



TRAUMA SUPPORT RESOURCES

A curated set of resources and follow up to Pithy Musing's Episode 12: "What we don't understand about trauma and need to" with guest Kirsten Moline, BSW, RSW



Special thanks to:

Kirsten Moline | molinekirsten@gmail.com | 250-661-9645

Registered British Columbia Social Worker (RSW)

Somatic Experience Counsellor

Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) Approved Counsellor

Trauma Informed Counsellor

Pithy: “to be concise and meaningful”

Contents

Definition of trauma:2

Some examples of traumatic events include:2

Three types of trauma:2

How can the impacts of trauma show up in our lives?2

Stages of healing from trauma (not linear)3

How can we support ourselves to heal and be more emotional regulated?3

How can we notice we are emotionally regulated? What are some signs?4

What is Somatic Experiencing?4

1 Minute Somatic Release4

54321 Grounding Practice5

7 Reminders About Trauma5

Trauma Informed Books, Websites and Social Media Links5

Trauma Informed Books:5

Trauma Informed Websites/Social Media Pages:5

Trauma Informed Websites/Social Media Pages for Parents (and/or for childhood trauma survivors)5

Definition of trauma:

Any one event or events that causes our central nervous system to become overwhelmed. Dr. Peter Levine (founder of Somatic Experiencing) says trauma is “any unresolved autonomic nervous system response. It’s about the nervous system’s response to the event, not necessarily the event itself”.

Some examples of traumatic events include:

Growing up around/experiencing domestic/intimate partner violence; a car accident; mental, verbal, emotional abuse; the unexpected passing away of a loved one; bullying in childhood and/or in the workplace as an adult; betrayal; harassment and discrimination; life threatening or non life threatening injuries; major surgery or life threatening illnesses; physical and sexual abuse; sexual assault; prolonged periods spent in an unsafe environment/circumstance; neglect; being ignored/given the “silent treatment” as a child by ones’ parents/guardians (this is called “lateral violence”); unstable living environment due to poverty/ill parent/parent with an addiction; experiencing racism, sexism, homophobia, trans phobia; natural disasters; war; traumatic birth (for mother and/or child).

Three types of trauma:

1) Acute (ie: one time incident - car accident)

2) Chronic (ie: repeated inter-relational trauma like neglect, abuse while a child/youth)

3) Complex (ie: exposure to a multiple traumatic events or experiences)

How can the impacts of trauma show up in our lives?

- Impacts our ability to have healthy relationships w/others & with ourselves (ie: negative self talk)
- Substance misuse can happen as an attempt to regulate a traumatized/dysregulated central nervous system
- Challenges with our mental health (ie: anxiety/depression)
- Poor concentration/foggy brain
- Putting other’s needs before our own needs / codependency in relationships / people pleasing
- Tolerating abusive behaviours from others (ie: abusive behavior may be normalized in childhood)
- An innate feeling of shame (ie: Shame says “I am a bad person” not “I did a bad thing”)
- Sense of self, identity, self confidence and self worth can be greatly negatively impacted
- Challenges in attaining our goals re: education, employment, career, life lists etc...
- Hyper arousal aka: anxiety, stress, panic attacks, racing heart...
- Feeling younger than our actual age
- Health issues: digestive, immune, headaches, insomnia, immune illnesses, interrupted “rest and digest”
- Chronic pain, muscle tension, an ongoing “bracing” of muscles
- Overwhelming feelings of: confusion, sadness, rage, hopelessness, agitation, numbness

- Fight response: Angry outbursts, controlling behaviour, rage, anger towards self
- Flight response: over thinker, anxiety, panic, perfectionist, unable to follow through
- Freeze response: feeling of being “stuck”, difficulty making decisions, feeling numb, “out of it”

Stages of healing from trauma (not linear)

- **Creating safety for yourself** (ie: accessing Trauma Informed Counselling/resources; setting and holding boundaries; for example: changing community if in recovery from D&A via having a dry/sober community; leaving abusive relationships and situations)
- **Grief and Loss/Mourning** (grieving the past, what could have been, what wasn't, time lost...being supported by Trauma Informed Counsellors/resources/supports as we do this grieving)
- **Reconnection to Self/Identify and with Community** (ie: building and or finding identity can look like: finding out what you really want, like, are passionate about, find interesting and exploring how you can have it in your life more/ not what our family of origin, society or anyone else has told us we “have to be” or “are”)

How can we support ourselves to heal and be more emotional regulated?

