



**UKASFP CONFERENCE 2019**

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# **SOLUTION FOCUSED SEVERE TRAUMA & STRESS RECOVERY**

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# Intended learning outcomes

At the end of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate an increased understanding of severe trauma and/or stress
- Appreciate how revictimization and retraumatisation can be avoided
- Describe some of the basic SBFT tools & techniques used with this group of service users

- Feel more confident in taking on service users who have experienced severe trauma and/or stress
- Note the parallels/similarities with the Power-Threat-Meaning Framework (PTMF)

# 3 REASONS SOME PRACTITIONERS AVOID

1. Fear of saying something that will make the client worse
2. Fear of vicarious traumatisation
3. The mistaken belief that there are thousands of specialists 'out there' waiting for the phone to ring

# IMPORTANT BASIC SF TOOLS & TECHNIQUES IMPORTANT FOR SEVERE TRAUMA RECOVERY WORK

- BUILDING OF RAPPORT & TRUST
- DISCOVERING CLIENTS' SKILLS, STRENGTHS, ABILITIES AND RESOURCES
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, VALIDATION AND NORMALISATION OF FEELINGS, THINKING AND EXPERIENCES
- EXCEPTION FINDING
- BEST HOPES
- FAST FORWARDING THE DVD OF YOUR LIFE
- SMALL STEPS

# The 6 main areas of concern

1. Triggers
2. Flashbacks
3. Unwelcome (unwanted or intrusive) thoughts
4. 'The lows'
5. Sleep disturbance
6. Living life to the full (thriving)

PTMF parallel/similarity: (Related to 3 & 4) "Identified emotional distress; unusual experiences; v low moods; sense of being troubled.

# **The 3 stages of recovery:**

(With full acknowledgement to Yvonne Dolan)

1. VICTIM
2. SURVIVOR
3. THRIVER (Living life to the Full)

# WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

(TO REPLACE BIOMEDICAL PSYCHIATRY'S "WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?")

RECOMMENDED TED TALKS VIDEO TO ILLUSTRATE THIS:

**“THE VOICES IN MY HEAD”**

**-ELEANOR LONGDEN TED.COM**



# Techniques for triggers

“That was then, this is Now!!...”

Diaphragmatic (7/11) breathing

# VICTIM STAGE

- NAMING AND ACKNOWLEDGING WHAT HAPPENED
- FIRST STAGE OF HEALING. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR CLIENT TO FACE THE REALITY OF THE BAD THING THAT HAPPENED
- THEN CAN ACKNOWLEDGE THE FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS (USUALLY GRIEF + ANGER) AND ALLOW SELF TO EXPERIENCE THESE EMOTIONS & EXPRESS THEM. IT IS THE WORKER'S JOB SIMPLY TO ACKNOWLEDGE & VALIDATE ALL FEELINGS EXPRESSED, NOT TO PROBE & RE-IMMERSE THE CLIENT IN THEM.
- THIS IS A VITAL PART OF HEALING + A VALUABLE PART OF THE VICTIM STAGE

# SURVIVOR STAGE

- BEGINS WHEN CLIENT UNDERSTANDS THEY HAVE LIVED BEYOND THE TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE THAT OCCURRED
- REINFORCES THE FACT THAT IT HAPPENED IN THE PAST
- THEN QUESTIONS MAY BE ASKED: “HOW DID I SURVIVE IT?”; “HOW DID I DO IT?”; AND, “WHAT STRENGTHS AND RESOURCES DID I USE?”
- CAN ASK: “WHAT DID YOU DO TO GET YOURSELF THROUGH THAT TIME?”

# TECHNIQUES FOR INTRUSIVE/UNWANTED THOUGHTS

1. Let it go . . . Let it go . . . Let it go . . .”
2. The “Stop!” technique (+ replaying the video later)

### **3) Write, read & burn(or shred)**

(With full acknowledgement to Yvonne Dolan)

Many find this technique extremely effective in dealing with unwelcome thoughts.

#### **The Steps:**

- First, write down the details of the memory, thought, or image that troubles you.
- Now, write down any feelings you have about the memory, thought or image. If another person is involved in the memory, address these feelings to the person, where appropriate. Include anything you would wish to say or wish you could say to that person.
- Now re-read what you have written, reading it aloud. \*
- Once you have done so, burn (or shred) the pages.

