



Student's Guide to

# Radical Healing

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First released digitally  
on April 15, 2020.

## **Dear Survivor,**

Thank you for making your way to this guide. Our goal is to create a space and community for you to safely show up exactly as you are, and exactly as you are not - all are welcome here. Everyone's healing journey is different and we hope that you are able to use this guide in a way that feels right to you. **As you flow through the different sections, please remember this:**

- 1. You are not alone**
- 2. It is not your fault**
- 3. Your feelings (yes, even those ones) are valid**

It's normal to experience many different feelings, such as powerlessness, unsafe, or out of control (or something completely different). And while you may be questioning why you are feeling the way you are, we want you to know that nothing is wrong with you; your feelings and responses to trauma are valid. This guide will hopefully provide you with some insight on how trauma can impact us, and how to address those different impacts.

We wanted to share this quote in hopes that it will resonate in the way that feels best in this moment:

**“ I am deserving of healing, of generosity to myself, of patience as I stumble and celebration as I grow. I commit to myself to pull from the tools within me to surround myself with the support, love, and guidance that I need. - JNWC office, inspired by healers and those who engage in healing (Amita Swadhin, Adrienne Maree Brown, Brené Brown, Desiré Galvez)**

Thank you for taking the time to look at this guide, to make time for yourself and to engage in healing even when it seems impossible.

# Introduction to Trauma



There are many different forms of trauma and many different ways that trauma can impact us. It can be scary to not know why we are feeling the way we are. So, this section will explain what trauma is and how it shows up and impacts all of our systems.

Some forms of trauma may be:

- Direct or indirect harm;
- Being threatened with harm, especially over a period of time;
- Witnessing harm being done to or by others;
- Intentional or accidental harm by others;
- Learning that a traumatic event occurred to a close family member or close friend; or
- Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of a traumatic event.



Trauma is an experience that causes **physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, or social harm**, including lack of sleep, depression, anxiety, loss of appetite, nightmares, heightened sensorys (always feeling like you're on alert), a strain on friendships and relationships, a feeling of disconnection to yourself or beliefs, and more.

Trauma can impact your:

- **Behavior** (feeling numb, distant, overwhelmed, anxious, etc) focusing, completing tasks, etc.)
- **Memory**
- **Cognitive Abilities** (having difficulty
- **Physical health** (stomach pain, gastrointestinal issues, headaches)



## Trauma also has an impact on your brain

When a traumatic experience occurs, these areas of the brain are impacted:

**Prefrontal Cortex** – The “Director” that provides executive functions, i.e. focuses attention based on goals and tasks for a situation, engages in logical reasoning and thinking through how to handle things with steps, monitors our own behavior, inhibits impulses, and controls emotions. “Top-down” thinking.

**Amygdala** – The “smoke detector” that is always on, and monitors for signs in the environment of danger. The amygdala controls the fear circuitry in the brain.

**Hippocampus** – The “hard drive” where the brain consolidates encoded memories into long term storage.

**Thalamus** – The “sensory area” that translates sights, sounds, tastes, and smells into the language of the brain.



So what happens:

- The fear circuitry from the amygdala takes control due to a flood of stress hormones meaning the “smoke detector” can remain on high alert even after the safety threat is gone.
- A loss of prefrontal regulation changes attention and focus to “bottom-up.” This can make it extremely difficult to focus, think logically and can impact your behavior.
  - > *For example, your brain may shift into survival reflexes and engage in self-protection habits even if they are potentially harmful or detrimental to yourself or others.*
- Trauma can also cause altered memory encoding meaning your memory of a traumatic event may be fuzzy, not in chronological order while some memories may be extremely vivid - especially those connected to senses (for example, you may be able to remember the smells or sounds clearly while drawing a blank on time, faces, etc.).



# Introduction to Healing



**“Healing is the restoration of identity.”**

Healing starts with empathy for oneself and requires critical reflection and loving action.

It requires getting to the root instead of putting band-aids on the problem.

**Healing is a journey.**



Radical healing is important because for many people our experiences are a direct result of systems of oppression. For victim-survivors thriving is an act of **radical resistance**, a push against the violent norms of our society. To engage in healing is to engage in community power. And no one knows what that healing looks like besides you. We are here to share tools and context, but we know that you are the expert of your own life.

We encourage healing because future generations depend on our collective healing. Healing is the journey from surviving to thriving.



While surviving is an extremely valid way of navigating the world, and sometimes the only option for folks, understanding the difference between surviving and thriving or self-soothing versus self-care can open new possibilities.

Self-soothing is not inherently wrong or bad. Indulgence is great, avoidance, however, can prolong trauma. Sometimes we need self-soothing to get through the day, week, year. But **identifying the difference can empower us to have a balance that best supports us.**



## Self-Care:

- Long-term benefits
- Connection
- Deep cleaning
- Healing
- Therapy
- Setting boundaries

## Self-Soothing:

- Immediate Satisfaction
- Avoiding conflict
- Bubble bath
- Massage/Facial/Manicure
- Drinking/smoking
- Avoiding conflict

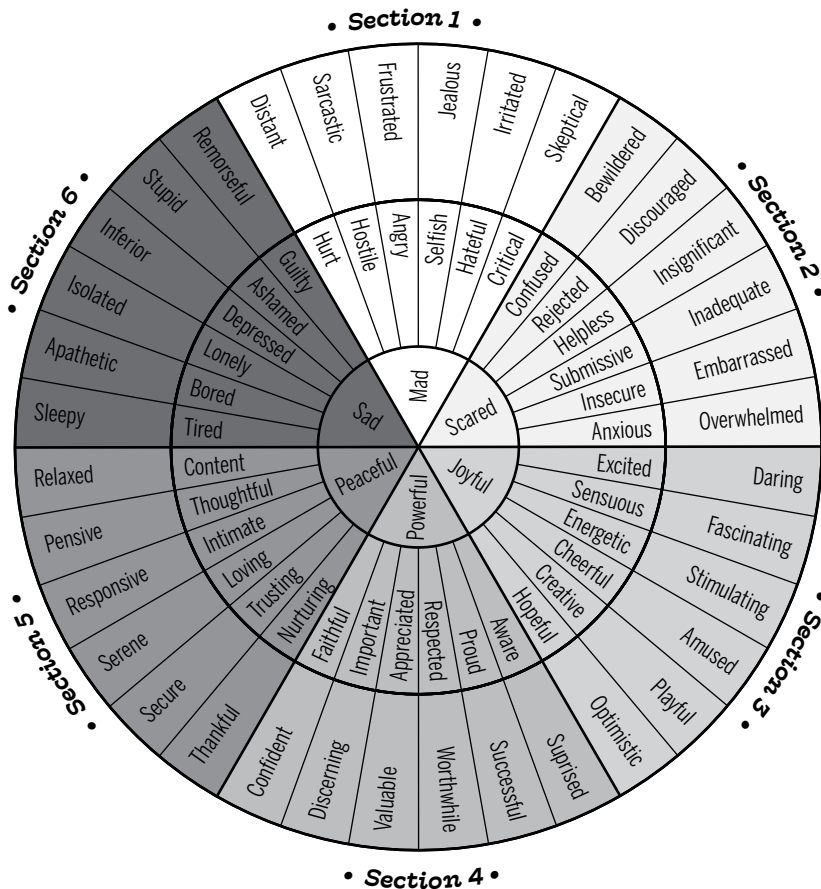


And while we saw the impacts of trauma, the good news is that our brains have something called neuroplasticity. This means that the brain is able to continuously change throughout your life. With support and access to healing tools over a period of time, your brain can actually heal. This doesn't mean that every day is easy or that traumatic events won't ever impact you again, but it does mean that when you have flashbacks or responses to those traumatic events, healing may empower you to address those responses in a way that best serves you.



