



ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

**TRAUMA AWARENESS and  
RESILIENCE WORKSHOP  
AVP New York**

Dear AVP Coordinator,

This workshop is challenging on many levels.

Participants in community must have completed at least an AVP Basic Workshop and preferably an AVP Advanced Workshop and an AVP Training for Facilitators Workshop before taking this workshop.

We have only offered this inside prison with participants who have gone through the three levels of AVP workshops, ideally together. Participants in community generally have more access to professional help should this workshop present the need. Incarcerated participants do not have access to professional help. We therefore try to build strong community among the participant group inside prison prior to the workshop. The best way we have found to do that is by only offering it to people who have completed all three levels of workshop together and reminding them that they have each other to listen to should the need arise. We have found that this workshop brings the team together like none other. It is powerful and it can be healing.

Please remember to make copies of the Groundings as a handout so that people have the tools to bring themselves back to the present if they begin to re-live a traumatic event. The groundings are tools for healing.

As with all AVP workshops, this workshop must first be experienced as a participant before facilitated. We all have trauma to work through. We must do our own work before we can be of assistance to others in their work.

—Shirley Way and Karen Reixach, AVP Facilitators at Cayuga Prison

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# Trauma Awareness and Resilience Workshop

Sources: Trauma Healing Manual by Nadine Hoover  
Peacebuilding en Las Americas: Sanación del Trauma  
by Val Liveoak, Cecilia Yocum, PhD Psychologist, Nina Garcia, Christina Bellamy, Linda Condon, Beverly Ward and Adin Thayer  
Liberation Workshop – Nadine Hoover

## Handouts:

Groundings

Emotional Freedom Technique

Materials for making journals: plain copy paper, stapler, crayons

## Session 1: Greeting and Building Community and Safety

Welcome

Agenda Preview

Gathering: Adjective name and what I hope for from this workshop is... (20 mins)

Opening talk (15 mins)

### Development of this special topic workshop

The trauma resilience workshop is an Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) Advanced special topic workshop. AVP began in 1975 by Quakers, peace and civil rights activists and men incarcerated in prison. In the early 2000's, community-based healing and trauma recovery workshops were launched in Burundi and Rwanda with survivors of genocide. In 2004 a similar workshop was developed with people recovering from civil war and a tsunami. In 2008 the workshop was taken to Colombia and in 2010 to Central America and the U.S. Only a few workshops have been held inside U.S. prisons.

### AVP philosophy and approach

Add:

- Everyone's journey is different.
- Focus on personal change in private and public life.
- Attend voluntarily. Not required or coerced.
- Discern decisions together.
- Focus on learning, not on religion or therapy.
- Enjoy! Experiencing a culture of peace: playful, awestruck, surprised, hospitable, loving...

Roadmap

Orientation to workshop: 2 sessions per day:

Day 1: build community and understanding trauma and self-care

Day 2: building a sense of safety and memories of loss

Day 3: integrating the past with our present and re-connecting with our communities

Open questions i.e. unanswered questions posted.

Cooperative Agreements

Add:

- Take care of yourself and the group. We will be discussing our personal traumas but there is no need to describe events in detail and we ask that you do not because it may trigger others in the group who may have experienced or witnessed something similar.
- Be sure to get enough sleep, refrain from drinking or drugging or risk-taking.
- Some exercises involve touch—take care of yourself. Pass as needed.
- We ask that you commit to being present for the whole workshop.

Ex: Adjective Name with gesture (30 mins)

L+L: Big Wind Blows (15 mins)

Break (10 mins)

Ex: Step into the Circle (30 mins)

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) tapping (10 mins) –tapping to tap on the meridians—energy pathways in the body that help to calm and relax and restore balance in the body. (see handout).

- Side of the hand.
- Top of head
- Inner eyebrow
- Side of eyes on bone
- Under the eyes--bone
- Under the nose
- Chin
- Collar bone
- Under arm
- Inside of wrist to inside of wrist

**Practice Tapping Point Sheet**

- Side of the Hand
- Top of the Head
- Eyebrow Point
- Side of the Eye
- Under the Eye
- Under the Nose
- Under the Lip
- Collarbone Point
- Under the Arm
- Inner Wrist



**Session 2: Understanding Trauma and Self-Care**

Agenda Preview

Gathering: Something new and good going on in my life is.... (20 mins)

Ex: Stand on the Line (30 mins)

L+L: All L+Ls in this workshop need to involve physical movement. (15 mins)

## Break

Ex: Core Self (40 mins)

Definition of Trauma (on a poster) (2 mins)

Trauma is a perceived threat that overwhelms usual functioning or adaptability with a sense of terror or helplessness, constricting attention to self-preservation. It is a mental state of collapse and disorganization that occurs when one cannot resist or flee a perceived threat instilling deep patterns of emotional distress. No instance is universally traumatic, so one can't judge the event alone. Trauma is a feeling that is so overwhelming that one is reduced to terror and helplessness. Trauma is a normal reaction to an abnormal event or situation.

