

3. Re-examine Thoughts About Trauma

- Situations similar to the trauma that we have yet to resolve could easily trigger our threat system.
- On one hand, we could **become disconnected with the presence** and feel like we are going through the traumatic event all over again and as a result experience intense feelings like fear, loneliness, terror, sadness etc..
- On the other hand, the threat system could **colour the way we approach the presence** so we could misinterpret the current situation to be more threatening than it really is, therefore overreacting.

3. Re-examine Thoughts About Trauma

As we think about our trauma, it is important for us to

- i. **Establish a connection with the here and now** so that we remember our trauma do not define our lives.
What we went through happened in the past but we are safe in the present moment.
- ii. **Notice our thoughts regarding how we make sense of the trauma** so we could identify instances when we have misinterpreted our experiences. This could help us to better evaluate the situation and take appropriate actions to cope.

A. Traumatic Re-Experiencing Coping Plan

What places, situations or cues might trigger your flashback and re-experiencing symptoms?

If you have a flashback, which technique do you prefer to help yourself to reconnect with the here and now?

☐ Grounding

☐ Mindful Breathing

Would it be better if someone could accompany you when you need to go to these places or confront these triggering cues? If so, list some names you have in mind so you could seek their help and support when necessary.

Before and after you confront a challenging scenario, it is often beneficial to recruit your soothing system which could help to calm your threat system. Which technique do you prefer to help activating your compassionate mind?

☐ Safe Place Imagery

☐ Perfect Nurturer Imagery

☐ Compassionate Self Imagery

B. Mindfulness to Thoughts

Our mind often wander and shift from idea to idea instead of staying still. This is especially true when we are not focused in any particular tasks. This is a natural and normal phenomenon.

However, sometimes our train of thoughts might not be helpful nor beneficial to our well-being. Rumination and excessive worries are examples of such unhealthy mind wandering. It is therefore important that we notice what's going on in our mind without being dragged into our waves of thoughts automatically.

Sit in a comfortable position. Breathe out and in slowly.

Notice the cool and warm air flowing through in and out.

Pay attention to whatever that comes up in your mind. It could be anything – a memory of the past, a thought about the future, a comment of the present experience, a question in mind or even an action plan etc. Simply observe these thoughts as if they are dishes on a sushi train. You do not need to react to them. Notice them, allow them to be there and remember that they would go eventually.

Mindfulness to Thought

Date

How focused I was in the mindfulness exercises?

Cannot

Focus

At All

0 -1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9 -10

Very

Focused

Throughout

Compared to the beginning, did your notice changes in your mind, body or feelings during/ after the practice?

What did you notice during or after the practice, e.g. difficulties you encountered, intriguing observations, new discoveries etc.?

C. Expressive Writing

Writing about our struggles is a chance for us to get in touch with and to learn to tolerate our difficult emotions. It may even help us to make sense of our experiences when we write about it freely. People who completed writing about their stressful life events for three days were found to have improved physical and mental well-being.

For the next three days, use the space below to write about your **deepest thoughts and feelings** about a traumatic life event for about 15 minutes each day. Do not worry about grammar, spelling or sentence structure.

Make use of your re-experiencing coping plan (worksheet 3A). When you feel distress during writing, use mindfulness skills to reconnect with the here and now. Practice self-compassion after the writing could also help to calm your emotions. Seek social support when necessary.

Day 1 2 3

Date

Continue on the next page

4. Revisit The Traumatic Memories

- The last part of the workbook focuses on integrating and applying the skills and exploration we covered in the previous three sections to facilitate compassionate processing and reframing of our traumatic memories.
- **Notice how our threat system reacted to the trauma and calm our fight, flee or freeze reaction with the help of the soothing system as we look back at our traumatic memories with compassion.**

D. Confronting Behavioural Avoidance

Have you been **avoiding going near or visiting certain places** due to your struggle with the traumatic memories?

Have you been **avoiding to participate in certain activities or withdrawing from certain social activities** due to the struggle with trauma?

Have you been **avoiding to fulfill some responsibilities or duties** due to the struggle with trauma?

What do you wish you could do differently, try and explore, or achieve if traumatic memories no longer bother you?

D. Confronting Behavioural Avoidance (cont.)

If you decide to visit the places, participate in activities and social activities or fulfill the responsibilities and duties you have been avoiding now, what do you think your traumatised self would say to you?

What could you do to soothe the traumatised self?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding | <input type="checkbox"/> Mindful breathing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safe place imagery | <input type="checkbox"/> Perfect nurturer imagery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate self imagery | <input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate self talk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate reframe of traumatic memories | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: |

Can you write down some reminders/ encouragements for yourself from the perspective of your compassionate mind?