when deep down you really do?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**9. Negative and Critical Mindset.** Do you always look at life from a negative point of view and criticize other people, places or circumstances?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**10. Desire to Return to Old Ways.** Do you believe it would be easier to return to a familiar old way of living rather than change and learn new healthy habits?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**11. Anxiety Issues.** Do you live in a constant state of fear or worry?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**12. Don't Handle Stress.** Do you get anxious, nervous or stressed out when you have a big test or project due?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**13. Avoid Conflict.** Do you associate conflict with danger and avoid it at all costs?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**14. Depression.** Do you feel sad for long periods of time and nothing makes you happy or feel better?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |



15. **Distorted Thinking.** Do you frequently believe something only to discover that it is not true?

Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

16. **Hypersensitive to Disrespect.** Do you feel unimportant, ashamed, humiliated, bullied, put down or laughed at by family members or friends?

Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

17. **Hypersensitive to Criticism.** When someone gives you feedback, do you feel you are being criticized and shamed?

Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

18. **Judge Ourselves Harshly.** When you do something silly, foolish or wrong or get a low score on a test, do you beat yourself up and feel like a loser?

Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

19. **Power and Authority.** When given a task, do you start acting like a bully or look down on other co-workers?

Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

20. **Operate by a Double Standard.** Do you believe there are two sets of rules? One for a stronger person and another for everyone else?

Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

21. **People Pleaser.** Do you feel you have to fix everyone and make them happy? Do and say what others want so they will love us?

Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

22. **False Guilt.** Do you ever feel guilty or remorse for something someone else did? Or been blamed for something others did that was hurtful?

Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

23. **Don't Know Who You Are.** Do you frequently feel like you don't know who you are or were meant to be?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

24. **Addicted to Chaos or Risky Behaviours.** Do you thrive on drama, chaos or doing risky things that gives you a rush of adrenaline?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

25. **Great Starters. Poor Finishers.** Do you always feel energized when you start a project or something new, then quickly lose interest?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

26. **Instant Gratification.** Do you live by the motto, "Do it now because it feels good?"

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

27. **Unpredictable or Explosive.** Do your moods or personality make you unpredictable to others or do you explode in anger and drive people away?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

28. **Promise More Than Can Deliver.** Have you ever made promises or taken on projects that became bigger than you could handle?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

29. **Anger Issues.** Do you turn your anger into a weapon with your words or actions to hurt someone?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

## WAYS OF COPING

The following Characteristics identify how we COPE.

30. **Lies.** Do you sometimes lie, even when it's just as easy to tell the truth?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

31. **Emotional Stuffing.** Do you live by the three rules, “Don’t feel, don’t trust and don’t talk?”

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don’t know               Sometimes               No

32. **Escape Through Fantasy.** Do you spend a lot of time in an imaginary world, playing video games, watching movies, reading or writing?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don’t know               Sometimes               No

33. **Sabotage.** Do you throw a wrench into success when things are going good or end a relationship because it seems too good to be true?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don’t know               Sometimes               No

34. **Image is More Important.** Do you believe your image is more important than being real or authentic?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don’t know               Sometimes               No

35. **Blame.** Do you often blame someone else for the problems in your life? Do you always have excuses for incomplete tasks or assignments?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don’t know               Sometimes               No

36. **Victim Mentality.** Do you often feel like a victim? Feel helpless or ‘poor me’?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don’t know               Sometimes               No

37. **Stopped Growing Emotionally.** Do you feel stuck at the age you were when you experienced trauma?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don’t know               Sometimes               No

38. **Super Responsible, Super Irresponsible.** Do you resonate with one or the other?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don’t know               Sometimes               No

**39. Addiction.** Do you feel you are addicted to drugs, alcohol or something else?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

Your scores here determine how you cope in life. The following ways is how your body copes to protect you.

**SOMATIC:**

**40. Memory Gaps.** Do you feel you can't remember things that happened in the past?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**41. Panic Attacks.** Do you have trouble sleeping, feel scared and anxious but don't know why?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**42. Other Responses.** Do you have any unexplained or diagnosed aches, pains or illnesses?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**WAYS OF RELATING**

The following Characteristics fall into the category of how we RELATE.

**43. Wear Masks.** Do you ever pretend to look and act how others want us to in order to fit in?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**44. Isolate.** Do you ever want to isolate from everyone? Move away to start over? Become invisible?  
Or turn off our emotions?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

**45. Manipulate.** Have you become an expert at getting people to do things for you?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

46. **A Burden.** Do you often feel like asking someone for help with a task or problem will inconvenience or put them out somehow?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

47. **Trust Issues.** Do you have a hard time trusting people to keep you safe? Or do you trust everyone you meet?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

48. **Shame.** Do you believe you are not valuable, loveable or good enough?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

49. **Authority Issues.** Do you deliberately defy, rebel against or push back when asked to do something?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

50. **Boundary Issues.** Do you fear someone will be mad at you if you don't do as they ask? Even if you don't feel comfortable?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

51. **Attachment Issues.** Do you really want to feel close to somebody but are afraid of what that means?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

52. **Healthy vs Unhealthy Bonding.** Do you feel safe, protected, loved and cherished? Or do you tune out, are disorganized, angry or feel insecure?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

53. **Helper or Needy?** In your relationships which role do you play, the helper or the needy one?

- Not true       True               Always               Never               Yes  
 A little true       Very true               Don't know               Sometimes               No

54. **Distorted View of Love.** Do you feel you have healthy understanding of what love is?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

55. **Many Insecurities.** Do you have a lot of insecurities about our personality, bodies, the way we look, think, act and feel?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

56. **Deep Longing for Validation.** Do you long to know you are valued for who you are, the things you do and for being you?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

57. **Unhealthy Value.** Do you base your value on external criteria? For your looks, brains, talents, personality or money?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

58. **Jealousy Issues.** Are you jealous of your friends or family spending time with other people or doing things without you?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

59. **Don't Know What Loyalty Is.** Do you believe that you have to be loyal to your family, no matter what? That 'blood is thicker than water'?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

60. **Fear of Abandonment.** Do you fear being left alone or rejected by our caregivers and friends?

- |  |                                    |                                     |                                    |                              |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not true      | <input type="checkbox"/> True      | <input type="checkbox"/> Always     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little true | <input type="checkbox"/> Very true | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> No  |

This test is designed to create self awareness of our level of Complex Trauma. Take note of those characteristics you have marked as true and those you have marked as sometimes. These could be sensitive areas and an opportunity to explore, heal and grow.