Questions? Comments? This is not an invitation to share stories of trauma. We do not want to trigger ourselves or others into reliving traumatic experiences. We can cause more harm by doing so.

Definition of Resilience (on a poster) (2 mins)

Resilience is the ability to bent without breaking, the capacity to bounce back after adversity, the ability to withstand hardship and recover.

A sense of powerlessness, futility and paralysis results from trauma, even the secondary trauma of hearing and seeing such horrific stories. Trauma sets in when we feel our needs outstrip our resources. **If we experience the power of life as greater than human powers, of either destructiveness or industry, then the resources available to us always outstrip our human needs and we become resilient to trauma and this sense of paralysis.** Acting in love, integrity and kindness in the face of human tragedy is a joy, not a burden. —Nadine Hoover

Questions? Comments?

Regular Stress and Traumatic Stress Brainstorms: (20 mins)

What are some examples of Regular (Daily) Stress?

What are some examples of Traumatic Stress? Let the group name what they can, then add what they did not get.

Direct involvement or witnessing:

- Natural disasters or accidents
- Serious illness
- War
- Sudden loss (home, job, loved one, friend)
- Physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse
- Structural violence—poverty, racism
- Ongoing humiliation
- Exposure to media, communal or societal violence

Grounding (5 mins) (A grounding is essential here.)

Evaluation: Sessions 1+2 (10 mins)

Closing: Texas Hug (5 mins)

### Session 3: Understanding Trauma and Safety

#### Agenda Preview

Gathering: Adjective name and something that makes me feel safe is... (20 mins)

Ex: Trauma Iceberg (30 mins)

Self-Care: Deep Breathing (5 mins)

L+L: choose one that involves body movement (15 mins)

Break (10 mins)

Ex: Community workshops: Good Companions, Good Listening (20 mins)

Prison Workshops: Review Active Listening (Advanced Manual) and do Concentric Circles 1

Concentric Circles 1 (20 mins)

Some tools I've discovered that help me to keep my balance are...

Some ideas I have about what might help me or others feel safe while exploring this topic are...

A time I listened to someone else was...

Processing question: What will you take from this exercise?

### Session 4: Transforming Power and Remembering and Mourning

#### Agenda preview

Gathering: A way I took care of myself yesterday is...

Ex: Transforming Power—Building Resilience, Breaking out of the Cycles (20 mins)

In groups of three or four, going around the circle, each person has three minutes to say what piece of the mandala or what guide has helped them deal with or heal from the trauma that they have experienced.

Processing question: How can TP help us with trauma and traumatic events?

Ex: Concentric Circles 2 (30 mins)

Although life can be very difficult, we all have things that bring us joy. Some things that bring me joy in my life today are...

A time I almost gave up on life but got support or strength to carry on is...

Ways I have overcome everyday stress during the last week are...

Something that has transformed my life for the better is...

Processing question: What will you take from this exercise?

Ex: L+L: Choose one with body movement (15 mins)

Break (10 mins)

Read and post definition of Loss:

**Loss**

*Something or someone important that we can never meet or have again.*

Gathering: Something or someone important to me that I have lost is... (20 mins)

**Grief** Read and post definition of grief:

*A personal, emotional reaction of deep sadness or sorrow in response to a great loss of a relationship, person or thing.*

Gathering: A way I have expressed grief is... (10 mins)

**Mourning** Read and post definition of mourning:

*Time set aside personally or with family and community to remember and pay our respects for who or what was lost and discharge our grief over the loss.*

Gathering: A way my community mourns is... (10 mins)

Grounding:

Self-Care: Back massage (10 mins) *Be sure to give people the opportunity to pass.*

Ex: A Personal Loss: (45 mins)

Self Care: Guided Meditation and Visualization (10 mins)

L+L: Here I Sit *(or other involving movement.)*

Evaluation: Sessions 3+4 (10 mins)

Closing: Affirmation pyramid—one positive word that came out of your companion group (5 mins)

## **Session 5: Reconnecting**

Affirmation Posters

Agenda Preview

Gathering: Adjective name and one person I call a friend or one person who loves me is... (20 mins)

Ex: Recalling Significant Moments: (60 mins)

EFT tapping (10 mins)

Break (10 mins)

L+L: You are amazing! (15 mins)

Ex: River of Life (60 mins)



## Session 6: Rebuilding Trust

Agenda preview

Gathering: Someone I trust and why... (20 mins)

Ex: Empty Chair (40 mins)

L+L: Choose one with body movement (15 mins)

Break (10 mins)

Ex: Tree of Trust (30 mins) *(If time. If short on time, cut this.)*

Ex: Human to Human (Advanced Manual) (40 mins) or, if short on time:

Grounding: Pleasant Memories (10 mins) *(Do not do both Human to Human and Pleasant Memories.)*

Open Questions

Graduation

Evaluation: Head Heart Hand (Advanced Manual p. G-19)

Closing: Hurling out the garbage and Holding in goodness (10 mins) or Yarn Web

# A Personal Loss

## Purposes

To invite participants to remember someone or something lost, to honor what was lost and have compassion for themselves for what they experienced; to guide the group in the process of loss, grief and mourning.