For a visual representation of neuroplasticity you can check out this video: [bit.ly/CAREHZ1](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ1)

# Healing Modality Journey



Healing is unique for everyone, and the journey has no endpoint. The idea of healing can be overwhelming because the images we usually see of it, are of those who have already been engaging in healing for an extended time. And healing often requires us to reflect on painful memories, implement difficult boundaries with loved ones, and say no to things that may give us immediate pleasure but are really ways of avoiding sustainability.

There are many different healing tools and modalities. Depending on where you are in your journey or what your healing needs are, there may be a different tool or modality to support you. In the next few pages, we have a variety of healing modalities to get you thinking about what helps you feel whole and supported.

But you may be feeling confused or lost right now, and that's okay and also really common! So to help guide you, we have a "how are you feeling" map. If you're not sure what the feeling you have is called - take a look at the attached emotion color wheel to flesh out your feelings. Tip: there's no wrong answer. It's okay to trust your instinct and see where it takes you on this map. You can always return back and see if something fits better!

## "How are you feeling?"

**Disconnected, Difficulty being present, lost (Section 1, 2, 6)**

Right now you maybe feeling like you aren't really here. You may feel numb, disinterested, and maybe having a hard time being alone or focusing on anything. That's super common. There are some modalities that may help you reconnect and get to a place where you can explore some of your feelings a little more to get to the root.

You might want to try out:

- > [Journaling \(pg. 12\)](#)
- > [Yoga \(pg. 16\)](#)
- > [Hiking & Nature \(pg. 20\)](#)
- > [Sex & Pleasure Activism \(pg. 22\)](#)

*(Continued on the next pages)*

**Confused/Scared/  
Overwhelmed (Section 1)**

Right now you may not be sure what exactly it is that you are feeling or you may be feeling so many different emotions that you don't know where to start. That's okay. Let's take some time to explore those emotions and get to a place of emotional safety so we can better address our needs.

You might want to try out:

- > [Journaling \(pg. 12\)](#)
- > [Meditation \(pg. 19\)](#)
- > [Therapy \(pg. 26\)](#)
- > [Boundaries \(pg. 29\)](#)

**Sad, depressed, worn  
out, depleted (Section 6)**

Right now you may be feeling like you have no energy left, overwhelmed by daily tasks and having a hard time finding motivation. It's okay to feel like this and it's also common. These modalities may not change how you feel immediately, and sometimes we need professional help as well, but they also may begin to work overtime. If you're just not sure where or how to start, these are the modalities for you.

You might want to try out:

- > [Hiking & Nature \(pg. 20\)](#)
- > [Therapy \(pg. 26\)](#)
- > [Self Care Assessment \(pg. 32\)](#)

**Determined,  
Ambitious, Ready to  
throw yourself into  
some joy and healing  
(Section 3, 4, 5)**

Right now you may not know where to start but you know you're ready to. You're craving community, connection, and reflection. Maybe you're a little scared that this feeling will go away, that's okay. Your feelings like life may come in waves. Here are some modalities to check out to dive right into the healing process.

You might want to try out:

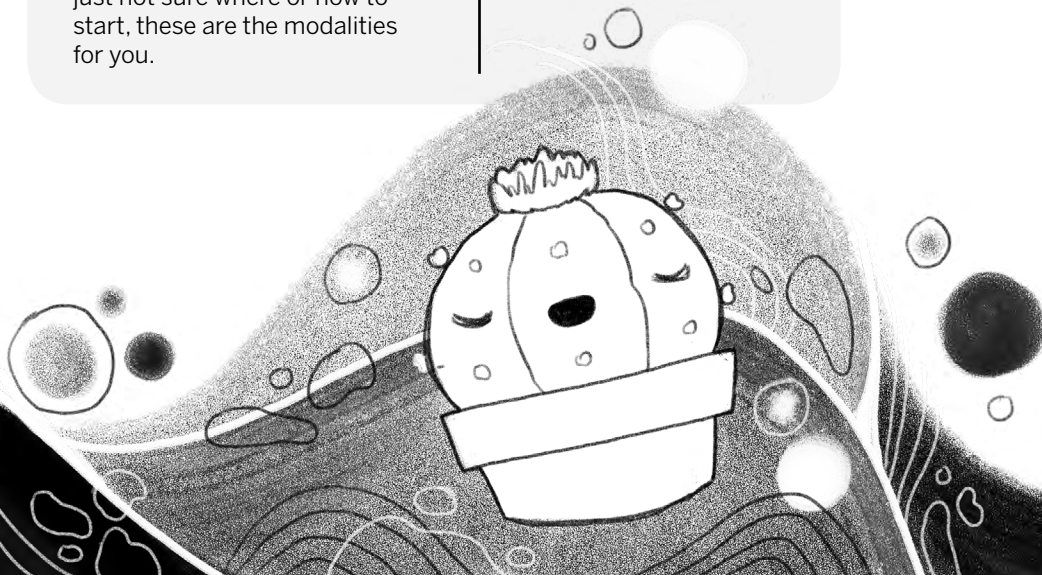
- > [Therapy \(pg. 26\)](#)
- > [Yoga \(pg. 16\)](#)
- > [Meditation \(pg. 19\)](#)
- > [Crystals \(pg. 28\)](#)
- > [Sex & Pleasure Activism \(pg. 22\)](#)

**Intense, Complicated,  
Angry, Confident,  
Daring (Section 1, maybe  
Section 3 or 4)**

Right now you may be feeling a lot of different emotions. Maybe you're feeling a rush of adrenaline, angry enough to take on the world, determined to get things done regardless of what the cost may be, intense but unsure of where it's coming from, these are all super common. It's important that even if you're feeling invincible after trauma, you may still need time to grieve. While your body or mind may be telling you to take on every new project you possibly can, it may be beneficial to schedule in downtime and rest.

You might want to try out:

- > [Yoga \(pg. 16\)](#)
- > [Hiking/Nature \(pg. 20\)](#)
- > [Self Care Assessment \(pg. 32\)](#)
- > [Readings on Trauma \(pg. 30\)](#)



# **Journaling**

Journaling is an intimate and powerful tool. For many, the fear of messing up or discovering truths that are difficult to process hold us back from journaling, and that's okay. If you're feeling confused or unsure of where your feelings are coming from or what you are feeling, journaling may be a good place to start.

## **Tips:**

1. Just write - don't edit. It is impossible to effectively write and edit, and journaling should not be about writing a bestseller, but instead putting your thoughts on paper. Or, if writing isn't accessible, try doing voice recordings or video journals!
2. Journaling before bed may help alleviate stress by transferring your issues from isolation in your mind to a notebook that you can get back to.
3. Journaling doesn't have to have any rhyme or reason. Started with one thought and found yourself lost in another - that's great!
4. Journaling also doesn't have to be aesthetically pleasing - do you prefer lists, bullet points, scribbles, doodles, poems, whatever flows - works.
5. Sometimes writing about painful memories can be overwhelming. It may be helpful to set yourself up powerfully by identifying support systems or creating a self-care plan with an advocate or therapist to prepare for any activations.