# COMPASSIONATE CARE

*Complex Trauma often happens at a young age and a subconscious level. For a person to begin to heal and change they need to develop a self awareness of what happened and how it affects them.*

- Tim Fletcher

Think of the protagonist (hero) in your favourite movie or book. Do you relate to that person? Often, the motive to stay tuned or to keep reading is formed in our minds when we find a kinship or relatability with the protagonist of the storyline. We call this “The Hero’s Journey”. We watch or read about them overcoming challenges and we ache to be the same as them. We want their stamina, charisma, willpower and fortitude. We may not even realize why, but we like them. Does this sound like Jesus Christ?

This is how clients find safety in our courses. As facilitators and coaches, we take our cue from our Saviour. In humility, we become mentors; our hearts beat right along with theirs. If we can create a safe place for clients to feel loved and whole again (their 12 Needs become met), they’ll be inclined to open up about their past trauma. They will feel guided by us, by our knowledge, heart and instinct.

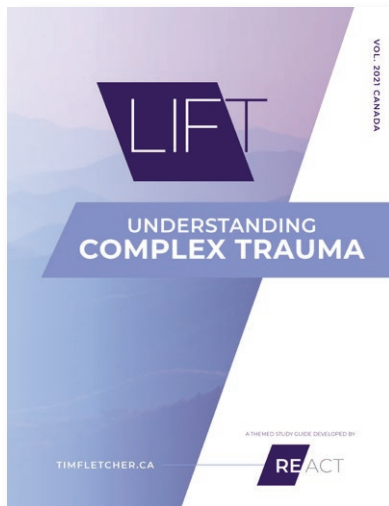
That’s what healing from addictions and mental unwellness is all about. By forming healthy relationships with those we can mirror or learn directly from, we are compelled to mimic people who we find the strongest connection with. We learned this skill as babies!

We must learn how to become fully engaged mentors - the type of people who need and help others. As “co-people”, we become those who are able to come alongside others and assist them in healing from Complex Trauma, while continuing to work on our own stuff. Think of it as jumping into the car with our clients and travelling down the carpool lane for a mile or fifty in their life. We keep an eye on the navigation system and call the guy in the helicopter above for directions if we get lost.

As we travel through this course, we may stumble a bit and that’s natural. It takes time to become comfortable with new roles especially as facilitators and/ or coaches. We may feel under or over qualified to take this training. We may not have years of training and experience that our instructors may have. Or, we may have years of training and experience but have become stuck in paradigms in an industry that has room for improvement.

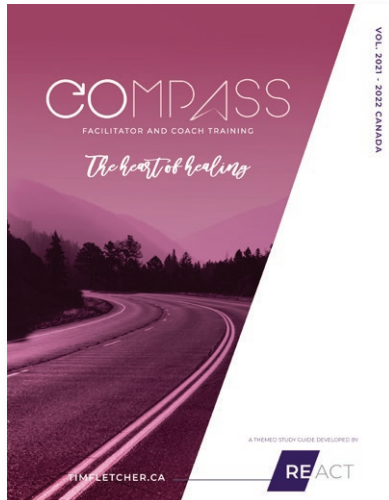
We need to find a level playing field, as we have players coming from so many different levels of experience, backgrounds, skills and knowledge. The intellect we all bring to this course is directed towards the goal of achieving successful client outcomes.

Below are courses offered through our TEACH environment at Tim Fletcher Co.



## **LIFT** Online Learning Program

A 15 week Complex Trauma course designed to uncover the root cause of addiction or mental health issues.



## **COMPASS** Coach and Facilitator Program

Offered to LIFT graduates, this program teaches how to build effective relationships with clients in peer-to-peer settings.



# TIMING IS IMPORTANT

*Compassionate curiosity about the self does not mean liking everything we find out about ourselves, only that we look at ourselves with the same nonjudgmental acceptance we would wish to accord anyone else who suffered and who needed help.*

- Gabor Maté

## Do no harm - timing is important

Many therapies address the process with clients by starting with a memory, being triggered and then dissociating. How do we move that person from an escalated state back to connection? A lot of therapies are good at this but what about the unresolved shame, anger and abandonment issues?

## That's where we come in

Clients can usually pinpoint when their addiction started, usually with a big "T" trauma event such as a car accident, death of a family member or pet a violent incident or sexual/ physical assault.

Beware of clients who have a predisposition to Complex Trauma. They may have experienced C-PTSD and have escaped the circumstances, but not healed from it. They have stuffed, ran away from, avoided and buried the trauma and find themselves triggered when a traumatic event brings it to the surface.

Develop a sense of curiosity when leading clients into self-awareness. It will help them see themselves more clearly. It also prevents us from running our own agenda, moving them away from self-awareness.



## TRY THIS TOOL

Create a chart of events we have experienced throughout our lives, up until now. Notice how the events may have formed triggers and our various response. Did you recognize a pattern? This is how we get to know ourselves.

Using this exercise with our clients is effective as they become aware of their own life events and how their triggers have formed. They are then able to identify their own patterns.

Children who come from healthy homes and experience a big “T” trauma event, don’t turn to drugs and alcohol. They would have had healthy coping tools and supports in place to get them through the trauma.

Clients need to be validated in their experiences and pain. It is important to recognize the timing of when to use therapy strategies and techniques. The key is meeting our clients where they are and moving them forward from there.

# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What were the prevalent emotions in your home growing up? Were the adults allowed to display different emotions than children? Explain.

2. Which characteristics did you use to try and meet your unmet needs? (Isolated, bully others, substance use, perfection, humor, people-pleasing) Give examples.

3. At some point did you realize these characteristics were harming you and if so, what caused you to notice the need for change?

4. You feel supported, loved, and valuable when ...

5. Give ways you can show support, unconditional love and inherent value to clients through mentorship?

# SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

*- John 4:7*

There is much to learn from this interaction between Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well. This well-known story becomes even more incredible when we read it through the lenses of Complex Trauma.

Jesus sits beside the woman. In that day, interacting with Samaritans was against Jewish law, nevermind sitting down and asking them for help. The response of the woman shows her incredulence, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?"

In this exchange, Jesus places himself in the passenger seat. By initially explaining the basics behind the necessity of water, he then begins to offer himself as a solution to the woman's pain and suffering.

The woman carried on a conversation with Christ because he was at her level - He met her where she was at in her troubles.



"Sir give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water". Initially, the woman believed Christ was there to make her suffering go away regarding physical thirst. But as the conversation continues, Christ talks to her about the heart of the matter, her deep longing for love and belonging.

When we are in the room with our clients, they may come to us thinking we will offer them the solution to their physical or realized pains. Throughout our relationship with them, we will be able to offer them Christ as a solution to their spiritual wounds and brokenness. This will become most effective when we are able to actually sit beside them, in a mutual conversation staged in equality. We are not the masters who know everything, who come to save people. Instead, we are humble saved sinners, able to sit side by side with others, and offer true sources of healing - for all aspects of their hurt.