## Time

45 minutes

## Materials

Drawing paper, scissors, glue, crayons, markers, old magazines etc.

## Instructions

1. The facilitator leading this exercise should have a drawing ready to demonstrate to the group. Explain briefly the loss depicted.
2. Inform the group that this activity will be processed first in small groups and then summarized in the whole group, where they may also share their work (if they wish to do so) and talk about their loss.
3. Ask participants to use the available craft materials such as paper, scissors, glue, different colors of paper, old magazines, markers, crayons, pencils, to represent a particular loss, be it a person, place or thing. This should be a loss which they are willing to share with a small group. For the purpose of this exercise it need not be the worst loss they have had, but a major, or important, loss. (Try not to exceed 15m) [Note: it is good for facilitators to draw one of their losses also.]
4. When finished drawing, each will walk around the room holding their pictures for display in silence, or if you prefer to hold the drawing facing inward, preventing other people seeing what they drew.
5. Then ask participants to find two others and a facilitator to form a companion group. Voluntarily, take turns and each can explain their drawings. Allow about 4 minutes for each person to speak—see Good Companions and Available and Prepared (handout).
6. Return to the whole group. Is a Grounding needed?

## Processing Questions:

Remind the group not to give out personal information on situations of others.

*What were your reactions to loss and grief?*

*What did you learn?*

## Core Self

### Purposes

To invite participants to connect with their inner being—to understand that it is always there for them to return to and that it is a source of peace, strength and goodness. Use this exercise in the Basic Workshop, following the Transforming Power talk. Use it also in the Trauma Resilience Workshop.

### Time

30 minutes

### Materials

Drawing paper, crayons, markers, oil pastels etc.

Core Self poster—a circle with the words “Core Self” inside the circle in big, bold letters. In smaller type, also inside the circle: “authentic, genuine, true”. Radiating out from the circle: “curious”, “confident”, “sincere”, “constant and maturing”, “capable”, “creative”, “calm”, “courageous”, “compassionate”, “clear”, “connected”.

### Instructions

1. The facilitator explains that everyone has a core self and that the core self is the origin of our unique goodness, capabilities and qualities. The facilitator goes over the Core Self poster.
2. Lead the group in the following meditation:
 

*“Stop in your body and your mind. Relax. Feel your skeleton. Notice your breath, your heart beat, your Transforming Power that is right here. You do not need to close your eyes. This place is always available to you, in every moment. Open to the Transforming Power within you. Remember a time when you felt totally yourself, alive and engaged in your core self. Remember a time when you were open to the goodness that is inside you—the goodness that is a place of calm, a place that brings you confidence in yourself and compassion for yourself and others. What does that place feel like? What does your core self feel like? In a moment I will ask you to begin to draw what that feeling looks like, feels like. Feelings can be abstract so your drawing can be abstract rather than representational. What color does your core self feel like? When you are ready, you may open your eyes and return to the room. When you begin drawing, start with your non-dominant hand.”*

Note: We use our non-dominant hand so that we are not caught up in making the drawing look representational and so that we have to focus more on the act of drawing. When we are traumatized, the two sides of our brain become disconnected. The right side is our creative side, the left side our cognitive side—where language lives. So to really use the right side is important. And then to write three words and explain the drawing out loud is to help to re-connect the two sides of the brain.
3. When most people have finished drawing, ask them to write three words on their drawing. Any three words.

4. When the participants have finished, the facilitator explains that *“We always have our core selves with us. We can trust that it is there and always safe—a place where we find peace and strength inside ourselves. The more we practice going there, the more real it can become for us.”*
5. The facilitator then models showing their drawing to the group, saying a few words about it and reading the words on the drawing and then posting the drawing on the wall. The facilitator invites participants to do the same, one at a time, reminding participants that they can pass if they wish.

**Processing Questions:**

*What did you learn about your core self?*

*What will you take from this exercise?*

# Empty Chair

## Purposes

To identify important or spiritual strengths and resources for each person.

## Time

40 minutes

## Instructions

Going around the circle each of us will, in turn, stand behind our chair and take the role of a person who loves them; it may be the person you named in the gathering or someone else. The person may be alive or dead. It may be a spiritual being such as God or Allah.

As an example, say the person's name is John and the person John chose to play is his aunt.

Standing behind her chair, looking at the chair, as if he were still sitting there, John would say, *"My name is Carrie and I am John's aunt. I love you John. You are..."* And here John's aunt names John's qualities that she wants to hold up and affirm about John and what she might say to John and what John might want her to say to him. When Carrie is done, John returns to his chair and crosses his arms across his chest as if receiving a hug from Carrie. Only when his hands return to his lap is the next person permitted to begin.

The facilitator leads off the process. This is a serious exercise and should be done in silence.

## Processing

*What did you notice from doing this activity?*

*What did you learn?*

*How does this relate to transforming power and healing from trauma?*

# Good Companions, Good Listening

## Purposes

To practice listening with interest and relaxed concern. To practice talking more deeply about personally difficult experiences and discharging the emotions associated with them. To practice ways of accompanying each other in the work of healing.

