

SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH TRAUMA

Practice grounding, centering, and boundaries in yourself

Be contained, and prevent your own activation

Practice energetic reinforcement in yourself (the ball exercise, for example)

Work with the client to build containment in the present moment

Work on safety and developing a safe space in the client's life

Teach the client grounding, centering, and boundaries

Help the client contain dissociation, overwhelm, and fear

Treat memories empathically, but preserve uncertainty (get help)

Teach the client to expand their range of nervous system responses:

(for example, many fighters need to learn how to freeze or flee, many freezers need to fight or flee, and many fleers need to freeze or fight)

Encourage the client to do physical activities (such as sports) to learn a wider range of response choices

Help the client to develop a support system in their community

Suggested Activities (these are simply examples, not guidelines: experiment, use what works)

Fight response: relaxation (to activate the freeze response), non-competitive games, activities involving containment and expression simultaneously (backgammon, tennis, meditation, horseback riding, walking, Tai Chi, Chi Kung, gardening)

Flight response: running (to complete the flight response), competitive games (to activate the fight response); squash, soccer, frisbee, judo, aikido, strength training, badminton

Freeze response: running (to unlock the flight response), soft martial arts (aikido, Tai Chi), strength training, soccer, hiking, aerobics, warm water immersion

Things to Avoid

Do not revisit or reactivate the trauma (i.e. by "telling the story")

Do not focus discussions on the past (build containment in the present)

Do not use unstructured or spontaneous expressive techniques (get training)

Do not validate or discount recovered memories (treat them as "in process")

TRAUMA RESPONSES, ADDICTION, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Substance abuse is a kind of trauma (to which adolescents are particularly prone). Healing activities for trauma should assist helping clients expand their range of choice and action. This involves helping them to understand their habitual trauma responses, the ways in which substances contribute to those patterns, and the means by which they can learn other ways of dealing with stress and trauma.

<i>Trauma Response</i>	<i>Likely Substance Use</i>	<i>Healing Activities</i>
Fight Nervous system overly activated Tendency for conflict Poor containment	Stimulants Cocaine Alcohol Phencyclidine (pcp) Ritalin, Amphetamines Methamphetamines Coffee Steroids	Relaxation (to activate the freeze response) Non-competitive games Games with containment and expression (tennis, backgammon) Meditation Horseback riding, Walking Tai Chi, Chi Kung Gardening
Flight Nervous system overly activated Dissociation Containment in imagination	Hallucinogens Entactogens LSD Ecstasy (MDMA) MDE (Eve) Ketamine	Running (to complete the flight response) Competitive games (to activate the fight response) Squash, soccer, frisbee judo aikido
Freeze Nervous system "paralyzed" Tendency for collapse Poor containment	Opiates Heroin, Methadone Valium GHB Rohypnol OxyContin Talwin	Running (to unlock the fight response) Soft martial arts (aikido, Tai Chi) Strength training Soccer Hiking Warm water immersion Juggling
Orient Nervous system hypervigilant Tendency for anxiety Anxious containment	Marijuana Some stimulants also	Activities involving active choosing Commitment to groups, families, processes Quilting Woodworking