When someone finds the benefits of the healing oil to their ailments, they will tell others. The Samaritan woman went into the town and told others, "this man told me everything I ever did." As if to say, "this guy really knew me!" As people find healing for their physical and emotional wounds, they find healing for their psychological and spiritual wounds as well. Implementing this program into current program offerings helps guide people to Christ in the very way he showed us. This is the gospel, working in action!

# MODULE 03 BECOMING A GUIDE

*Compassionate curiosity about the self does not mean liking everything we find out about ourselves, only that we look at ourselves with the same nonjudgmental acceptance we would wish to accord anyone else who suffered and who needed help.*

- Gabor Maté

The broad affects of Complex Trauma, can feel overwhelming at times.

In Module 2, we reviewed the infant attachment cycle and how it affects the body's internal system, in healthy and unhealthy childhood environments. As children grow, they develop tools that helps them survive.

Identifying unhealthy characteristics is essential for us to see them both in our clients and ourselves. The connection between these adaptations and mental health disorders, enables us to build a more thorough recovery plan.

In a mentor's role, we help guide clients towards self-awareness by meeting them where they are at and recognize when to use alternative therapy strategies or techniques.

Clients need to be receptive and able to apply these tools to their own lives without setting them back or moving too far forward, without skipping steps.

In this module we will introduce concepts surrounding;

- Spiritual Awareness piece
- Creating Awareness
- Becoming a Passenger
- Healing Tools

# CREATING AWARENESS

*Effective healing and transformation begins by creating awareness. We can't change until we bring our trauma out of the subconscious mind into the conscious mind, examine our perceptions and take steps to change."*

- Tim Fletcher

Self-awareness is the biggest tool we give our clients.

Today will introduce the Stages of Change to help create awareness of where we are in our journey as a mentor. In order to best serve our clients, it is important we are open to personal growth, new information, applications and modalities. This is an integral part in understanding the stages our clients need to go through.

Most of our clients who have Complex Trauma, suffer from C-PTSD. Recovery may take longer as clients need to process their trauma, one issue at a time in order to heal.

Some clients will say:

"All my problems started after my big "T" trauma."

Tim's response – if a person grew up in a healthy home, had healthy tools and loving support, it wouldn't have resulted in C-PTSD. The fact they turned to unhealthy ways of coping suggests they didn't have all the necessary tools.

In order to heal, clients need to process through all stages of change, for each individual trauma they have experienced. After making changes, some individuals may return to their problem behaviour. This can happen at any time throughout the stages. Not everyone will experience "relapse", but it is always a risk.

Recovery can feel like one step forward, two steps back. Our goal is to achieve two steps forward, with one-half to one step back.

**RECOVERY TRUTHS:**

- Research shows that for the average person, it takes 13 attempts to quit smoking
- Along with drug and alcohol dependency, we also need to go through the stages of change for other unhealthy behaviours - anger issues, codependency, our coping styles, bad attitudes
- “Process Addictions” – shopping, gambling, food, porn, gaming, exercise, etc.  
We can relapse in any of these areas. For example, someone could have an angry outburst or go back to an unhealthy relationship.

The decision to enter recovery requires a lot of courage and determination. We can help support our clients by guiding their awareness towards a realistic understanding of recovery.

Remind clients: “It may seem overwhelming and discouraging, but as time goes on, the process will become easier and worth it as confidence is gained with every step.”

The five stages of change outlined show the thought process and decisions required in order to achieve success in recovery.

**Five Stages of Change**



**1. PRE-CONTEMPLATION** Not considering change or using. We use denial or rationalize and believe we know all the answers. “I drink because ...”. We’re reluctant to change and lack motivation or knowledge about it. We feel rebellious and don’t like being told what to do. “I don’t have a problem with my using. You have a problem with my using”.



**2. CONTEMPLATION** Come to the realization that we have a problem but still haven’t commit to change. We begin to weigh out the pros and cons and talk about future plans to get help with no intention. We want to get rid of the negative consequences without changing and find ways to control our using. We are content to stay sitting on the fence (and we can stay here for years).



**3. PREPARATION** We make a commitment and devise a realistic time frame for quitting the substance or behaviour. We plan on how we are going to change and prepare for the pitfalls.



**4. ACTION** Make a public statement; go to AA (NA, CA, MA) or counselling. We are motivated and want to do what it takes to have a drug/ alcohol-free life or without the unhealthy behaviour or activity. At this stage, we walk our talk. We practice new coping skills, change our friend circle, work towards forgiveness and dealing with shame. This stage takes the most energy and requires a lot of support.



**5. MAINTENANCE** On-going and lasting, adapted to a new life, get support system. The changes finally become routine. We still have to be vigilant. If we let our guard down we may slip back into the old ways. It is good to maintain some type of accountability even after we have had changes in place for a long time.



# BECOME A PASSENGER

## Go from the drivers seat to being a guide

Pay close attention to what an individual says, words used, facial expressions and body language. These cues provide an opportunity to understand the type and level of trauma they are experiencing. Gain an understanding of where they are, learn about their upbringing, get a sense of how they learned to cope and what survival skills may have been developed.

We can gain an understanding of who they are by asking open ended questions and using empathetic listening. By asking good questions, we get a sense of what makes the person tick. We connect with our clients to understand what challenges they are facing, which enables us to guide them through their stages of healing. It is up to us to become the passenger as we help navigate the roads, streets, towns and cities of our client's healing journey.

As we progress through their journey we may notice a change in our client's behaviour. They may have encountered adverse experiences outside of the program or experienced a trigger they are not yet aware of.

Tim suggests there are five people living inside our clients.

1. The adult in recovery who is using their cortex to make wise decisions. They are honest and reliable.
2. The addict. If the person relapses, a different person appears. They are dishonest, lying and manipulative.
3. Mental health. Issues appear with mental health as the person goes from regulating emotions well to depression, high anxiety, no motivation and are in fight or flight.
4. The traumatized person. There is no evidence of this person until they are triggered. Either the angry narcissist appears or the broken and defeated victim.
5. The inner child. The wounded child makes an appearance in hopes of finding a world that is not so scary.

Alcoholics and process addictions can be high functioning, cortex thinkers who fly under the radar. It is generally with the harder drugs we more commonly see any one, or several of the five personalities. Recognizing when a client has relapsed is crucial as they can do a lot of damage to themselves and others.

When we see a client change, we need to find a way to de-escalate them out of their limbic brain.

- Lead them into a grounding exercise with deep breathing
- Ask if they would like to share what they are feeling
- Do they have a support person they can meet with outside of the session?
- Validate their feelings with “It’s tough what you are going through” or “This sucks or is hard”
- Engage them with questions and validation, indicating we are here to help
- If they are unwilling to share, end with “I am sorry to hear that,” and move on

Sometimes in recovery we’re doing well and then, one problem after another hits us again and again. This is normal for everyone. They are not alone.