## Time

30 minutes

## Materials

Good Listening Companion poster

Physical Discharge of Emotional Stress poster

## Instructions

1. *“We communicate a lot without speaking, so good listening and much communication are non-verbal. Notice what you communicate through the language of your face, breathing, muscles and attention. Good companions are good listeners, who stop, turn towards the speaker, pay attention, and do so while staying present in our core selves and remembering the core self of the other person. We listen to, learn from and discharge our distresses, make decisions from our core selves, not from out of our distress as much as possible and invite others to do so as well.”*
2. Find a partner. Take a moment to look over the posters. Give time for each for just thinking or reflecting. Talk about: *“Things other people do that make me feel helped and supported are...”* or *“The best ways to help me are...”*

### Do:

- Pay attention to the other’s goodness and capabilities.
- Stay relaxed, non-anxious and present in this place and time.
- Take equal turns.

### Do not:

- Make it about me, interrupt or tell my own story.
- Figure it out or fix it, give advice or solutions.
- Over-react or steal the other’s emotions.

### Emotional Discharge

All are natural signs of healing, not of being hurt.

Listen, learn from and discharge distresses.

Make decisions and act from core self, not distress.

<b>Emotion</b>	<b>Signs of Discharge</b>
Grief	Crying, sobbing, moaning
Fear	Shaking, shivering, cold sweat, urinating, laughing
Anger	Loud voice, sharp movements, pacing, hot sweat, laughing
Boredom	Conversational talking, laughing
Joy	Conversational talking, laughing
Pain	Yawning, stretching, scratching

**Processing Questions:**

*What did it feel like to do this activity?*

*What did you get out of listening?*

*What did you get out of speaking?*

*What did you learn/*

# Recalling Significant Moments

## Purposes

To help people process grief and continue the healing process.

## Time

One hour.

## Materials

One candle per group, matches for each group, drawing paper, crayons etc.

## Instructions

Before the session, arrange a central space, convenient to all of the groups, with candles to be lit by the participants, and light a large candle; have matches ready (if needed) and tape to attach the pictures to the wall. It is good to put a metal tray or cookie sheet under the candles if they are not in small containers.

1. Explain: "Often, we do not have time, circumstance, or the ability to process our losses. This activity will allow you to process a loss, recalling a positive, important and meaningful time connected with the person, place or thing you have lost."
2. Working with the drawing of a loss demonstrated by a member of the facilitation team in the previous exercise, briefly demonstrate the following process:
3. "We will be in the same groups as we were for A Personal Loss. You may choose to use the loss you drew yesterday or you may choose a different loss. Each group will have a facilitator, as before. Facilitators will be prepared to lead Groundings as needed in the groups. The small groups will separate themselves as far apart as possible."
4. "In your companion groups, you will think of an important and significant moment with the lost person, place or thing."
5. "Each person will have the opportunity to create a short scene that symbolizes this moment, using your group to portray the characters and explaining how to act out the scene. If props are needed, find what's needed."
6. "The scene may have movement or it may be stationary. It should not take more than a few minutes to create and enact." The facilitator now asks two or three people to enact a moment with his or her loss as a demonstration.
7. "After watching the scene, ask the focus person if the scene was portrayed correctly and if it depicted the feeling of that moment. If not, replay the scene."
8. "If the focus person wishes to take his or her own role in the scene, repeat the scene."
9. "After the group has recreated the significant moment, the group will then accompany the focus person to the designated area."



10. “The focus person will paste their picture to the wall and light a candle to commemorate the moment remembered. The person lights their small candle from the large candle lit in advance, symbolizing healing. The focus person may say a few words commemorating the person, place or thing they have lost. [Note: If a participant does not want to do the scene, they will still be invited to light a candle, and put the picture on the wall.]”
11. “Then invite the focus person to say something specific they want to remember from this activity.”
12. “Then proceed to work with the next person in your group, recalling their Significant Moment.”
13. After all the small group members have had an opportunity to have a scene and light a candle, give the whole group a chance to view the drawings shown in the gallery of work, and remember the significant moments that they have experienced. Then, in the large group circle, take the time to be silent or sing.

**Processing Questions:**

*Would anyone like to share something?*

# River of Life

## Purposes

To think about traumatic experiences in the context of our whole lives. To integrate traumatic experiences into the longer narrative of our lives.

## Time

One hour.

## Materials

Drawing paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils etc.