## **Some prompts:**

- How am I feeling right now?
- What does justice look like to me?
- My perfect day would look like .....
- A love letter to my present self, my past self, my future self.
- A list of gratitude, what is making or has made me happy?
- A love letter to someone that helped you.
- Write about a place, real or imaginary that makes you feel safe, what does it look like, smell like, feel like, sound like?
- What brings you pleasure, how does it bring you pleasure and what would it be like to do or get that thing/experience?
- What does healing look like for you, how do you want to feel in 3 months, one year, five years?

**Use the following pages to journal!**







# Yoga

Yoga, like meditation, can reduce stress, depression, and anxiety while also creating a connection between the mind and body. While yoga cannot address the root causes of trauma, it can alleviate traumatic stress symptoms.

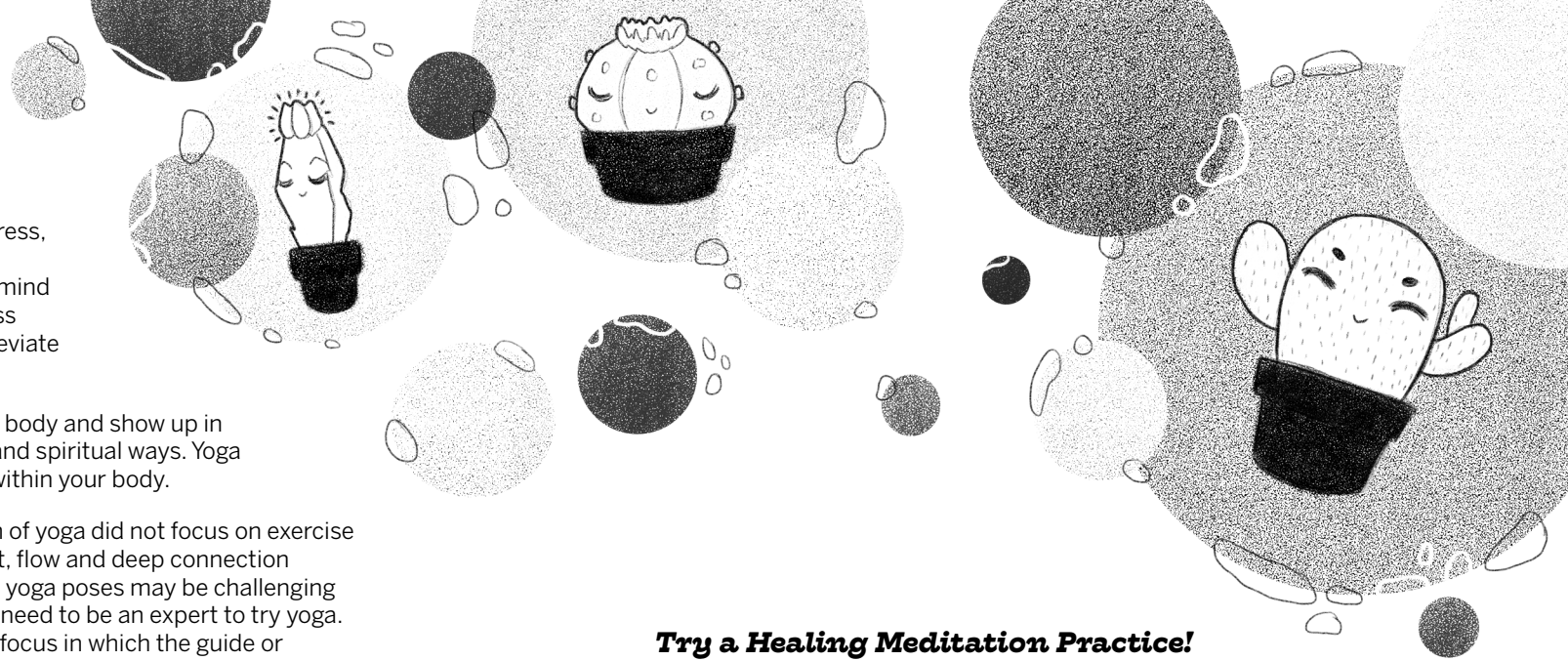
We know that trauma can live in the body and show up in physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual ways. Yoga can create reconnection and trust within your body.

It's important to note that the origin of yoga did not focus on exercise or weight loss, instead of movement, flow and deep connection between your mind and body. While yoga poses may be challenging they shouldn't hurt, and you do not need to be an expert to try yoga. Trauma-informed yoga is a specific focus in which the guide or facilitator asks for consent before touching others, using scents or turning off the lights.

You may be able to learn more about yoga and trauma here: [bit.ly/CAREHZ2](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ2)

## Where can you try yoga:

- **The SRWC at UNLV** offers yoga classes weekly, free for students enrolled in 4 or more credits. Get their schedule here: [bit.ly/CAREHZ3](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ3)
- **The Rape Crisis Center** has free trauma-informed yoga classes every Tuesday at 4:45 PM: mats are provided and you can reach out for transportation. Find more information here: [bit.ly/CAREHZ4](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ4)
- **The Downtown Yoga & Wellness Coop** has a 45min Trauma Recovery Yoga class for all levels. Drop-ins are \$10. Check out more info and dates here: [bit.ly/CAREHZ5](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ5)
- [Follow the JNWC Instagram \(@unlv\\_jnwc\)](#) to find updated resources, like online yoga classes.



## Try a Healing Meditation Practice!

The following mantra meditation, as taught by master teacher Sri Dharma Mittra, gives the mind an anchor to return to when traumatic sensations or memories surface.

### 1. Preparation

Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position (or on a chair with your feet flat on the floor) and your hands resting comfortably on your thighs, with palms facing up.

### 2. Coordination

Synchronize the breath with the following syllables and *mudras* (hand gestures). Inhale to the count of four as you slowly and gently close your fingers in toward your palms, keeping thumbs soft, while silently saying the first syllable. Exhale to the count of four as you slowly and gently open your palms while silently intoning the second syllable, and so on.

*HUM (inhale)...SA (exhale)...SO (inhale)...HUM (exhale)  
SO (inhale)...HUM (exhale)...HUM (inhale)...SA (exhale)  
SO (inhale)...HUM (exhale)...HUM (inhale)...SA (exhale)  
HUM (inhale)...SA (exhale)...SO (inhale)...HUM (exhale)*

Repeat the pattern for several rounds.

# Meditation

Meditation is an ancient cultural spiritual practice particularly from India, China, and Japan, but elements of meditation can be found in many cultures across the world. In recent times, western science has been able to explore the benefits for the mind and body. Meditation is known for reducing stress, depression, and anxiety. Research shows that with a consistent practice of meditation we have the ability to change neural networks in our brain particularly the area that regulates executive functions like the fear circuitry, this is called neuroplasticity. We all have an innate ability to heal ourselves and our ancestors have known this.