Be careful not to jump in and minimize their pain or try to fix them by suggesting ‘It can’t be that bad’. It will make things worse.

Clients leave after the end of the day and may return to old behaviours. They are beating themselves up and expect us to also. Our reply is: ‘This is normal, lets learn from this’.

Our response should normalize and demonstrate acceptance as to just how tough this whole recovery journey is.

When we show our clients compassion and grace, they are able to give it to themselves. They will learn how to treat themselves the way we treat them.

# HEALING TOOLS

Therapists and clients, much like couples, choose each other to satisfy similar needs. In order to help a client develop greater self-awareness, we need to develop our own healthy level of it as well. Doing so prevents a “couple conundrum”, which only leads to bad therapy.

Recovery from addiction has no magic-bullet. Like the mechanic repairing the engine, we use a variety of tools to complete the job. This is a graphic way to remind people these are all parts that we are trying to build into our lives.

Like a five year old who wants to be the top mechanic of General Motors ... give me the tools! We can give them the entire tool box but without the training and experience, they are useless. It takes instruction, practice and years of implementation to fully recover.

When we come from Complex Trauma, we have a definitive aversion to feeling uncomfortable and want to find resolutions to these feelings immediately!

By combining tools such as grounding, support networks, self-awareness of triggers and patterns along with CBT and DBT, clients can create pathways that will help them accept the uncomfortable emotions.

Self-awareness as to how the subconscious brain works is the first thing they need to be aware of. It processes every piece of information we have ever encountered and categorizes them to determine the difference between danger and safe. Our programming patterns continue to run all the time.

Autopilot stems from the subconscious. Recovery means rewriting the program and client's don't do that by counselling alone. Healing happens when we bring trauma forward to the conscious mind and work with the content to change the perception and heal.

Complex Trauma usually takes place in our formative years before we have developed a vocabulary of words to describe it. The programs in the subconscious mind have been written before we are aware of it.

Clients feel stuck in their stories, and believe the only thing they have to do is quit using to make their lives fall back into place. We need to remind them, their addiction was a series of steps that led them to this point. It will take another 100 steps of recovery to understand the extent of the problem.

Once a client stops using and comes out of a compulsory treatment, they are filled with a sense of guilt and responsibility towards their families. It is important they recognize the need to work on themselves is a priority as every other motivating factor in their lives will be short-term reasons to stay clean. Eventually, the underlying issues of Complex Trauma will trigger a relapse.

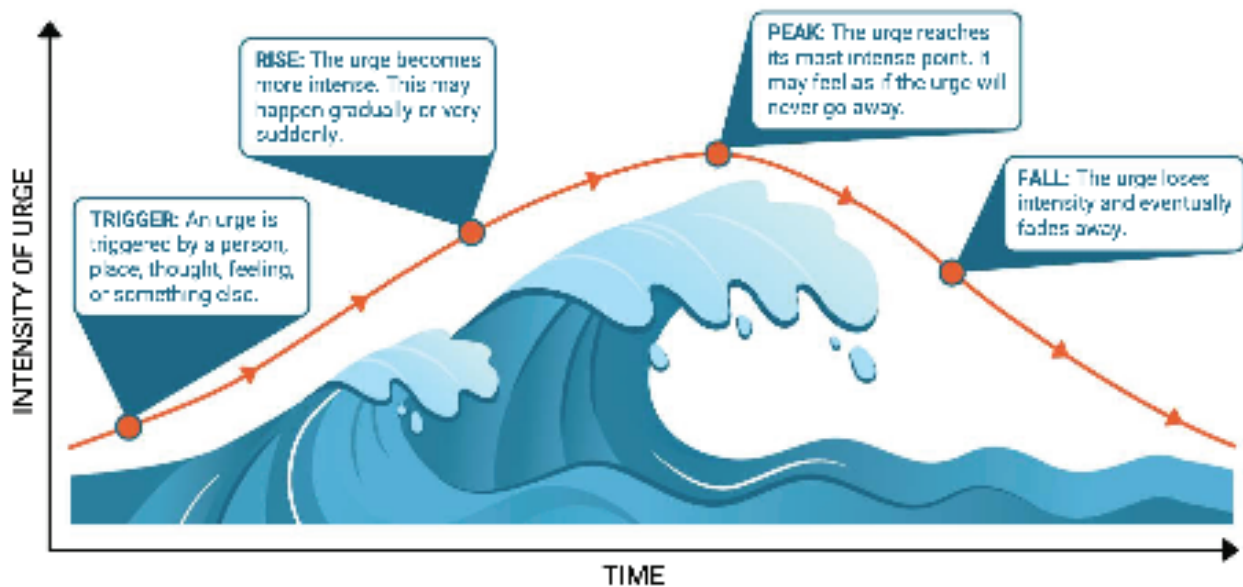
To successfully treat both PTSD and C-PTSD, we need to help clients establish the following sequence of healing. We provide the environment and teach them to create these for themselves:

- Safety
- Trust
- Connection
- Self-compassion
- Build healthy relationships or supports
- Learn to handle triggers and to self-regulate
- Reprocess memories
- Self-awareness – old tools, patterns, triggers
- Learn healthy tools

## URGE SURFING

Urge Surfing is a technique for managing our unwanted behaviours. Rather than giving into an urge, we will ride it out, like a surfer riding a wave. After a short time, the urge will pass on it's own.

This technique can be used to stop or reduce drug and alcohol use, emotional reactions such as 'blowing up' when angry, gambling and other unwanted behaviours.



# HOW TO PRACTICE URGE SURFING

There are three ways to practice curbing trigger urges.

1. Acknowledge the urge is there
2. Notice thoughts and feelings without trying to change or suppress them. It is normal to feel discomfort during the urge
3. Remind ourselves:
  - It's ok to have urges. They are natural reactions to addictions and habits
  - An urge is a feeling, not a 'must.' We can have the feeling and choose not to act
  - Some discomfort is ok. We don't have to change it
  - The urge is temporary. Like any other feeling, it will pass on its own

## OTHER SKILLS

### Managing Triggers

Use coping skills to reduce the power of triggers. Know our triggers ahead of time and have a strategy or skill prepared for each one. Examples: deep breathing if stressed, eat when hungry or leave a location if it is high risk.

### Delay & Distraction

Do something to take our mind off the urge. Every minute we delay, increases the chance of the urge weakening on its own. Examples: go for a walk, listen to music, call a friend, read a book, practice a hobby.

*The following strategies have been adopted from TherapistAid.com*

Tim Fletcher's COMPASS Training Course offers countless tools to help clients process C-PTSD and find recovery from addictions and mental health issues. This course also offers practicum opportunities and classroom collaboration to try out your techniques in safe places with other facilitators and clients.