River of Life worksheet

## Instructions

1. “Think about your life as a river. Draw the river—the source being your birth, flowing up to the present and on into the future. Draw the important events along the river that have shaped who you are. Add important people and places. You may choose to draw a road or a path instead of a river, or something else that represents your life. Add words as needed.”
2. Facilitator shows their drawing, explaining the events depicted, showing rapids and discolored water through difficult times.
3. As people finish, call them back to the whole circle. Explain that participants will create companion groups of three and a facilitator will be added to the group. (It is best if these are not the same groups as in A Personal Loss and Recalling Significant Moments.) One at a time, you will present your drawing to your companion group.
4. A person in the group will take notes on the River of Life worksheet.
5. There will be three chairs, each with a sign “PAST” “PRESENT” and “FUTURE”.
6. The focus person will first sit in the PAST chair and name the important events of their past. With the help of the companion group, the focus person will name their inner and external (e.g. family, friends) strengths that helped them face the challenges of their past.
7. Then the focus person will move to the PRESENT chair and name the important events of their present. With the help of the companion group, the focus person will name their inner and external strengths that they have now.
8. Then the focus person will move to the FUTURE chair and name the important events that they anticipate coming to pass in their future and with the help of the companion group, what inner and external strengths will help them in their future.
9. The focus person may name some goals they have and what they think they need to do to achieve them.
10. The group repeats the process for each person in the group.

**Processing Questions:**

*What did you notice in doing this?*

*What new learning did you get from this?*

*How is this related to transforming power, healing from trauma and living nonviolently?*

# River of Life, Trauma Awareness and Resilience Workshop

(name)	(date)	(location)

1. Important events in my past: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Inner strengths that helped me in my past: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

External strengths and resources that helped me in my past: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Important events in my present (today and recent past): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Inner strengths that help me now: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

External strengths and resources that help me now: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Important events in my future: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Inner strengths that I will carry into my future or that I anticipate obtaining in my future: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

External strengths and resources that will help me in my future: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Steps to arrive at my desired future: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

A promise to myself: \_\_\_\_\_

# Stand on the Line

## Purposes

To become aware of how we take care of ourselves. To share ideas for taking better care of ourselves, especially in times of stress.

## Time

30 minutes.

## Materials

Brainstorm sheet: Ways I take care of myself

## Instructions

Being safe with ourselves is a first step in healing from trauma.

1. Brainstorm Ways I take care of myself.
2. Ask everyone to stand.
3. Point to one wall. "This wall represents zero percent. This opposite wall represents 100 percent. There is a line between these two walls. Half way along that line is 50 percent."
4. "How well we are able to sleep is a good indication of how well we are doing. Think about how much adequate sleep you usually get."
5. "If you get adequate sleep every night, stand at 100 percent. If you never get adequate sleep, stand at zero percent. If you are somewhere in between, find your spot on the line and stand there."
6. "Now take a moment to think about where you would like to be."
7. "Now move to where you would like to be."
8. Ask for a volunteer at 100 percent to speak about why they are there and what it will take for them to get there.
9. Ask for a volunteer at the lowest end to speak about why they are there and what it will take for them to get there.
10. "Now considering all of the factors we brainstormed. Think about how well you take care of yourself."
11. "Now move to where you are on the line."
12. "Now think about where you would like to be."
13. "Now move to that spot on the line."
14. Ask for a volunteer at the lowest end to speak about why they are there and what it will take to get there.
15. Ask for a volunteer at the highest end to speak about why they are there and what it will take to get there.

Have hurt yourself, including drinking, drugging or looking for fights  
Have run away from home  
Have ever given up on life or felt suicidal  
Wanted revenge or got revenge  
Have felt listened to and understood by someone else  
Have felt helped by someone  
Have felt loved by someone else  
Have felt you are more than enough  
Have felt accepted just as you are  
Feel smart and capable  
Know how to take care of yourself  
Love yourself and others  
Trust someone else  
Feel beautiful or handsome  
Have forgiven someone who hurt you.”

**Processing Questions:**

*What did you notice in this activity?*

*What will you take away from this activity?*

*How is this related to healing from trauma and living nonviolently?*

*Note: The childhood experiences listed here are from the ACE test or Adverse Childhood Experiences list. People who have experienced four or more are twice as likely to develop heart disease and cancer. With six or more, people have life expectancy reduced by 20 years. These events actually change our physiology and the way we deal with stress through the rest of our lives. It floods our unfinished system with cortisol. But with one loving, listening, truth-holding adult, a child can heal.*

## Step Into the Circle

### Purposes

To find similarities and differences among the group and build a sense of safety, allowing people to share difficult things. Proceed cautiously. This must be done gently. Opening up too early too deeply may create a sense of isolation, distrust and need for protection. Is there enough community in the group? Are people secure enough in themselves?

### Time

30 minutes.

### Instructions

Ask people to stand in a circle.

*“In this activity I will read several examples of life experiences. If what is asked is true for you, please take one step into the circle. Then we will be quiet for a moment and imagine what life is like for those for whom it is true and for those for whom it is not true. Then, step back. This is a serious exercise. It will be done in silence, without comment verbal or non-verbal. You have the right to pass. Are there questions before we begin?”*

“Step into the circle if you...”