Meditation can offer new insights and can open opportunities for new perspectives however it is not something that happens right away. In fact, starting a meditation practice can be a challenging experience for a number of reasons. Meditation asks you to pay attention to your breath and body but for people that have experienced trauma in their bodies, this can activate a stress response and flashbacks can arise. If this happens to you, you're not alone and it doesn't mean you can't meditate, it just means that you have to approach meditation to a trauma-informed lens.

A trauma-informed approach to meditation adapted by [@seerutkchawla](#) (IG)

Traditional	Trauma-informed
<b>Pay attention to your breath</b> Observe your natural breathing Control your breath	If you struggle with noticing your breath or it makes you uncomfortable, <b>chew gum and pay attention to that</b>
<b>Pay attention to your body</b>	You have tuned out your body for a reason, <b>tuning back in can be scary.</b>
<b>Body Scans</b> Progressive muscle relaxation	This can activate a stress response in your body and might lead to feeling dysregulated. <b>Ground yourself</b> , and then ground yourself again. If you want to practice this, do it in tiny increments and <b>check-in with yourself before and after.</b>

Traditional	Trauma-informed
<b>Close your eyes</b>	<b>You do not have to close your eyes</b> if it feels scary or out of control.
<b>Practice for 10 minutes / 30 minutes / 1-hour</b>	You don't need to start with any set time, <b>start as small as you need to.</b> 1 minute or even 30 seconds. The most important thing is that it doesn't overwhelm you.
<b>Be still</b>	<b>Use a fidget spinner, a palm crystal, playdoh, or putty.</b> Feel it's texture, weight, and motion. It is also okay to move positions if you need to.
<b>Focus on the guided meditation</b>	If you can't focus on a guided meditation, <b>listen to a song you love</b> and notice how your body responds to it.
<b>Sit cross-legged</b>	If for any reason, like chronic pain, this is difficult - don't. Sitting cross-legged doesn't have any magical powers, <b>be comfortable.</b>
<b>Practice everyday</b>	<b>Pick up where you left off when you're ready.</b> If you miss a day it is no big deal.
<b>This will make you feel better</b>	This might make you feel worse, as you tune back into what is going on in your mind and body. <b>Be gentle with yourself, it is okay to not be okay.</b>

## **Resources:**

**Apps** - [Liberate](#) (by and for the Black African Diaspora), [Headspace](#)

**Youtube** - The Mindful Movement: [bit.ly/CAREHZ6](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ6)

# Hiking & Nature

Nature teaches us a lot about what it takes to not only survive but to thrive in the world. It teaches us about resilience and our innate capacity to heal. Connecting to nature can remind us of our connection to the world and that we are not alone. It can physically help us center ourselves and be mindful of the scenery around us.

## ***How does connecting with nature help us heal from trauma?***

[Here are three ways](#) that connecting to nature helps us recreate our whole and healthier selves, and ultimately helps us heal from the wounds of trauma.

1. **Nature can help us to Ground** – to feel rooted in our bodies and connected to our surroundings with present moment awareness. When we develop the skills to Ground, we can transform powerful, and traumatic, emotions with mindfulness, allowing them to become productive and unstuck. When we're grounded we are able to touch into painful emotions and sensations without being overwhelmed. Trauma emotions stick in our body, and becoming unstuck from these emotions in a safe way requires us to be Grounded.
2. **Nature can help us find our power.** Trauma is a thief of our personal power, and it is incredibly liberating to regain that power. Nature provides us with opportunities and challenges that help us reconnect to our inner strength. Whether it's finding the strength to complete a difficult challenge, discovering the patience and care to plant a garden, or feeling the safety in being in a natural place, nature has opportunities for powerful change.
3. **Nature is an amazing teacher, full of metaphors and life lessons.** It is a vast and ever-changing tapestry of plants and animals, water and fire, earth and sky. Observing the how, what, when, where, and why of these changes often serves as a mirror to our own experiences in life, providing us with powerful insights on how we can grow and heal. In nature, we're reminded that painful experiences do not have to define the rest of our lives.

## **Resources:**

Connecting to Nature as a Path Towards Healing: [bit.ly/CAREHZ7](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ7)

Places to go hiking near Las Vegas: [bit.ly/CAREHZ8](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ8)

Nature Sounds on Spotify: [bit.ly/CAREHZ9](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ9)

When you're out in nature here's an activity you can do using all five of your senses; sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste. Bring your awareness to your surroundings.

### **1. What do you see?**

Pay attention to the different colors of the plants, trees and maybe animals.

### **2. Can you smell anything?**

Pay attention to the smells of pine, fresh air, soil or water.

### **3. What can you hear?**

Pay attention to the sounds, it could be the wind, birds chirping, moving cars, or the sound of you walking.

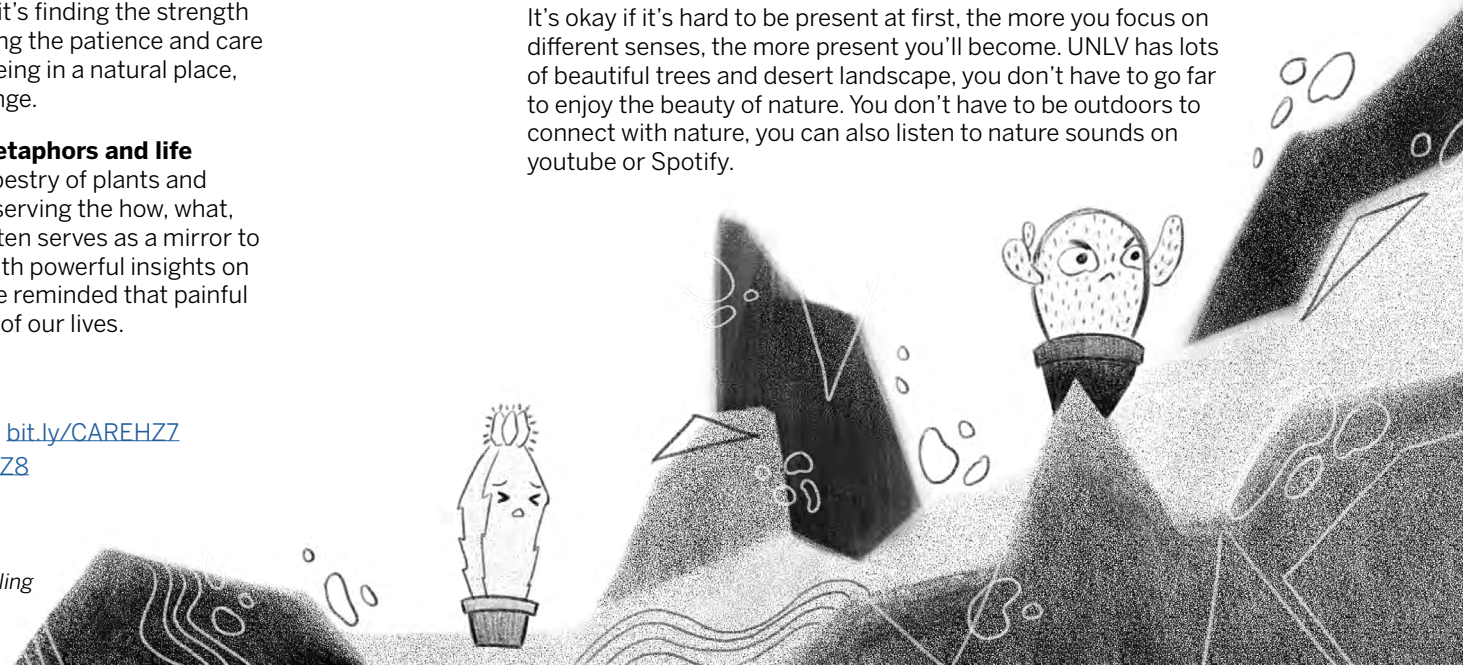
### **4. What are the sensations around your body?**

Pay attention to what your body feels, feel the wind, stop and hug a tree, the rocks or dirt on your feet, pick up a rock and hold in your hand.