## WATCH THE VIDEO

LIVE LINK - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUm9grBzu8w> (Time 00:00 - 07:17)

TYPE INTO YOUTUBE SEARCH: HELPING PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX TRAUMA - PART 5/5 - PRACTICAL TIPS

# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Have you encountered any of the following people throughout your life?

- Predators
- “Bad Boys”
- Greasy hustlers
- Narcissists
- Needy
- People who pity you, and see you as a project
- Bitter, Negative
- Self-Righteous
- Prejudiced

2. How did you deal with these people?

3. We can gain an understanding of who they are by asking open ended questions and using empathetic listening. List 3 prompting questions you could ask clients.

4. Share about a time when you or a client started to slip backwards through the stages of change.

5. Everyone has different “dominoes” or warning signs that occur prior to falling back into unhealthy behaviours. Being aware of them now, can help prevent relapse in the future. Make a list of dominoes you experience. (Warning Signs of unhealthy behavior)

6. If you start seeing warning signs in your life, what steps could you take to get back on track? (Relapse includes any regression of our healthy coping tools. Ex: process addictions, anger, depression, etc.)

7. Other than tools discussed in this module, if you start seeing warning signs in your clients life, what resources would you suggest for them to get back on track? Do any Bible verses come to mind?



# SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

*So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.*

*- Galatians 3:9*

When we look at some of the main characters in the Bible through the lens of Complex Trauma, we discover there are dysfunctional people. In the story of Hagar, God teaches us how to deal with people in a different way. When we meet people where they are at and give them what they need in order to heal, we can see great change.

God appeared to Abraham and said he was going to make him into a great nation. He would be blessed with countless descendants - as many as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Abraham was married to a woman named Sarah. The promise made to Abraham presents a number of challenges.

In order for the promise to be fulfilled, she would need to have children. The couple is growing older, and she has yet to conceive a child. As she ages, her mood seems to slide downward as she is faced by cultural ridicule for not being able to produce offspring. Her own faith is tested. How was her husband supposed to become the father of a great nation, when she is failing as a wife and mother? Will she die, and Abraham marry somebody new?

As Sarah's mood declines, her faith wanes. She reaches out to find attainable ways to achieve God's promise on her own. Sarah suggests to Abraham that he should try have a child with their Egyptian slave, Hagar (which was fairly common practice during those times) and so Abraham does.

The Bible explains that Sarah "took Hagar and gave her to him". Hagar is much younger than Abraham and is being forced to sleep with her master, a much older man. Against her will she must honour and listen to her mistress. Hagar becomes pregnant and starts to resent Sarah. Sarah goes to Abraham to complain about this bad behaviour, so Abraham tells her to deal with Hagar as she wishes. Instead of having a healthy conversation with Hagar about what had happened, she begins to treat Hagar badly and Hagar runs away. Now, we have two very unhappy ladies, a hurt and compromised man and nobody is talking about it. This family is dysfunctional!

In the middle of all of this, two very beautiful things happen. First (it's important to note that God went to Hagar first, before His beloved married couple), God appears to Hagar in the wilderness. Hagar's experience with so-called "godly people" wasn't a good one. Coming from an Egyptian background, she would have had no first-hand knowledge of the true God. She had been mistreated by the couple,



become subject to an angry, mean Sarah, and had been forced to sleep with Abraham. Her experience with God in her masters' mirrors would have been ugly, and not accurate. This is often what Complex Trauma does to people whose authority figures do not accurately present the love and authority that God would show. Can we blame Hagar for running away? In His wisdom, God comes to mirror to Hagar who He really is, without having Abraham and Sarah in the way. God finds Hagar, and as the loving father He is, assures her that he is watching out for her, blesses, reprimands and promises to protect her with His boundaries.

Second, God hasn't forgotten about Sarah and Abraham. He sends them messengers on two different occasions to explain to them that what they had done to Hagar was not the way he intended them to become a great nation. Abraham and Sarah didn't need to manipulate each other, or sacrifice their boundaries in order to keep each other happy. Instead, God assures them that Sarah will actually carry a child in her womb, even though they are nearing 100 years old.

Abraham's problem was that his wife was unhappy because she wanted to get pregnant but she can't. The deeper problem is that Sarah does not trust God to fulfill His promise. Sarah laughs at the idea and lies to God's angels about it. Put yourself in Sarah's shoes. By not being able to become pregnant, Sarah assumes she isn't part of God's plan or promise with Abraham. Abraham realizes that he has a partner that is not on the same page as him spiritually, but also empathizes with his wife. His entire life and deepest passion has been devoted to God, trusting His plan.

When we are dealing with others who are not on the same page as us, it can be very difficult to navigate through the dysfunction without becoming overbearing or bossy. Abraham was able to save his relationship as he met Sarah where she was at. He made an effort to understand her pain and love her in her struggles, in the hope it would help her. Sarah eventually came to the place where she was on the same page as Abraham and trusted God. He didn't have to try to manipulate or control her, he just needed to be patient, love her as best as he could, without giving up his boundaries or values.

When we are faced with dysfunction, often we consider giving up our values to make things work. It is important to know our internal boundaries and how to use our value system to protect and care for the people we love. We may not fully understand our loved ones' hurts. Using Abraham's example of love, we must trust that God will work in their heart until they are able to trust Him again. This is agapé love, the love that abides.

# MODULE 04 LOOK, LISTEN, FEEL

*We have an obligation to our clients, as well as to ourselves, our colleagues and our loved ones, not to be damaged by the work we do.*

*- Tim Fletcher*

In Module 3 we learned about the Stages of Change and what is required in order for us to become an effective navigator as we guide our clients down the streets of recovery. We also explored some useful therapies and tools to help the journey along.

In this module we will include:

- Spiritual Awareness piece
- Awareness and Enabling, take an unbiased look at ourselves and clients
- Recognizing Secondary Traumatic Stress, learn to listen to our body and self care
- Feeling Empathy - tools and scenarios
- Compassionate Communication

## AWARENESS AND ENABLING

People with trauma can only heal in an environment of safety. We need to be a safe person who they can gradually trust.

A good mentor = knowledge + working on our own stuff

It is necessary for mentors to understand the difference between their personal and professional values.

**Personal values include:**

- How and whether or not we worship
- Political views
- How we view authority
- Ideas about race, gender and sexual orientation

- Perceptions of youth or elderly
- Our views on substance abuse
- How we relate to money or poverty

**Professional values include:**

- The value of human lives
- Client privacy
- Belief that healing trauma involves talking
- Exploring events around trauma evokes healing
- Our clients want help
- We hold space and love for them
- We respect our clients inherent rights as humans

**Professional ethical guidelines are based on the principals of:**

- Non-maleficence - do no harm
- Beneficence - do good

The healthiest environment for a client to grow in, is one where we demonstrate and practice enforcing physical and emotional boundaries.