# Techniques for Dealing with 'the lows'

1. The rainy day letter
2. Make contact with a nurturing friend
3. Maintain good exercise, diet, fluid intake and sleep pattern

# PERMISSION GIVING STATEMENTS

(WHEN GETTING 'THE LOOK')

1. “In all the years I have been doing this work, I have heard just about everything there is to hear about what can happen to people and what one person/people can do to another”.
2. “You may want to tell me what happened, either now or in the future. You may want to tell someone else. Also you don't have to tell anyone at all. All of these are okay . . .”

# 8 Key Points to Avoid Retraumatization or Revictimization, When Clients Disclose

1. Show compassion and deep empathy
2. As the service user discloses:  
acknowledge, validate and normalise all feelings & sensations expressed

PTMF parallel/similarity: Recognise that emotional distress and troubled or troubling behaviour are , ultimately, understandable responses to a person's history and circumstances.



3. Ask strength-based questions, interrupting as appropriate whilst the client is disclosing, as follows:

- How did you cope at the time?
- What got you through all this?
- What most helped?
- How did you do that?
- How did you know how to do that?
- Looking back on what happened, in what ways has it made you a more determined and/or stronger person?
- Awful though it was, which aspects of surviving it have made you a better person?

4. It is important to compliment sincerely, where appropriate, both as the service user is disclosing; and most importantly at the end of the session
5. Treat the content with care, respect and in a supportive manner
6. Value and affirm throughout, both verbally and non-verbally
7. Keep your own and your service user's eyes on the treatment goals
8. Keep to the '5 o'clock rule'

# **Blocks to disclosing**

Over 25 possible reasons!

# **Sleep disturbance**

Over 40 techniques in the following categories:

1. Preparing for bed
2. Getting off the sleep
3. Getting back to sleep, if awakened

# The (most important) Thriver Stage

- Principle focus of client
- Meaning & purpose; direction in life
- Visualisation is important (eg Letter from the future)
- More freedom than at earlier stages
- Real future possibilities & dreams can be explored
- Allows more compelling presents to be experienced
- Enjoy life to the full

PTMF parallel/similarity: “We can help clients identify new kinds of patterns; help to discover a new and meaningful future, taking hold of their own power.”

# THRIVING

- ALLOWS YOU MORE FREEDOM THAN EARLIER STAGES
- ALLOWS YOU TO EXPERIENCE A MORE COMPELLING PRESENT AND TO CONTEMPLATE A FUTURE THAT IS MORE VIVID AND FULFILLING THAN YOUR PAST
- ABLE TO ENJOY LIFE TO THE FULLEST, EXALTING IN EXPERIENCES THAT REACH THE POTENTIAL YOU WERE BORN WITH
- ABLE TO EXPRESS SELF IN MOST PERSONALLY REWARDING AND CREATIVE WAYS AVAILABLE TO YOU

- CURRENT EXPERIENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS – WILL INCREASINGLY EVOKE A SENSE OF IMMEDIACY, WONDER AND ENHANCED POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH
- DISADVANTAGE: WHEN INITIALLY CONNECTING, MAY FEEL UNFAMILIAR AND THEREFORE UNCOMFORTABLE
- LESS WILLING TO SQUANDER TIME AND ENERGY ON ABUSIVE OR TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS OR SITUATIONS. INSTEAD, DEVOTE TIME AND ENERGY TO THE LIFE YOU REALLY WANT AND DESERVE

# **SF Techniques for helping client's journey within the Thriver stage**

- Letter from the future
- Fast Forwarding the DVD of your life



FIGHT

FLIGHT

FREEZE

**FACE!**

# The triple twins of SF success

1. Patience & Persistence

2. Hope & Optimism

3. Curiosity & Creativity

THE SPECIALIST SF TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES ARE TRANSFERABLE ACROSS THE WHOLE SEVERE TRAUMA RANGE (INCLUDING ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT; AND COMBAT OPERATIONAL STRESS INJURY)

# Supplanting Victim-Survivor-Thriver continuum on the 1 – 10 progress scale

1

VICTIM

5

SURVIVOR

10

THRIVER

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SF SEVERE TRAUMA RECOVERY WORK

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE FROM NEUROSCIENCE:

- JOSEPH LE DOUX
- BESSEL VAN DER KOLK

# BOOK:

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