### **5. Can you taste anything?**

Pay attention to the flavors inside your mouth maybe it's the food you ate earlier and if you're brave enough taste the dirt.

It's okay if it's hard to be present at first, the more you focus on different senses, the more present you'll become. UNLV has lots of beautiful trees and desert landscape, you don't have to go far to enjoy the beauty of nature. You don't have to be outdoors to connect with nature, you can also listen to nature sounds on youtube or Spotify.



# Sex & Pleasure Activism

In this section, we encourage you to explore inviting pleasure into your healing journey. Adrienne Maree Brown's book, *Pleasure Activism*, inspires us and helps us understand that pleasure is key to understanding the trauma we've experienced, and to sustain our healing journey, we have to feel good throughout the process.

## **Here are some key concepts to understanding pleasure:**

1. Pleasure is a measure of freedom.
2. Pleasure is about noticing what makes you feel good and what you are curious about.
3. Pleasure is about learning about the ways you can increase the amount of feeling-good time in your life.
4. Pleasure allows you to create more room for joy, wholeness, and aliveness and less room for oppression, repression, self-denial, and unnecessary suffering.
5. Pleasure decreases any internal or projected shame or scarcity thinking around the pursuit of pleasure, and it can quiet any voices of trauma that keep you from your full sacred sensual life.
6. You are allowed to have abundant pleasure.
7. When we collectively orient around pleasure we can begin to understand that liberation is possible.

**“ The erotic is a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we know we can aspire. For having experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognizing its power, in honor and self-respect we can require no less of ourselves. - Excerpt from *Uses of Erotic: The Erotic as Power* by Audre Lorde**

So let's get into it, sex can make us feel good and orgasms are truly the best for a lot of different reasons. When it comes to sex, it's important to acknowledge that everyone is different and we all have different likes and dislikes. Getting to know yourself sexually and tapping into the power of the

erotic is a process and a journey. It's okay to skip to other sections if you're not aligning with this message. Only you get to decide what that looks like.

Here are some tips if you're resonating with this message so far. It's okay if you want to come back to this at a later time.

## **Masturbation**

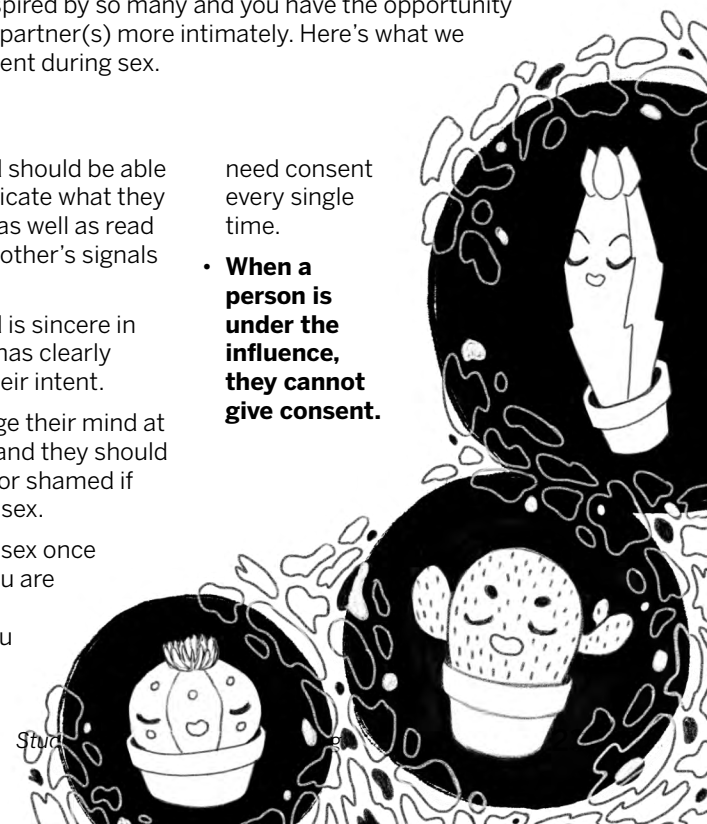
You don't have to be with someone in order to have wonderful orgasms. Masturbation can be a great way to connect with your body and for you to know what feels good to you. Masturbation is one way you can reclaim the senses of your body and you can explore your own ability to bring pleasure to your body. The best part about this is that you are in complete control, you can go as deep into your senses as you're comfortable with and you can stop whenever you want. Everyone is different, you can masturbate without sex toys or with sex toys, you can do it in front of a mirror or in the shower. You get to decide what masturbation looks like for you and at the end of the day, masturbation can be a fun and safe method to explore your sexuality. You can read this article, [Sex after Trauma: How Masturbation Can Help You Heal \(bit.ly/CAREHZ10\)](https://bit.ly/CAREHZ10) if you're curious to explore this route.

## **Consensual sex**

Having safe and consensual sex can allow us to feel that sense of satisfaction that is aspired by so many and you have the opportunity to connect with your partner(s) more intimately. Here's what we mean by having consent during sex.

### **Consent means...**

- Everyone involved should be able to freely communicate what they do or don't want, as well as read and respect each other's signals and boundaries.
- Everyone involved is sincere in their desires and has clearly communicated their intent.
- Anyone can change their mind at any point in time and they should not be pressured or shamed if they want to stop sex.
- Choosing to have sex once does not mean you are choosing to have sex every time. You need consent every single time.
- **When a person is under the influence, they cannot give consent.**



It is never your fault if you were not able to give consent or someone else did not respect your sexual boundaries. No one deserves to be sexually assaulted or raped and you are not alone. Perhaps that experience is the reason you're reading this zine. We want you to know that what happened to you does not define who you are, you can heal from the trauma of sexual violence and you deserve a healthy and pleasurable sex life. For this reason, consent is especially important because every time you engage in consensual sex, it creates new neural pathways in your brain that say sex can feel good and you are safe. Through the process of neural plasticity, those new neural pathways accumulate over time and they can override previous negative experiences.

At the same time, our body stores memories and sometimes even when you're engaging in pleasurable, safe, and consensual sex, a painful memory can arise and now your mind and body no longer feels safe. This is called an activation but is commonly referred to as a "trigger". We choose the word activation because the word "trigger" can have a connotation to gun violence and the word activation more accurately describes the stress response in your nervous system (flight, fight, or freeze) that is activated. When this happens your mind and body relive the memory and this can be scary, uncomfortable, and frustrating because we get it, you simply want to enjoy sex. However, activations during sex are not uncommon and if this happens, here's what you can do.