**Physical:**

- Encourage time limits for sessions
- Exit strategies - when to end a session if unsafe

**Emotional:**

- Avoid being triggered ourselves
- Be aware of body language
- Be sure not to share too much personal information trying to connect with client

## WATCH THE VIDEO

LIVE LINK - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZBucZXh9Ko> (Time 08:53 - 14:19)

TYPE INTO YOUTUBE SEARCH: RE-PARENTING - PART 9 - HURT

# PRACTICE HEALTHY EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT

Emotional detachment will include caring deeply with;

- Good internal boundaries. We don't feel like we must make the clients think about things exactly the same way we do
- Kindness and compassion. We don't take it on as our job to do whatever is necessary to get them through each day
- We don't take it home with us
- Practical parenting skills. With a child – we care deeply, we get our hands dirty, we help where we can, we cry, but need emotional distance in order to be objective

In order to be effective, it's important keep our hearts open to anything a client may share with us.

Clients respect mentors who demonstrate boundaries. They may not like us, but the more we show love and compassion towards them, we will earn their trust and respect. As we begin to understand our clients, we will instinctively determine the timing of when to offer advice, when to challenge, when to push, when to validate, when to hold space, when to focus on solutions and when to take them back to their trauma vs. capacity building.

# ENMESHMENT AND CODEPENDENCY

Beware of the difference between healthy attachment, enmeshment and codependency. It is easy to fall into the last two categories without our awareness.

Unhealthy signs of a therapist:

- “Checks up” on the client with calls and texts
- Experiences feelings similar to those the client has expressed, between sessions at a similar intensity
- Is preoccupied with the client. Has fantasies of “taking care” of the client or somehow intervening in the client's life to “help”
- Justifies between-session contact by explaining the client needs a great deal of extra attention, without a supporting case formulation to support that view
- Worries like a parent, or a lover, if the client is late, or fails to appear for a session
- Feels sad or rejected when the client asks about reducing frequency of sessions or ending therapy

If we become in a codependent or enmeshed relationship with our clients we will do harm.

# WHEN DOES A MENTOR BECOME AN ABUSER?

Most mentors want to help their clients. Those who become abusive start with good intentions. It is important to notice when the relationship is no longer healthy. This can happen when;

A mentor is a narcissist pursuing ideology. They can be kind, confident, charming, yet do harm.

Over-emphasis on doctrine – believing it is absolute truth;

- It is dangerous to make every doctrine black and white
- In reality, many topics are not black and white, there are a lot of topics that are grey
- Understand the purpose of creeds. When we list the few things that are black and white, and therefore, non-negotiable

Over-emphasis on the Bible - becomes dangerous when we;

- Use it as the only source of truth and are suspicious of science, social sciences and culture
- Develop a belief system where every single topic is based on the Bible. People are made to feel they are a bad Christian if they don't agree

If we view the world as a dangerous place, it is easy to believe and think everything about the world is bad.

Over-emphasis on loving God, including a requirement to be sold out to God with no compromises;

- Compelling Christ-followers to live an extremist lifestyle (cult-like)

## Other ways mentors can become abusers:

- They have not worked on their Complex Trauma and hold a position of authority
- Individuals who have experienced Complex Trauma in a form of spiritual abuse, causing a serious disillusionment with Christianity. Their resentments and opinions can be transferred to their clients
- They may have had a close relationship with God but it was stripped away, or may experience confusion about what God requires. A lack of freedom to explore a relationship with God caused them to think something must be wrong with them spiritually

When in a position of authority, our responsibility is to ensure our own grandiosity or “God-syndrome” doesn’t take the driver’s seat. The client may begin to idealize us and want to form a dependent relationship, having us available 24/7 to help with every problem.

It is important to set out guidelines for clients and determine whether we want to be available when a client is in crisis, needs to call after work hours or when they need help outside of the office hours.

Setting clear boundaries is not only a matter of ethics, but a way of emotionally detaching and not being drawn into helping clients more than we should.

## SPIRITUAL ABUSE

When our thoughts and beliefs about our faith become questionable, or causes us to become distraught or unhealthy, consider the following:

Include that God is perceived as “he”/ male. Jesus and Father don't sound good when we have a poor representation of “love from a Father” here on earth.

Find someone outside of the church or from a different one to help. We may experience

- Anger and grief
- A deep sense of betrayal by God
- Guilt for looking critically at the church

Find our voice;

- If we are attending church, give ourselves permission to step away for a while
- Give ourselves permission to question everything we have been taught
- Try new ways to connect with God and deepen our relationship with him

# LISTEN TO YOUR BODY SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

## FACTS:

- Studies show 6% to 26% of therapists working with traumatized populations, and up to 50% of child welfare workers, are at high risk of secondary traumatic stress or the related conditions of PTSD and vicarious trauma
- It affects most counsellors or mental health workers at some point in their careers. It is not reserved for the seasoned - older therapists; it can strike therapists earlier in their careers, generally within three years
- It manifests primarily as emotional exhaustion, “emotional fatigue” or “emotional overload”

Like a tree holding water in its roots, we all have our own levels of energy and physical resources that sustain us.

The environment around us determines if we deplete these resources quickly, often without our awareness.

Burnout occurs when we become too involved with our clients' problems. We may feel the need to work harder on their recovery than they are themselves. This is also called, “Secondary Traumatic Stress, Vicarious Trauma” or “Compassion Fatigue”.

## Definition:

Secondary traumatic stress is emotional duress that results when an individual hears about, or watches, the firsthand trauma experiences of another.

Burnout and secondary trauma are a slow depletion of mental and physical resources, often undetected until we are really sick.

How can we make sure to keep our energy intact, without depleting and reaching burnout?

The answer is self-care.

It is essential for our growth and well-being, as well as for those closest to us, that we are aware of when we need to replenish.

Like reading the weather forecasts, some days are hot, some days are dry and some filled with rain. We can't always predict what the weather will be, but we can ensure we have our rain boots and umbrellas ready.

Without proper self-care, it can be easy to lose sight of our professional values and inflict some of our personal values towards our clients. Intentionally or unintentionally, it places our clients in harm's way.

Firstly we do no harm. Secondly, we do good.

It is critical we become self-care professionals. Self-care rejuvenates us, fills the gas tank and winds back up our energy key.

When we practice what we preach, we model a healthy lifestyle for our clients.

What is required to meet our needs and enjoy life in a way that is sustainable? Everyone needs regular downtime and restoration.

