




Trauma, Emotions and Memories

Sail workshop #3

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Welcome!



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



Trauma, Emotions and Memories

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

Remember Self Care



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

Remember Self Care



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

Grounding Exercise



- So far, we've learned 'elevator breath', and '5-5-5'
- Today, a 3rd exercise is 'Grow Roots'
- Stamp your feet several times on the floor, and feel the floor against them.
- Now, imagine your feet are growing roots down through the floor, into the earth itself. Breathe slowly, in nose, out mouth, as the roots grow. Feel your strength.

Soothing?



- Most people recognize that children or animals may need to be soothed sometimes..(thunderstorms, bad dreams)
- But as adults, sometimes we too need to be soothed. We do it for ourselves.
- Reaching for a cigarette or a drink are often 'automatic' self soothe techniques, but we can mindfully soothe ourselves.

Soothing Exercises

- Today, let's generate a list of healthy ways to 'soothe' yourself. What helps you to soothe?
- Let's create a list of ways... this can be personal, but here are some suggestions to get you started.
- Generate your own list





Ways I soothe myself



Ways to Soothe



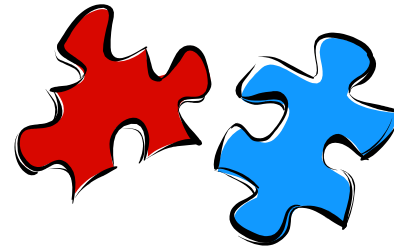
- A cup of hot herbal tea (fragrant) overwhelmed
- A really hot bath (with a book) exhausted and overwhelmed
- A walk or a swim anxious or angry
- Sitting by the water, breathing sad or anxious
- Stroking pet's fur sad or anxious
- Cooking and slowly eating a wonderful meal
all
- Watching favourite movie (no TV) anxious or overwhelmed
- Talking with a friend sad, angry or overwhelmed



Trauma, and Emotions

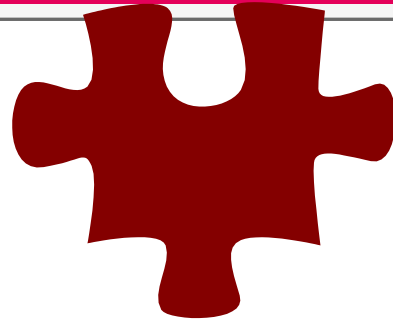
- Last time, we learned about triggers as trauma ‘markers’.
- Another way your body **stores trauma information for survival**, is to encode the emotions generated by the trauma, and **bundle them into the trauma memory.**

Emotions



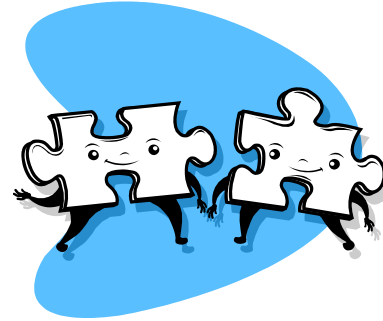
- As a result, the trigger can produce emotion unrelated to present day situations, such as **fear, humiliation or anger**
- Survivors may experience feelings 'out of the blue' ...but it is related to a trigger or memory.

Emotions



- As you begin to think and talk about what happened to you, you may find **many emotions coming to the surface.**
- Although this can be difficult, it is part of healing from the abuse.

Emotions



- Emotions related to past abuse experiences are **strong, powerful responses** to what was done to you.
- They have their place in healing, as you ‘feel’ them and then move on.

Emotions



- Often people expect to feel upset related to past abuse.
- Remember though, **there is no timetable about how long you should take in healing.**
- You will heal in your own time, not the timetable of others.

Addictions



- Many abuse survivors have used addictions to help numb out painful emotions and triggers.
- Work on resolving addictions may leave space for feeling these emotions.

Emotions



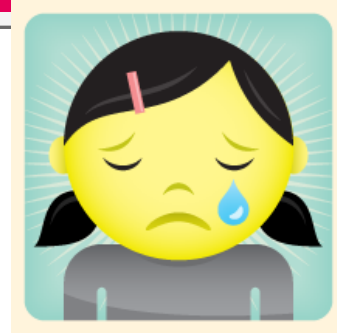
- Many survivors experience a flood of emotions through healing, when the numbing out phases end.
- Sadness, guilt, anger, fear and grief are all common emotions.

Emotions



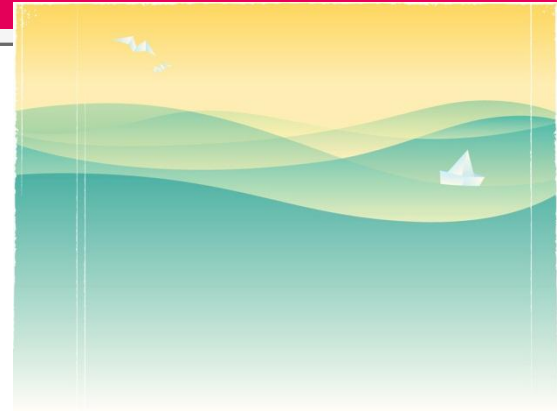
- Emotions aren't right or wrong, they just **are**.
- Learning to ride out the wave, and hold on is part of healing.
- If you have numbed out your feelings a long time, look forward to experiencing **JOY**.