### **Adapted from (adm) "I WANT YOU, BUT I'M TRIGGERED" in Pleasure Activism**

#### **1. Stop**

Pause what you are doing. If you can speak, say, "Wait, stop, I need a moment." If you can't speak, remove your partner's hands from your body and step away, holding your hands up. If that is too much, just fully withdraw your body from contact. If you know from past experiences that you have some triggers, it can help to name this up front and let your person know what they can do if you get triggered. This is also a good thing to ask a new lover: "Is there anything I might do that could trigger you?" Or, "If anything I'm doing doesn't work for you, please say 'stop' or hold up your hands."

#### **2. Take Time to Recover**

Let your breath return to normal, however long that takes. Notice if you are caught in a memory or if you are actually feeling unsafe in the present moment. Again, if you can speak, say "Something is coming up from my past, I need a moment." If you can't speak, closing your eyes can help you to establish a boundary around your attention and keep it on your own well-being and breath.

#### **3. Decide What to Share**

You are not obligated to disclose your past trauma. Sharing the details of it in or right after the moment of activation may not be appropriate for the connection or the moment or your healing. Or it might be exactly right. Some options: "I want to share more about my history of trauma with you but not right now." Intimacy, yes, but I need time. This might include, "I'd like to continue— but can you avoid [if the activation is a physical place or activity, name it as an emerging boundary]?" "Are you open to hearing about what's coming up for me right now?" Hearing about other people's trauma can be hard, even re-traumatizing for people. It can also be a swift transition from heavy petting to deep sharing. The connection may not be about that kind of depth, even if something is coming up in that moment. "I am feeling like myself again. I don't want to talk about it. I would like to keep making out, if you're down." Sometimes the activation is familiar, and once it passes I just want to keep going, not move into a big process moment. "Something is coming up for me, I'm not ready to share it, I think I [you] need to head home."

#### **4. Let Your Body Follow Your Words/Desires**

If you want to leave or want your lover to go— make those moves. If you have a friend who can come and get you, call them up. You don't need to drive when your system is taken over by trauma. If you want to continue the encounter and your lover is still game, start slow. Move within the boundaries you need. But it's really important to know that you deserve pleasure. Experiences where you can be activated and recover, which usually come after doing healing work at a somatic and/or therapeutic level, help to reset your system to know that you can enjoy the connections you choose to and reclaim your freedom and pleasure inside of spaces absent of harm.

There are a lot of different ways we can incorporate pleasure in our healing journey and we hope we've sparked some ideas. As a reminder, you are exactly where you need to be. Healing is a nonlinear process and the wide range of emotions, even when they are conflicting, are valid.

#### **Resources:**

*Pleasure Activism* is available at the healing library if you're resonating with this message. **If you were activated and would like to talk to a CARE Advocate, you can schedule an appointment or call the CARE hotline 702-895-0602.** You can also talk to a therapist or counselor for additional support (you can find more information about therapy in the following section). Lastly, journaling about this part of your journey and documenting any activations that arise can also be really helpful.

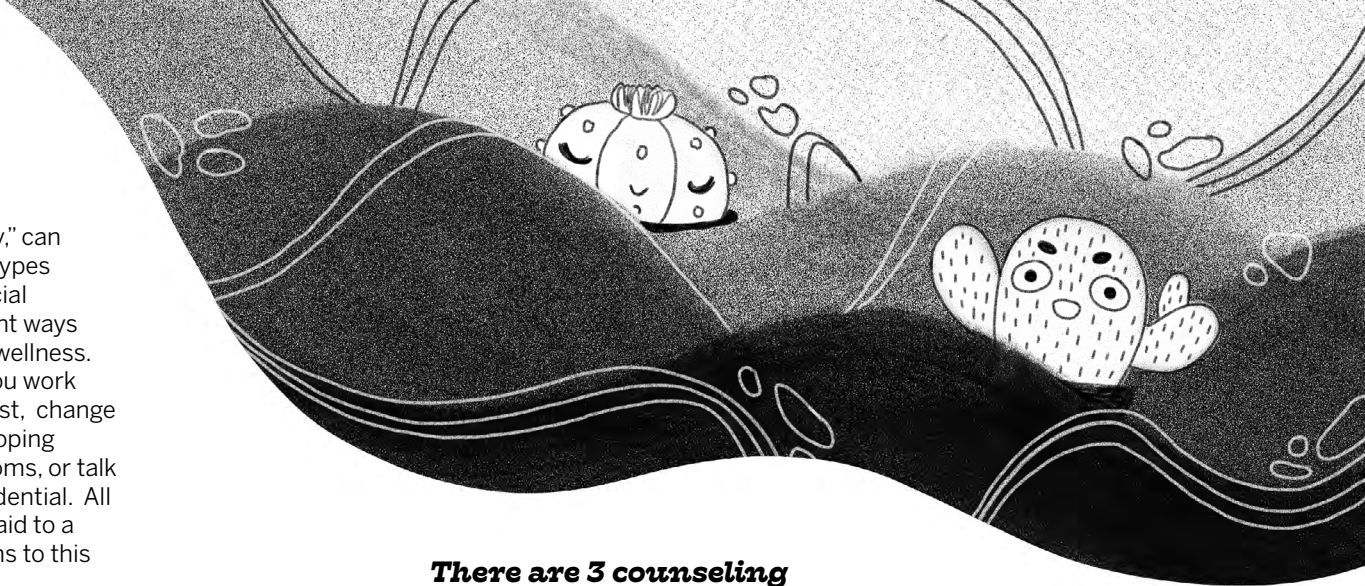
# Therapy

Psychotherapy, or more commonly referred to as “therapy,” can be very beneficial to victim-survivors. There are different types of therapists/counselors, some may be counselors, or social workers, or psychologists, and they provide clients different ways to cope with life that may impact their mental health and wellness. In therapy, a professional relationship is created to help you work through a specific issue or explore larger patterns that exist, change things that may not be working, deal with feelings, learn coping skills/techniques/strategies for stress or negative symptoms, or talk about things in a safe, non-judgmental space that is confidential. All of these can help to promote healing. Generally, what is said to a therapist will remain private, and there are a few exceptions to this rule to keep the client and others safe.

You can always ask questions of the therapist to see if they have had experience with trauma, interpersonal violence, or your specific type of concern. Therapy is your personal processing space and needs to feel right, so it is okay to ask for specific requests or to request a change if you do not believe that you and your therapist are a good match.

## **Therapy can be helpful in the short-term or long-term.**

A therapist can help to learn about yourself by pointing out patterns and giving you honest feedback. Some therapy is provided during one-on-one individual visits, and some therapy is provided in small groups for people with similar concerns. Some mental health concerns cannot be managed by psychotherapy alone. If medication is recommended, it's probably for an important reason, but is not required to participate in therapy. Benefiting from therapy does require open-mindedness, and work on your part – you will get as much out of therapy as the effort you are willing to put in to try new techniques or think about things differently.



**There are 3 counseling options on campus, two of which are free to UNLV students.**

### **1. CAPS:**

- **Fee:** free for students who have paid their health fee
- **Location:** 3rd floor of the Student Wellness Center, inside the SRWC
- **Services:** short-term counseling, individual & group, medication services, community referrals,
- **Triage/immediate counseling**
- \*CAPS also has an interpersonal violence and trauma specialist that works in-house (Liz Carrasco, LCSW).
- *To schedule an intake:* call 702-895-3627.