- Trust our spouse or friend to signal when we are 'off'
- Deploy our inner parent and correct our self talk
- Take an internal inventory on a regular basis - physically, spiritually, emotionally
- Identify what needs to change, has been neglected or needs to take it's place
- Develop a mindful daily practice
- Connect with God intimately
- Take time to remember who we are and meet our own needs
- This can include therapy, spiritual practice, exercise, proper sleep and time with loved ones
- Connect with others when we are not in the therapist role - family, friends
- Seek solitude and time in nature
- Keep "in touch" with ourselves - journal
- Keep growing as a person - learning, hobbies, spiritually, intellectually
- Do things we enjoy and that fills our gas tank - fun and enjoyment rejuvenates us
- Internal and external boundaries - become a pro at setting them
- Healthy detachment - caregiving vs care-taking
- Time for a hobby or craft or learn something new

By incorporating a healthy self-care routine into our lives, we will achieve balance and be able to sustain our careers for a long time.



# FEELING EMPATHY - TOOLS AND SCENARIOS

*Tie them as reminders on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.*

- Deuteronomy 6:8

Success in helping others is not 100% dependent on the helper, much of it depends on the willingness of the client to change.

It is important to recognize that not everyone with a problem wants help;

- Some come after a crisis and want to look like they're changing so that loved ones will stop being mad at them
- Some want to stop using in a destructive way and just want to learn how to control it
- Some want a magic pill that will enable them to stop using without changing their lifestyle
- Some want to change a few things, but keep unhealthy pieces

**As mentors, it is up to us to assess three goals:**

**Goal #1** – figure out where they're at – if they're willing to change

**Goal #2** – figure out if they're willing to do the work – or is their attitude, "I'll change as long as I don't have to change this one area."

**Goal #3** – figure out what they need to do and what our role is. If we are working harder than them, something is wrong

## WATCH THE VIDEO

LIVE LINK - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUm9grBzu8w> (Time 07:16 - TO THE END)  
 TYPE INTO YOUTUBE SEARCH: HELPING PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX TRAUMA - PART 5/5 - PRACTICAL TIPS

After taking a thorough history and exploring some of the underlying issues (over the first few weeks), sessions with clients begin by asking how they are doing in the present. Issues that come up in the present, usually lead back to underlying issues.

Below are some of the expectations we need to meet to assist our clients along their recovery journey.

### Help them understand who they are

Those with Complex Trauma are not sure who they are without their addiction, or other coping strategies. It is up to us to help them discover who they are in:

- Personality – introvert/ extrovert; logical, creative, emotional makeup, learning style
- Areas of confusion
  - When I'm nice, is it because I am genuinely nice, or because I'm codependent?
  - When I stand up for myself, am I being narcissistic or selfish?
  - Are my behaviours genuine or a mask?
  - A person of value, created in the image of God

### Validating

Our clients appreciate when they feel heard and validated:

- Their pain was often minimized as a child. They need someone to acknowledge that what was done to them was wrong
- “Hold space for them” – don't be uncomfortable when they show emotions. Allow them to feel and talk about it

### Using “I sense” instead of accusing them

- Use “I am concerned” to bring up points of healing, instead of negative criticism
- Say back to them what we heard them say, highlighting the key issues
- Make note of the lies they believe about themselves and life
- Don't take them to pain memories unless they are ready – do they have tools and have grown enough to be able to manage it. Otherwise, we will re-traumatize them

### Reminding them of truth over and over

- Gradually work yourself out of a job
- The more they heal and grow, the more they will be able to process through their stuff; the less they will need us
- Clients will often resist this because it feels like we are abandoning or rejecting them

When they start learning how to think, they need us to validate they are thinking correctly about a topic. There may be times of confusion where they are not sure if their thinking is accurate. We do not want to develop a relationship where we think for them (though we may do that initially). We want to help them learn how to think – to consider different options and weigh out pros and cons for each action and decision.

## KEEP IN MIND

There will be times clients will be mad at us. If they have Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) or are narcissists, they will rant, smear our credibility and attempt to manipulate us. Don't get caught up in their drama. We likely hit a major trigger. Patience and time will shine the light on the truth.

A narcissist client is challenging to treat. They often;

- Refuse to admit their painful, deeper issues
- Try to manipulate you
- Convincingly make their partner the problem – someone who is very sick
- Live out of their head – shut down all emotions

Individuals with narcissist tendencies often seem to be healthier than they actually are. A key growth step for them will be to enter their emotional world, learn, accept, feel, then learn to express their emotions in a healthy way.

### Demonization by Clients

While some clients idealize therapists, others put them down and then some will oscillate every other week. The healer may be set on a pedestal only to be knocked off of it soon after. Without objective feedback, therapists can end up confused and in doubt about their own qualities, qualifications, and sense of worth.

Be aware that depersonalization can manifest through a general dislike, detached and callous attitudes towards clients. They are perceived as energy drains or stressors.

### Crisis Care vs Ongoing Care/ Counselling

In order us to help clients navigate Complex Trauma, we may need to occasionally provide crisis care and recognize the need for ongoing care.

Crisis – suicide threat, lose kids or a job

- The focus is to deescalate the person, get them grounded so that they can think out a plan. They become aware of our support.

## Ongoing

- Work on understanding the underlying issues and healing
- Clients learn to implement healthy tools

After doing a thorough history and exploring some of the underlying issues in the first few weeks of the counselling relationship, we begin with asking about how they are doing in the present. Issues that come up in the present will usually lead us back to underlying issues from the past.

Knowing what is happening in the present will indicate what the client needs to work on next along their healing journey. We don't determine this, they do.

Be mindful when we feel like overstepping and want to fix that particular issue right away. Tim offers a helpful suggestion when he says "clients are buckets of dirt, not realizing their own potential. The best thing you can do is plant seeds. Let God do the watering and fertilizing, and pray for growth. As things begin to grow and bloom, let the client recognize this growth hasn't come from you as a facilitator."

# COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING

*The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply.*

- Stephen R. Covey, Author  
(The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People)

Effective therapy requires counsellors to show both empathy and compassion. While they may seem closely related in their meanings, they are different.

Empathy is the ability to prospectively feel another's emotions.

Empathic support requires mentors to practice techniques on how to listen and ask questions. This is important. How we master these two skills determines the success of the client - counsellor relationship. When clients feel heard and listened to without judgment, it creates trust and we build a deeper understanding.

Compassion is a feeling or desire to help and compassion develops when we feel empathy, inspiring us to create change.

Compassionate listeners maintain complete silence and pay attention, not only to words they hear, but also to facial expressions, body language and tone of voice. We notice the silence between words. Sometimes we know listening is enough.

Compassionate communication requires a mentor's full attention in order for them to best understand what the client is trying to convey. If we are not actively listening, we can miss cues or misinterpret what is being said.

If we develop a sense of curiosity when we lead clients into self-awareness sessions, they will see themselves more clearly. This focus on the client's journey is the most effective treatment and prevents us from running our own agenda.