Have children

Are the youngest child in your family

Are the oldest child in your family

Like to play

Have hurt another person

Were emotionally abused or emotionally neglected as a child

Experienced physical abuse or neglect as a child

Were sexually abused as a child

Someone in your childhood home had substance abuse issues

Someone in your childhood home participated in criminal behavior or went to jail

Your mother was treated violently in your childhood home

Your parents were separated or divorced when you were a child

Are afraid to sleep at night

Isolate yourself or feel abandoned

Have been shot at

Have carried a weapon

Have experienced sexual harassment

Have been touched inappropriately

Have been sexually abused or experienced sexual violence

- Have felt you are more than enough
- Have felt accepted just as you are
- Feel smart and capable
- Know how to take care of yourself
- Love yourself and others
- Trust someone else
- Feel beautiful or handsome
- Have forgiven someone who hurt you.”

**Processing Questions:**

*What did you notice in this activity?*

*What will you take away from this activity?*

*How is this related to healing from trauma and living nonviolently?*



# Trauma Iceberg

## Purposes

To identify the effects of trauma that we see and that we don't see.

## Time

30 minutes.

## Materials

Chart paper with an iceberg drawn with some portion above the water surface and a much larger portion below the water surface.

One blank chart paper, markers.

## Instructions

Draw an iceberg with a small portion above the water surface and a much larger portion below. Then brainstorm:

What are the effects of trauma that we see? (write these on the portion above the water)

What are the effects that we don't see? (write these below the water)

If the group does not name these, include them:

We can lose speech, lose language, become confused.

Physiological changes: difficulty breathing, eyes hurt, sick to stomach, numbness, loss of feeling, wanting be alone.

A veil comes over the mind. It is hard to be happy, crying easily. Anger. Need of love, loss of memory, hard to make decisions, hard to focus, paranoia, jumpiness, get tired easily.

Cumulative trauma can be passed across generations without direct knowledge or experience—holocaust, racism. Previous traumas can be re-activated by similar events.

Do not allow yourself to freeze after experiencing a traumatic event. Trauma sets in when we freeze.

Place a new blank chart paper over the iceberg and brainstorm:

What can melt the iceberg? (place a new blank paper over the iceberg and brainstorm)

# Tree of Trust

## Purposes

To identify causes and results of trust and to look at the strengths and supports that are needed to build a trusting community.

## Time

30 minutes.

## Materials

1-2 leaves, a fruit (e.g. mango or apple) and a root for each participant (cut out of construction paper).

A chart paper with a trunk and branches drawn.

## Instructions

*We cannot fully heal by ourselves. We are communal beings. We need to be part of a community that loves and supports us—a community of trust—to be fully ourselves. What does that community look like? What are the essential elements of such a community?*

*Think about what people who are part of a trusting community do that is not seen. What is necessary to build a community of trust? Write a word or phrase on the root. One by one, come up and read your word or phrase to the group and tape the root on the tree.*

*Then: What is the work of the people who are part of a trusting community that is seen? What is necessary to build trust among people that is tangible and seen? Write a word or phrase on your leaf or leaves. One by one, come up and read your word or phrase to the group and tape the leaves on the tree.*

*Then: What are the fruits of a trusting community? What are the results individually and communally among a community of people who trust one another? Write a word or phrase on the fruit. One by one, come up and read your work or phrase to the group and tape the fruit on the tree.*

## Processing

*What do you see here?*

*What steps do you need to take in your life to cultivate a tree of trust in your community?*

*Has this exercise given you a better sense of transforming power in your life?*

## **Light and Lively: You Are Amazing!**

Seated in a circle, you turn to the person to your left or right and say, “*Affirmation name, You are amazing! because...*” And the because is either something that is true about the person or it is something that is fantastical. If what was said is true, the person responds, saying, “*Yes, I am amazing! because...*” And they affirm what was said. If what was said is not true, they say, “*Yes, I am amazing! But not because I can...*” repeating what the fantastical statement was. “*I am amazing because...*” and they state something amazing about themselves. Then that person turns to the person next to them and says, “*Affirmation name, You are amazing! because...*”

## Groundings

*Please make copies to handout to participants at the end of the workshop.*

### Purposes

To give short, simple, effective techniques to use when distress levels rise to the point that a person begins to get carried away with emotion, in other words when the person begins to “daydream,” “fly,” lose language or dissociate. To help a person come back to their senses and be grounded in the present. To increase a person’s capabilities to bring themselves back to present time using techniques that are easy to use in any setting. *Note:* These activities are written for facilitators or companions to lead, and we recommend that they be learned with the help of another person. Some of these activities, indicated by *Italics*, are better done always with a companion to help the distressed person return to present time.

**An Object** “Take a small object in your hand—whatever you can reach, a small stone, a pen, a cell phone, whatever. Look at the object and describe it in as much detail as possible—its color, texture, size, shape, read any writing on it, what it is used for and so forth.”

**3 2 1** “Look around above eye level and name three things you can see, three things you can touch, three things you can hear; now two things you can see, two things you can touch, two things you can hear; then one thing you can see, one thing you can touch, and one thing you can hear.”

**Fingers** Ask everyone to raise two fingers (index and middle finger on one hand) in front of their face and have their eyes follow the two fingers as they move from one side of the body to the other, crossing the center line of the body, weaving through the air. Stop a moment, rest and repeat.

