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COMPLEX TRAUMA

A THEMED STUDY GUIDE DEVELOPED BY

REACT

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 Complex Trauma. 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 place 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



Complex Trauma AND THE 12 NEEDS

Definition of Complex Trauma: an event that a person perceives as both scary and dangerous, beyond their resources to deal with. They fear they might get hurt, die or go crazy.

Two Types of Trauma:

1. Simple - a one-time event
2. Complex - ongoing danger, over a period of time

Causes of Trauma:

1. Abuse – emotional, spiritual, sexual, physical
2. Abandonment – adoption, CFS involvement, workaholic parent, divorce, death of a parent, constant moving
3. Neglect – emotional or physical
4. Basic needs not being met (mild to severe)

In all my years of being a counsellor, I have come to believe strongly that over 97% of people have Complex Trauma to some degree. - Tim Fletcher

WATCH THE VIDEO

What happens when a child has an unmet need that they can't resolve? Tim looks at the needs and drives that exist in every human, and shows how unmet needs result in Complex Trauma, and can lead to addiction and or mental health issues.

LIVE LINK - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtstsU8jgZ4>

TYPE INTO YOUTUBE SEARCH: 12 NEEDS AND COMPLEX TRAUMA

THE 12 NEEDS

All humans were born with the inherent right to 12 Basic Needs. They are broken into three categories, Physical, Emotional and Spiritual.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

1. **Pleasure** - past-times, hobbies, entertainment. This guides our life and choices - how we spend money
2. **Food and Water**
3. **Sex** - the desire to procreate

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. **Security, Safety, Justice** - “That’s not fair”. Parents give consistent boundaries
7. **Purpose, Significance** - A sense of value, truth about what I’m good at
8. **Rest** - I learn to plan it into my day
9. **Beauty**

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

10. **Awe** - Something that takes us out of ourselves (music, sports, travel)
11. **God** - Blaise Pascal, a 17th century philosopher and mathematician said “there’s a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ”. A contentment must be found in understanding that we as humans are not able to control everything that happens, and that a purpose must be found.
12. **Happy, Content, Satisfied, Whole** - This happens when all of our needs are met.

Tim talks about the ultimate goal is to feel whole, contentment, satisfied with life and joy. If one or more of these needs were not met consistently, the child experiences pain. The brain then looks for ways to meet those needs or solve problems. One solution is found in food, drugs and/ or alcohol as it numbs the pain.

THE 12 NEEDS OVERINDULGED

PHYSICAL NEEDS

1. **Pleasure** - past-times, hobbies, entertainment. Finding pleasure can become an obsession - golf, gaming, crafts
2. **Food and Water** - overeating to numb and avoid pain
3. **Sex** - an unhealthy desire to procreate or a preference in porn or sex addiction

EMOTIONAL NEEDS

4. **Acceptance, Respect, Nurture, Love, Comfort, Tenderness** - only acceptance exists. A desire to be in a relationship no matter what; codependency; people pleasing
5. **Relationships/ Belonging** - the need to feel part of a group - gangs
6. **Security, Safety, Justice** - take up political causes; parents become overprotective; we refuse to take any risks due to fear; we obsess about extreme things like money saving
7. **Purpose, Significance** - the need to be noticed; acquiring all the toys to impress; gain our sense of value through the wrong things; bad boy image
8. **Rest** - we lose the drive and ambition to work or do anything; we become lazy and unmotivated; we pursue a “life of leisure”
9. **Beauty** - travel-a-holic; acquiring art beyond our means; porn has a part of this

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

10. **Awe** - the “adrenaline junkie”; emotional highs; seeking the sensational; religious experiences
11. **God** - extreme fanatics; cult followers
12. **Happy, Content, Satisfied, Whole** - doesn’t exist. We strive to fill that huge void or hole in our hearts

PROBLEMS

- One common way we can have a “hole in our heart” is to avoid the God need. We think we don’t need to be connected spiritually and we feel empty and discontent.
- We have been deeply wounded in childhood because needs #4-7 weren’t met consistently. It leaves an emotional hole in our hearts.

- 90% of addicts have Complex Trauma - Gabor Mate would say 100%
- Abuse leaves us even more wounded
- Our lack of coping skills can lead to more trauma - with abuse, children learn to put up walls to protect themselves, but as adults, that makes intimate relationships impossible.
- We get wires crossed in our brains.
 - If we're lonely for a relationship, we may turn to food to bring a release of dopamine - the pleasure chemical.
 - Or, we may find meaningless sex to meet emotional needs. This compounds the problem as it doesn't fill the void.
- We overindulge one need to compensate for one that's missing. All 12 needs can be misused and become addictive.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What was the main cause of your Complex Trauma?

Abuse, abandonment, neglect, or your basic needs not being met?

2. Looking at the 12 Needs, which needs were not met for you as a child?

How did that affect you growing up? Did you find other ways to meet your needs?

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

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

4. Have you experienced some “wires crossed in your brain” in an attempt to meet your needs?

What have you used as a replacement to meet needs? Have they left you feeling fulfilled or do you still feel a “hole in your heart”?

5. Knowing that each of the 12 Needs can be overindulged, which needs have you overindulged in the past?

How did you try to fulfil those needs?

6. How can you meet your missing needs in a healthy way?

Write down some examples for each need.



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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