# EFFECTIVE TREATMENT MODELS

In our experience, the following two methods of mirroring, reflection and paraphrasing are the best way to reach clients.

## 1. Mirroring

Mirroring is an effective tool used to validate the client and make sure we understand what they have said. Many times, Complex Trauma clients have never felt heard before. Mirroring is a way of validating them to make sure we understand what they have said and create a connection.

“Can I just say back to you what I heard you say, because I want to make sure I’m hearing you correctly.”

## 2. Reflection and Paraphrasing

Reflecting shows clients we have not only heard what they have said, but also indicating the emotions they experience as they share their stories. Paraphrasing puts their stories in another frame to show the same picture from our perspective.

**Example:** Client - “My ex called me yesterday and told me our daughter is very ill after a car accident. She is four years old and I am scared for her. They live on the East Coast and I have to travel to see her. I don’t know if I can afford to go.”

Counsellor (Paraphrasing) - “Jonathan, you had some bad news about your daughter who has been in a car accident. You are frightened for her and worry about money now that you have lost your job.”

Client - “Yes, yes, that’s true.”

Notice, the counsellor only reflected on the emotion of what was said ... ‘frightened and worry.’

Building trust with Complex Trauma clients starts with them feeling like they have been listened to, valued and heard. Reflection is like holding a mirror for the client. Repeating back to the client what we heard and ask for clarity.

**Example:** “My mother and my wife are fighting. I am really angry with her.”

It is important to clarify who the client is referring to as ‘her’.

## TOOLS

The following six tools are most commonly used when we coach or counsel our clients:

1. Without judgment, gain an understanding of the experience from the client's point of view.
2. Include periods of silence. This may feel uncomfortable at first. It will come more naturally with practice.
3. Make eye contact and be aware of our posture, expression and body language.
4. Mirror and paraphrase what we heard to check for accuracy.
5. Ask questions only to clarify what the client is trying to communicate. Allow the client to finish thoughts without interruption.
6. Give a short summary to indicate that we have heard and understood what was said.

## WHAT TO AVOID

The following four behaviours can be viewed as red flags by our client. It is important to be mindful of these behaviours in our sessions.

1. Interrupting a sentence. Even if there is a long pause, this is not the time to comment. Especially in the first few sessions, they need us to listen more than contribute.
2. Failing to make eye contact. This will trigger many emotions for individuals with trauma. They already lack trust and will feel disrespected.
3. Being distracted by thoughts, losing focus and daydreaming. This could break trust that may already be in place. Individuals who have experienced trauma are sensitive and feel emotions more intense than others.
4. Listening to decide what our reply should be. Sometimes feeling heard means just needing to vent frustration and to know someone cares enough to listen.

# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do you need to do to make sure you keep emotionally detached from clients?

2. Which clients are you most often drawn to?

3. List the personal and professional values that you are comfortable sharing.  
Where is there a cross-over?

4. Do you feel any biases that may impact building trust with clients?

5. Do you feel any insecurities as a mentor? Please share.

6. Where do you have room to grow?

7. Summarize how you feel the spiritual connection ties in with the lessons in this module.

8. Is there anything missing that you wish you had learned throughout this introductory course?



# RESOURCE LIST FOR COACHES

## Text-based Resources

- American Counselling Association Code of Ethics
  - <https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>
- American Counselling Association Competencies (including LGBTQ, Race and Spirituality)
  - <https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/competencies>
- American Counselling Association Guide to Ethical Decision Making
  - [https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/ethics/practitioner-39-s-guideto-ethical-decision-making.pdf?sfvrsn=f9e5482c\\_10](https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/ethics/practitioner-39-s-guideto-ethical-decision-making.pdf?sfvrsn=f9e5482c_10)
- American Psychological Association Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct
  - <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>
- American Psychological Association Professional Practice Guidelines
  - <https://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines>
- International Coaching Federation Standards and Practices
  - <https://coachingfederation.org/regulation>
- Counsellors for Social Justice Resource Library
  - <https://www.counseling-csj.org/resource-library.html>
- National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioural Medicine Blog
  - <https://www.nicabm.com/blog/>
- Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families (resources for family dynamics)
  - <https://www.annafreud.org/>
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (includes an index of mental illness and addiction)
  - <https://www.camh.ca/>

## Video-based Resources

- American Counselling Association YouTube Channel
  - <https://www.youtube.com/user/CounselingViews>
- American Psychological Association YouTube Channel
  - <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheAPAVideo>
- International Coaching Federation YouTube Channel
  - <https://www.youtube.com/user/ICFHeadquarters>
- National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioural Medicine YouTube Channel
  - <https://www.youtube.com/c/nicabm/videos>
- Anna Freud NCCF YouTube Channel
  - <https://www.youtube.com/c/AnnaFreudNCCF/videos>
- Gabor Maté YouTube Channel
  - [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsRF06ISFA8zV9L8\\_x9jzIA/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsRF06ISFA8zV9L8_x9jzIA/featured)

- Tim Fletcher YouTube Channel
  - <https://www.youtube.com/c/TimFletcher/videos>
- Podcasts (Look for these titles on whatever podcast platform you use!)
  - Let's Get Uncomfortable: a sex-positive podcast for counsellors by The PodTalk Network
- Positively Ethical by The PodTalk Network
  - Apply Topically by The PodTalk Network
  - The Trauma Therapist by Guy MacPherson

### **Authors & Books About Trauma / Healing**

- Nadine Burke Harris
  - The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Trauma and Adversity
- John Friel & Linda D. Friel
  - Adult Children Secrets of Dysfunctional Families: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families
- Daniel J. Siegel & Marion F. Solomon
  - Healing Trauma: Attachment, Mind, Body and Brain
- Melody Beattie
  - The Grief Club: The Secret to Getting Through All Kinds of Change
- Thich Nhat Hanh
  - Reconciliation: Healing the Inner Child
- Bessel van der Kolk
  - The Body Keeps the Score
- Gabor Maté
  - Four books listed on his site: <https://drgabormate.com/book/>
- Pete Walker
  - Three books listed on his site: <http://www.pete-walker.com/>
- Alice Miller
  - Several books listed on her site: <https://www.alice-miller.com/en/home/>

### **Authors and Books About Coaching / Helping Others**

- Brené Brown
  - The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be
- Curly Martin
  - The Life Coaching Handbook: Everything You Need to Be an Effective Life Coach
- Boyatzis, Smith, and Oosten
  - Helping People Change: Coaching with Compassion for Lifelong Learning and Growth
- Russell Brand
  - Mentors: How to Help and Be Helped

# REACT

*If you have any concerns or questions regarding any of the content contained in this document, please reach out! We would love to hear from you, and will be eager to assist in any way that we can.*

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