**Five-Letter Word** Suggest a five-letter word. Ask people to think of geographic places, types of food, or other categories, that begin with each of the five letters.

**In This Chair (or On This Floor)** While sitting in a circle, say to everyone, “Feel your bottom on your chair (or floor). Notice the legs of the chair go down to the floor. Notice the floor goes out to the walls and the walls go into the foundation of the building. Notice the foundation goes into the ground and the ground spreads out to be the town of [Name] which is on the earth and the earth is a large ball of mass in the universe. The universe supports the earth, which supports the town of [Name], which supports this plot of ground, which supports the foundation of this building, which supports the walls, which supports the floor, which supports the chair, which supports me. I am supported by all of this.”

**Closed Eyes** [Recommendation: do this with a partner to help bring you back into the present. Remember that emotion builds inside. If the emotion is too high, then this approach may make it worse, not better. So, use this activity when it helps. If it makes you feel worse, stop immediately and use “An Object” or “3, 2, 1.”] When you are ready, close your eyes and remember your personal safe place, then ask yourself what it is you need right now. Before opening your eyes, say a concrete but unusual word such as “Snapdragon,” “Frog” or “What color is my shirt?” Something that pulls you into present time.

**Silence** Sit silently. Ten minutes is good; twenty will take people deeper. When you feel the group has become calm and centered and it is time to move on, simply say, "Thank you." You may take hands on either side around the circle or shake the persons' hands beside you.

**Pleasant Memories** Ask everyone to sit comfortably. *"I will talk you through a few steps to recall a pleasant memory. When we get to the step where you are actually feeling really good and happy, we want to imprint that memory with a physical code. You may pick your own physical code, but often it is gently pinching or rubbing the skin between your thumb and first finger with the opposite hand. Whichever hand you use, always use the same hand when imprinting or recalling pleasant memories. So right now gently pinch or rub the skin between your thumb and first finger or pick your own simple, tactile action."* [Pause.] "Okay, now stop." [Pause.] *"Now, relax your breathing. Relax your eyes. Relax your mind. Smile. Remember a pleasant memory. Try to use all your senses to remember this pleasant memory fully. What colors do you see? What and who are around you? What sounds do you hear? What is the air like? As you feel the full goodness or happiness of the memory, do the action you have chosen."* Give the participants time to recall and rub their hand. When you see everyone doing their action for a bit, then say, *"Okay, you can come back now. If you do this frequently, whenever you need to shift your mood or energy, you can repeat your action while recalling pleasant thoughts and the memories and feelings will tend to come to you more quickly even in difficult times and circumstances."*

**Gong** If you have a gong, you may use it. Say to everyone, "If it's comfortable to do so, close your eyes; if not, that's okay, but if your eyes get heavy you may close them later. Let your mind follow the sound." Hit the gong and wait until the sound is completely gone.

**Walk or Run** If someone is carried away with emotion, invite them to a safe, quiet place away from others. Give them a moment to adjust to being out of the group. If they still don't feel they can rejoin the group, invite them to go outside with you and walk really fast. If that doesn't work, then run. After a bit you can return. If someone "goes berserk," then take them outside to walk or run.

## Journaling suggestions

- Write freely what comes to mind
- Write a letter to someone
- Write a dialogue with another person
- Develop a timeline to express your hopes for the future
- Record memories of special moments in your life
- Write a letter to God
- Write a letter to a wise person or your grandparents
- Write about an event you want to share
- Write a reflection on the workshop
- Write a reflection on a scripture or other sacred text / spiritual literature.

## Self-Care: Back Massage

Ask the group to stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Everyone turns to their right and places their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Massage their shoulders, the back of their neck and down the back, back up to the shoulders. Then turn back to the center and then to the left. Repeat the process with the person in front of you.

## Self-Care: Deep Breathing

Invite participants to sit up straight in their chairs, their feet firmly planted on the floor. Suggest that they close their eyes. Read or say these instructions slowly and calmly

*"Now breathe. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.*

*Focus on your breath, which fills your lungs deeply.*

*Feel your breath as it comes out your nose. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.*

*If you feel your mind is scattered, return to concentrate on your breathing.*

*You're alive. You are here.*

*Imagine taking care of yourself with a healthy diet and exercise.*

*Allow yourself to let people you trust know your needs.*

*Take the opportunity to open up to other ways of healing whose source is outside of you and also inside of you.*

*Be willing to reach to the depths of your strength and inner resources.*

*As you exhale, let go of your pain, your disappointments and your fatigue.*

*As you inhale, allow the air to bring reassuring calm to you. Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale.*

*As you inhale, take in vital energy, fill yourself with well-being, experience peace and let out a sigh if one is there. Ahhhh."*

Pause for a time allowing participants to relax their breathing.

Then, calmly say, *"Now you feel calm, relaxed, quietly prepared to open your eyes and return to this space. When you're ready, open your eyes and look around."*

## Self-Care: Guided Meditation and Visualization

based on Thich Nhat Hanh, then a visualization meditation—the blooming lotus, then Roberto Sazio developing self-awareness

Mark Thomas, AVP facilitator

Sit comfortably so you can breathe easily.