### **2. CICFC:**

- **Fee:** free to students, sliding scale for community members,
- **Location:** MPE building
- **Services:** individual, couple and family counseling available

### **3. The Practice:**

- **Fee:** discounted fees available
- **Location:** CEB RM 226
- **Services:** Individual & Group therapy, psychological & psychoeducational assessment

**Off-campus Therapists:** You can work with a CARE Advocate to identify a trauma-informed therapist. You can also go to [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com) and use the filter option to find a therapist who meets your needs. Some filters to use: insurance/price, gender identity, specialties, trauma-informed, and more.

# Crystals

Crystal stones are ancient minerals that can be used as tools for grounding and healing. Everything on this planet, including our thoughts and emotions, is comprised of energy. Rocks, gems, and crystals have energetic properties that emit a unique vibration that interact with our own energetic vibration and can directly affect our physical, emotional, and subtle bodies. When used with intention, such as for healing, crystals can provide insight and can offer support if your mind and heart are open to it.

One way crystals can support you is by grounding you to the earth's energy. Grounding means being connected to your physical reality rather than dwelling on future or past thoughts. In your healing journey, there will be times when you will feel overwhelmed with your emotions and while they are all valid, sometimes it can be difficult to focus on the present moment. Wearing jewelry with crystals, having crystals at home, or carrying pocket crystals can be helpful when you are feeling disconnected from your current reality. You can do this by simply bringing your entire awareness to the crystal using as many senses as you can. What does it look like? What does it feel like? How does it feel touching your skin? Bring your entire awareness to the present moment and eventually, you'll notice that your thoughts are quieter and your body is more relaxed. You can do this if you were activated by situation or memory, as well as before, during or after therapy, or while you're journaling. You can also meditate holding your crystal in your hand.

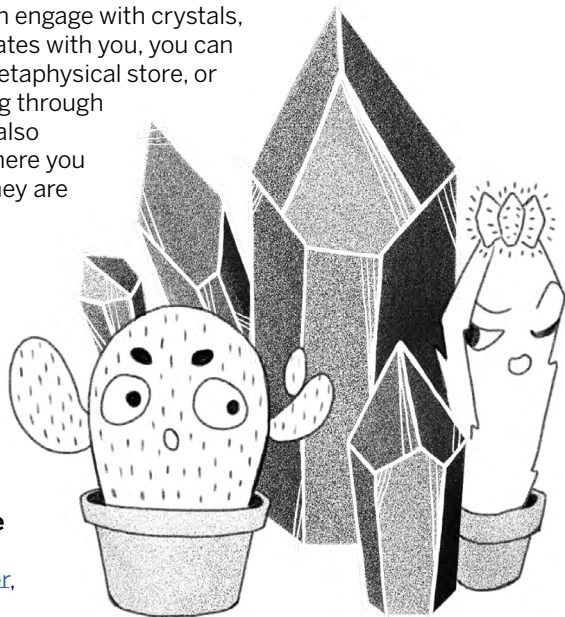
There are lots of ways you can engage with crystals, if this healing modality resonates with you, you can purchase them online, at a metaphysical store, or you can get one at our Healing through Connections workshops. It's also important to be mindful of where you get crystals and make sure they are ethically sourced.

## **Resources:**

**Article** - The Ultimate Crystal Healing Guide: [bit.ly/CAREHZ11](http://bit.ly/CAREHZ11)

**Youtube** - Crystals: [bit.ly/CAREHZ12](http://bit.ly/CAREHZ12)

**Shops in Vegas to purchase crystals** - [Sticks and Stones](#), [Enchanted Forest Reiki Center](#), [The Realms Within](#)



# Boundaries

Maybe you're feeling overwhelmed because it feels like everyone is telling you what to do or pushing you to engage in activities or communication that you're not comfortable with. Boundaries may help give you the space, time and energy you need to address your feelings. But what are boundaries, how do you implement them and how do you work through pushback or internal guilt for them?

**Boundaries are what we put in place to honor our needs.** Some examples may be:

1. "Please do not hug me, I'm not comfortable with that."
2. "I need some time to process and will not be answering calls or text for the next week."
3. "I hear you and support you and right now I am not in a place to hear about that topic. I encourage you to reach out to a professional and I will let you know if I am ever in a place to talk about that."
4. "I will not take that task on." or "I will not attend that event, thank you for inviting me." (saying "I can't" implies that there is something to be fixed. For example, if you say "I can't take that task on" the person asking may follow up with, "okay can you do it at a later time or is there something we can do so that you "can" do the task. But if it's something you are uncomfortable with or you do not want to change/rearrange your schedule, you may be put in an even more uncomfortable situation.

Setting boundaries can be made easier by identifying your needs. Do you need alone time? Time to process after a disagreement? Time away from media? Does touching make you feel uncomfortable? Is there certain language that activates you? Do you need physical space from people? Do you need time off of work? Do you want to be contacted by work after hours?

Implementing boundaries can often make us feel guilty for limiting someone's access to us. But not only do we deserve boundaries, they are essential to taking care of ourselves. If I say no to helping someone because it would negatively impact me, that "no" is allowing me to show up fully and safely for someone else, which may be myself. Every time we ignore our boundaries, we break trust with ourself.

## **Resource:**

Article - How to Set a Boundary and Survive the Shame and Guilt that Follows: [bit.ly/CAREHZ13](http://bit.ly/CAREHZ13)

# Readings on Trauma

Sometimes the hardest part of trauma is not understanding what's happening or why it's happening. We question our reaction to things, wonder if we'll ever be the same, or if anyone else is feeling this way. For some, reading and information gathering gives them a sense of control back. While it's important to have boundaries and not overwhelm yourself with research and information, because that can just be retraumatizing, doing some light reading here and there may be comforting.

Here is a list of some books to start with - this is not an exhaustive list and if none of them speak to you that's ok! Our office also has a healing library with limited books on healing and trauma that you can check-out for free.

Trauma	Healing
<a href="#"><i>The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, Body in the Healing of Trauma</i></a> - Bessel Van Der Kolk (uses scientific research to show how trauma literally reshapes both body and brain. *does depict explicit violence in some chapters*)	<a href="#"><i>Pleasure Activism</i></a> - adrienne marie brown (centering pleasure, healing and happiness in social justice work *survivors do share explicit stories of abuse in some chapters*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>
<a href="#"><i>Trauma Stewardship</i></a> - Laura van Dernoot Lipsky with Connie Burk (impacts of secondary trauma/ self-care/healing practices for those who work with trauma) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>	<a href="#"><i>dear sister</i></a> - edited by lisa factoraborchers, intro by aisha shahidah simmons (letters from survivors of sexual violence *explicit depictions of violence*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>
<a href="#"><i>Queering Sexual Violence: Radical Voices from Within the Anti-Violence Movement</i></a> - Jennifer Patterson (collection of personal narratives and strategies on connecting justice movements to address sexual violence *explicit depictions of violence*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>	<a href="#"><i>We Believe You</i></a> - Annie E. Clark and Andrea L. Pino (letters from survivors of campus sexual assault *explicit depictions of violence*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>