Emotions



- Many children growing up with abuse are taught not to cry or show their feelings.
- This was to protect your abuser, not you.
- Your abuser did not want to have to feel compassion.

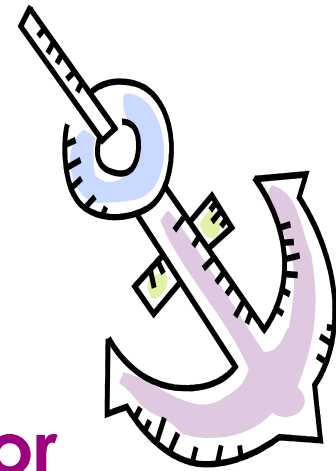
Emotions



- Many survivors are afraid of their emotions, they have kept them clamped down a long time.
- Emotions are like waves though, they come and go...you can have a rudder, and anchor...to help you ride it out.

The Anchor

- Your anchor, is your ability to **ground yourself, and soothe or distract yourself.**
- Survivors who practice **self care** give themselves an anchor they can use to 'ride out' the emotions that come with remembering and resolving past abuse.



The Rudder

- The rudder is what helps you steer yourself.
- In healing from sexual abuse, **the rudder is knowledge, reason and logic.**
- By coming to this workshop, you are building a strong rudder for yourself.
- Holding on to your knowledge, you can **balance your emotions** about abuse.





The Rudder (for guilt/shame)

An example of using knowledge:

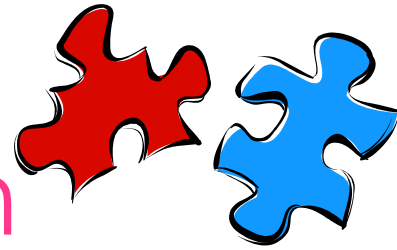
- Sexual abuse of children and sexual assault are crimes.
- No child is responsible for abuse which is committed by an adult.
- Children may be manipulated or tricked by abusers into believing they are responsible for abuse, but it is still **the adult who is responsible**. (you will learn more)

Emotions



- Many survivors haven't had a parent soothing them when they were children (abuse meant keeping a secret, and burying the emotions)
- **Self soothing** is a skill you can learn as an adult.

Memory + Emotion



- As you work on healing, you will get used to feeling emotions as you recall memories.
- You can **express emotion safely** too.
- **Soothing yourself is part of the healing exercise.**

Common Stages of Emotion in Healing



Expressing Emotion Safely

- Many survivors associate anger with abuse. That's because **abusive behaviour** was paired with the emotion **anger**.
- Anger is the emotion that says **'how dare you' or 'you had no right...'**. It has a place in healing.

Some Ways to Express Emotion Safely...

- Talk to others, talk to yourself...vent
- Journal or write a letter
- Practice exercise, such as swimming, walking, kickboxing
- Cry
- Yell, in your car, in the forest
- Throw a ball (or a plate at a rock)



After expression...soothe

- You may feel drained after expressing emotion, but often will feel a sense of relief as well
- Have compassion for yourself if you have been expressing emotion related to past abuse, this is emotion you had to hide for a long time, and **it is courageous to face it**



Soothing Your 'Child' Self

- Soothe yourself after, using your list to help you.
- If this is difficult, begin to think of **what you might say and do for a child** who disclosed to you...
- Imagine yourself soothing a younger part of yourself.



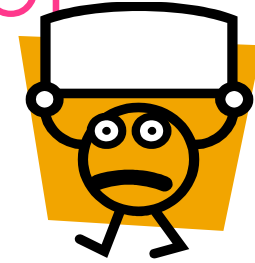
Soothing a Child



Anger: The Backbone of Healing

- Often in the final stages of healing, survivors' anger about what happened **begins to shift**
- Many survivors will take 'action' with the anger they are feeling – applying for compensation, (www.cicb.on.ca) confronting someone who has abused them, or becoming volunteers in raising awareness

Anger: The Backbone of Healing



- This self affirming, world strengthening expression of **anger is what formed many violence against women initiatives, like the SAIL program...**

Healing IS Possible

- Many of the areas which impact survivors of child abuse have now been covered in these workshops.
- Next time, we are going to examine more ways to help you **increase your resiliency**.
- Resiliency means 'bouncing back', and although it takes work, this is possible for you, like many others...

Practice Self Care

- As before, some of the topics may stir memories or emotions for you.
- Practice the skills you are learning **EVERY DAY...self care, grounding yourself**
- You may find yourself thinking of the past, but use some of the knowledge you have gained as your rudder, self care as your anchor. Our helpline **1 800 461-2929 is another anchor.**