Take in a deep breath.

I will be making statements—“breathing in” You breathe in to about the count of 5 pause and then breathing out to the count of 5, repeat mentally what I say.

Breathing in I know I am breathing in.

Breathing out I know I am breathing out. X3 *(Repeat the two sentences three times.)*

Breathing in I am aware of my body.

Breathing out I relax my body. X3

Breathing in I smile to my body.

Breathing out I relax the tensions in my body. X3

Breathing in I am aware of my emotions.

Breathing out I calm my emotions. X3

Breathing in I am aware of my thoughts

Breathing out I let them go. X2

Breathing in I breathe in healing to all parts of myself.

Breathing out I breathe out healing to all others. X3

Visualize yourself taking a nice relaxing walk through a peaceful garden.

It is warm and pleasant. There is a sweet fragrance of flowers in the air.



You are moving along peacefully.

You are attracted to a beautiful group of flowers.

In the group of flowers you see a flower that is only beginning to open.

Green coverings are still apparent.

Sunlight strikes the colors that are beginning to emerge as the petals unfold.

You gaze upon the flower as it opens slowly petal by petal.

Brilliant colors. Sweet fragrance.

You are attracted to the center of the flower.

The center of the flower calls for your attention.

Your consciousness moves toward it.

The center is the presence of wisdom, compassion, good will.

You look closer, you see a power coming forth from within.

There is a power that can change negativity to positivity.

Ill will to good will.

Harm into help.

We can call it Transforming Power.

The further you move into the center of Transforming Power, you know that you are part of it.

Transforming Power flows through you.

All of the petals of the flower, the Transforming Power flows through and gleams out into the world.

Transforming Power is at the core of who you are.

The power that can change the negative to positive, the harmful into the helpful, violence into nonviolence.

You breathe it in and out.

Transforming Power to all beings north, south, east, west, above and below.

From this center of peace and power it is easy for you to look upon and be aware of the many aspects of yourself.

Through many identities and roles, your body.

Say to yourself, I have a body. Become aware of your body. The sensations it is experiencing

You sense the feeling of the chair. You are physically in the chair and you are also the center of Transforming Power.

You relax the body. You have a body but you know that you are more than a body.

I have a body but I am more than a body.

I have emotions and feelings. Sometimes there is anger, irritation, fear, sadness, joy, happiness.

These emotions I experience.

They come and they go.

I am aware of them.

But I can be at the center of Transforming Power. They do not pull me back and forth.

They do not lead me to violence and harm.

At the center I can manage them.

I have emotions and I am more than my emotions.

I have thoughts and attitudes.

They flutter across my consciousness.

Little voices sometimes distract me.

Sometimes helpful, creative.

I can be aware of my thoughts, watch them pass.

Like my emotions they change and come and go.

But I am aware that I am at the center.

I have attitudes. My attitudes can lift me up or bring me down.

I can know myself as the center of pure self-consciousness and will.

I can manage my thoughts, my emotions, my body.

I can use them to benefit myself and others.

I know that Transforming Power within is mine but it belongs to all others too.

I can choose to be a vehicle for Transforming Power.

Radiating it into the world.

The center of the mandala is myself, many faceted.

I can find the peace at the center.

Breathing in I know I am breathing in.

Breathing out I know I am breathing out. X2

Breathing in I gather those things within me that can benefit the world.

Breathing out I bring them back to my physical reality. X2

[Long pause.]

Breathing in I am aware of my body in the chair (I am aware that I am in the room).

Breathing out I bring my consciousness back to the room. X2

[Long pause.]

When you are ready, bring your consciousness back to the room. Open your eyes.

You may wish to write down anything that came up for you during the meditation.

## Closings

### Hurling out the garbage and holding in goodness

Wake up body with light slapping—head, face, down chest, back, down legs, up legs, down legs, up legs. Repeat. Reach up to sky. Stretch one side, then the other. Repeat. Raise arms over head, inhaling. Forced exhale as bend at waist and knees, swinging arms down to floor and behind. Inhale, raise arms to sky and repeat. Shake energy into center of the circle. Name something you want to get rid of. Everyone repeats while lunging toward center and hurling that thing to the center. Repeat until the group is done. Then the group raises that pile of garbage and hurls it out the window. Then someone names something they want. Everyone repeats it, gathering it in from the center. Repeat until the group is done. Everyone then crosses arms over chest in a self hug, holding all that goodness inside.

**"An enemy is someone  
whose story we haven't  
heard."**

**"Behind every act of  
violence is an unhealed  
wound."**

**Gene Knudsen Hoffman**

**Shaking, trembling, crying or sweating are normal responses to threats and are helpful to the body and mind—releasing and using up the energy accumulated during the freeze response.**

**Most people know intuitively how to calm the instinctual and emotional brain naturally through drumming, dancing, singing, praying etc. -releasing blocked trauma energy.**

**Hurt people hurt people.**

**When we turn trauma energy  
against ourselves we are  
"acting-in". When we turn it  
against others we are "acting  
-out".**