Trauma	Healing
<a href="#"><i>Transgender Sexual Violence Survivors: A Self Help Guide to Healing and Understanding</i></a> - FORGE (definitions, data and techniques for healing after trauma *explicit data*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>	<a href="#"><i>I Will Survive</i></a> - Lori S. Robinson (holistic approach to healing and the barriers faced specifically by African Americans who experience sexual assault and abuse *explicit depictions of violence. Outdated terminology for some*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>
<a href="#"><i>Neuroplasticity</i></a> - Moheb Costandi (overview of neuroplasticity and how brains can change in response to actions and experiences *not reviewed by JNWC but received good reviews*)	<a href="#"><i>Sacred Wounds</i></a> - Teresa B. Pasquale (spiritual healing from 'church hurt' or negative religious experiences *describes different forms of trauma and experiences*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>
	<a href="#"><i>No Secrets No Lies: How Black Families Can Heal from Sexual Abuse</i></a> - Robin D Stone (resource guide to understand and prevent child sexual abuse *detailed experiences of sexual abuse may be present*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>
	<a href="#"><i>Light in the Dark Luz En Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality</i></a> - Gloria Anzaldúa (collection of personal narratives and theory to present story-telling as a political and healing act *depictions of historical and state violence*) <b>Rent it at the JNWC</b>



# Self-Care Assessment

No clue where to start? Feeling like you just need to sit down and address what you've been doing and what you want to be doing? This self-care assessment may help you identify areas that you want to pour more energy into. Remember it's not about grading yourself, but instead being aware of your needs, which only you know. [bit.ly/CAREH714](https://bit.ly/CAREH714)

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization*. Norton.

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.



When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

## Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

- 3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)
- 2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
- 1 = I barely or rarely do this
- 0 = I never do this
- ? = This never occurred to me



## Physical Self-Care

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when sick
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other fun physical activity
- Take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothes I like
- Take vacations
- Other:

## Psychological Self-Care

- Take day trips or mini-vacations
- Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet
- Make time for self-reflection
- Notice my inner experience - listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- Have my own personal psychotherapy
- Write in a journal
- Read literature that is unrelated to work
- Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
- Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- Engage my intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art show, sports event, theatre
- Be curious
- Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- Other:

## Emotional Self-Care

- Spend time with others whose company I enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in my life
- Give myself affirmations, praise myself
- Love myself

- Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
- Allow myself to cry
- Find things that make me laugh
- Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- Other:

**Spiritual Self-Care**

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time in nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish my optimism and hope
- Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- Be open to not knowing
- Identify what is meaningful to me and notice its place in my life
- Meditate
- Pray
- Sing
- Have experiences of awe
- Contribute to causes in which I believe
- Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks, music
- Other:

**Relationship Self-Care**

- Schedule regular dates with my partner or spouse
- Schedule regular activities with my children
- Make time to see friends
- Call, check on, or see my relatives
- Spend time with my companion animals
- Stay in contact with faraway friends
- Make time to reply to personal emails and letters; send holiday cards

- Allow others to do things for me
- Enlarge my social circle
- Ask for help when I need it
- Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust
- Other:

**Workplace or Professional Self-Care**

- Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- Take time to chat with co-workers
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Set limits with clients and colleagues
- Balance my caseload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much"
- Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay raise)
- Have a peer support group
- (If relevant) Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest

**Overall Balance**

- Strive for balance within my work-life and work day
- Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

**Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You**

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(Retrieved 8/6/2010 from [http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self\\_care\\_assess.shtml](http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self_care_assess.shtml) and adapted by Lisa D. Butler, Ph.D.)

# Healing Plan

What is healing for you? What's your next healing goal? What has your progress looked like?

1. > **Journaling**
2. > **Yoga**
3. > **Meditation**
4. > **Hiking Nature**
5. > **Pleasure Activism**
6. > **Therapy**
7. > **Boundaries**

# Healing Media Content

Social media has become part of our day to day life routine. Through social media; we stay connected with family and friends, we find out about events, and we use social media to laugh at memes or watch funny pet videos. While there are lots of benefits to connecting online, social media can also start interfering with our life, cause self-esteem issues and it can sometimes take a toll on your mental health. You may want to take a break from social media if you find yourself getting upset every time you log on, find yourself writing rude comments or thinking negative thoughts, or when you start to compare your life with that of others. You get to decide how long that break needs to be and it can be anywhere between a few hours to a week.

Also, on social media there is a community of healers that are committed to creating positive, informative and uplifting content. They are using social media platforms to engage with people on a similar healing journey. We encourage you to take a look at, who are you following? Is the content you are ingesting uplifting or is it bringing you down? If it uplifts you, try to find other people that post similar content. If it brings you down, then maybe you might want to unfollow or remove from your feed. If you don't know where to begin, you can start by [following us at @UNLV\\_JNWC.](#)

## Instagram accounts that promote self-care and healing:

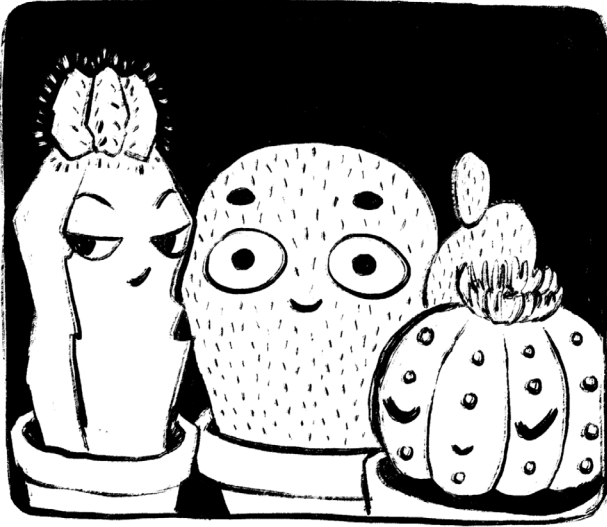
<b>Trauma</b>	<b>Healing</b>
<a href="#">@rewirehub</a>	<a href="#">@brujatip</a>
<a href="#">@seerutkchawla</a>	<a href="#">@unapologeticallysurviving</a>
<a href="#">@traumaawarecare</a>	<a href="#">@journey_to_wellness_</a>
<b>Boundaries/Consent</b>	<b>Self-care</b>
<a href="#">@the.holistic.psychologist</a>	<a href="#">@mellow.doodles</a>
<a href="#">@nedratawwab</a>	<a href="#">@myselflovesupply</a>
<a href="#">@11th.principle.consent</a>	<a href="#">@lovingmeafterwe</a>

## **Congratulations!**

Whether you've engaged in new healing modalities, thought about your needs or just took a few moments to reflect - congratulations! You're beginning a journey that can be challenging, overwhelming and also rewarding. Whether you tried a bunch of healing modalities, found one that really helped, or just read the back cover, we're proud of you. You are deserving of healing and patience, and you're not alone.

We want to leave you with this final quote:

**“ I am not broken,  
I am a fluid  
being ebbing and  
flowing with the  
waves of life. And  
I am searching  
for the balance  
within to remain  
steady in these  
waves. - JNWC office**



[unlv.edu/womenscenter](http://unlv.edu/womenscenter)

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