- One of the key things we need to heal from the impacts of trauma, is to have “empathetic witness” – aka: community, therapists, counsellors, friends, family, groups...that see us, hear us, believe us, and what happened to us. People don't get traumatized because they get hurt, they get traumatized because they were alone with the hurt. **Seek Trauma Informed Care Counselling & resources**
- Speak gently to yourself, as you would a dear friend....compassionate self talk practiced over time can be so very effective and helpful to our healing.
- Trauma informed care says one doesn't have to forgive the people who harmed us, to do the healing.
- Exercise or Movement of any kind....fun fact: it takes just 22 minutes of walking to lower cortisol levels!
- A good cry (another fun fact: crying releases oxytocin & endorphins, these are the happy chemicals that ease emotional and physical pain)
- Creativity/Creative expression (dance, art, write, doodle...)
- Big hugs/emotional connections with **safe, regulated people**
- Enough sleep, lots of water and nutritious food
- Being in Nature or imagining the last time you were immersed in nature (imagery is powerful!)
- Find some grounding practices that work for you...and then (wait for it) PRACTICE!
- Heat pad/hot water bottle on our lower back/kidney areas =supporting our adrenals can settle stress
- **LAUGHTER!!** It's in all caps and in bold because it is one of the quickest ways for us to come out of the stress response....

- Singing With others or on our own. There is a Central Nervous System nerve called the “Vagus Nerve” and it runs throughout our bodies and through our ears...so when we hum or sing it allows us to connect to this Vagus Nerve, which is the nerve that tells us we are safe.
- Mindful breathing...you don’t have to be a Yoga Master to pay attention to your breathing...focusing on slowing the “out breath” this connects us to the Vagus Nerve too!
- Less stimulus (sights, sounds, people, places, things etc..)/ less screen time (aka: doom scrolling)
- Last but NEVER least: start practicing setting boundaries with unhelpful patterns, activities, people, places, things that don’t support your wellness/healing. “A boundary is where I end and you begin” and it is a vital component of the healing journey.

How can we notice we are emotionally regulated? What are some signs?

- Slower and steadier heart rate
- Calmer emotions
- Calmer belly
- Clearer thinking/words more easily available
- Eye contact is easier
- More connected to body/body sensations/our surroundings
- Breathing is more expansive/easier
- We feel the age that we actually are

What is Somatic Experiencing?

The founder of Somatic Experiencing (SE) is Dr Peter Levine. He states “SE approach facilitates the completion of self-protective motor responses and the release of thwarted survival energy bound in the body. This addresses the root cause of the trauma symptoms. This is approached by Somatic Experiencing Practitioners by gently guiding clients to develop tolerance for difficult bodily sensations and suppressed emotions.” ie: car accidents that happened always from the right...client struggles to look right. It is a gentle embodiment modality to support the healing from trauma. “Soma” means “body” in Greek, so often it can be said that SE pays attention to how our bodies/central nervous systems are impacted by trauma.

1 Minute Somatic Release (from: @Breathe.Burn.Rise)

- Unclench your Jaw
- Drop your shoulders
- Shake your hands out
- Gently move your eyes side to side (if you have had a recent brain injury please do not do this movement)
- Stick your tongue out and exhale
- Take 3 deep belly breaths, focusing on slowing the “out breath”

54321 Grounding Practice

- 5 things you see (in your immediate surroundings)
- 4 things you feel (ie: your socks in your shoes, back on your chair...)
- 3 things you hear in your immediate surroundings (ie: clock, dog barking, birds singing...)
- 2 things you smell, or love the smell of (ie: coffee, lavender, mint, fresh bread in oven...)
- 1 self soothing compassionate statement to yourself (ie: I can do hard things; I am valuable; I got this...)

7 Reminders About Trauma

(from www.fortraumasurvivors.com)

Your feelings are valid

Your trauma is valid

If it hurts you, it hurts you

You are not too sensitive

You are not overreacting

You deserve your compassion

There is no timeline for healing

Trauma Informed Books, Websites and Social Media Links

Trauma Informed Books:

- 1) "The Body Keeps the Score" by Bessel Van Der Kolk
- 2) "Waking the Tiger" by Peter Levine (Founder of SE – Somatic Experiencing)
- 3) "In an Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness" by Dr Peter Levine
- 3) "When the Body Says No – The cost of hidden stress" Dr Gabor Mate
- 4) "Healing Trauma: A Pioneering Program for Restoring the Wisdom of your Body" by Dr Peter Levine

Trauma Informed Websites/Social Media Pages:

- 1) "[Somatic Experiencing International](#)" (based in Boulder Colorado, US)
- 2) "[Trauma Aware Care](#)"
- 3) "[Repairing the Nervous System](#)"
- 4) "[Jake Ernst, MSW RSW](#)" (his Social Media Page has website listed)
- 5) "[Black Therapists Rock](#)"
- 6) "[The BIPOC Project](#)"
- 7) "[Indigenous Perspectives Society](#)"
- 8) "[Fortraumasurvivors.com](#)"

Trauma Informed Websites/Social Media Pages for Parents (and/or for childhood trauma survivors)

- 1) "[Neurochild Community](#)"
- 2) "[Trauma Informed Parent](#)"
- 3) "[Complex Trauma Resources](#)"
- 4) "[Beth Tyson Trauma Care](#)"
- 5) "[Positive Parenting: Toddlers and Beyond](#)"