

CHECK IN-- PHASE II

First Name- Welcome each person!

Connection with self (Self care report: Physically, Emotionally, Mentally)

Connection with others (spouse, children, friends, others)

Connection with God (follow your inner-voice, values, sense of purpose)

What recovery rituals are you doing? Did you reach out for support?

Sobriety report and any slips into self-soothing or escapism behaviors

Level of commitment to recovery (Affirmation or Uplifting Thought).

Pledge confidentiality

“We’re a Band of Brothers”

ACES= Adverse Childhood Experience Study

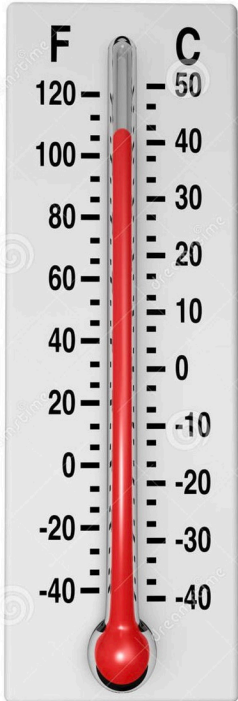
- Largest Longitudinal Study conducted by CDC (Center for Disease Control) started looking at obesity.
- Identified 10 types of trauma one can experience in childhood (5 personal; 5 related to family members)
- Results direct link between childhood trauma and onset of disease (addiction, depression, suicide, violence, obesity)
- Over 80% of ACE participants had at least one trauma, if you scored over 4 events this increases your risk of having problems in adulthood with emotional or physical health.

Attachment Trauma Consequences

- Loss
- Abandonment
- Rejection
- Betrayal
- Neglect
- Abuse
- Over-reactivity
- Negative Core Beliefs
- Hard Emotions activated-
Anger, Fear, Sadness, anxiety
- Shame messages say your
unworthy, flawed, or defective
- Numbing, escaping, addictions

Finding Peace: healing from Attachment Wounds, Troy Love LCSW, Yuma AZ

Thermometer: Emotional Check-in



- 95-105° Survival Mode: Overwhelmed, fight, flight, freeze. Trauma triggers activate Anger, Shame, Jealousy, anxiety, which leads to emotional unmanageability.
- 65-85° Growth Zone: Moderate emotional temperatures (peace, contentment, happiness etc). Coping skills equip you to manage hard emotions, do self-care, and grow through your hard life experiences. More joy in in this emotion zone.
- Under 30° Numbing Zone: this area is low growth because we are pretending we are not hurt. We use numbing and escapism to avoid feeling the hard emotions of life.

Source: Chapter 2: “In Tandem”, Recovering Me, Recovering Us
Mark Bird LMFT, PhD

Why do we have Emotions?

It is important to reflect on the purpose of “emotions” in our life.

1. **Emotions Protect**: when in a dark alley or dangerous situation your emotions prompt you of of potential danger and warn you to be careful.
2. **Emotions help you form your identity**: Emotions help you to learn what you like or dislike/ As you experience many facets of life such as movies, music, foods and a myriad of other life experiences your emotions give you feedback. You then take evaluate your experience emotionally and make decisions of where and what you choose in the future. Emotions help you to prioritize our choices.
3. **Emotions act like an internal GPS**. GPS=global positioning system on our phones can help us find locations quickly. Our feelings like a GPS can guide you to choose self-care. When feeling bored, this prompts you to seek excitement, when anxious/stressed your emotion signals you to relax, when lonely we long for others

Source: “In Tandem”, Recovering Me, Recovering Us Chap 2 Mark Bird LMFT, PhD

Helpful Ways to Regulate Emotions?

- Time Out
- Journaling
- Physical Practices
- Spiritual practices
- Zen Environment
- Social Support
Network

- Self-Talk
- Affirmations
- Relaxation
- Distraction
- Mindfulness
- Meditation

Client examples of healing trauma



- Client experience with affirmations
- Client experience with EMDR
- Client experience with journaling
- Client experience with meditation and mindfulness
- Client experience of surrender to God/12 steps

Summary: Addict Trauma Healing

- Research tells us that big or small life traumas are often the origins or seeds that lead to patterns of addiction
- Internet pornography is a “super stimulus”: which means you do not need trauma to become addicted.
- Trauma leads one to experience toxic shame and faulty beliefs. Individual therapy is often needed to heal these complex issues.
- Practice regulating hard emotions is a great tool for healing trauma and addiction recovery. Anxiety is the most common emotional trigger
- Group therapy or 12-step is a great method to heal trauma. Come out of hiding, heal shame, get emotional support.
- EMDR, Somatic Experience, & Trauma informed therapy is also helpful

Trauma's impact on Marriage

- ❑ Couple's are highly reactive due to trauma of betrayal and fear and uncertainty about marriage
- ❑ Each spouse needs practice in empathy which I teach "Lean into the pain" without being defensive
- ❑ Share some habits & tools that are effective in stabilizing the couple and building safety.
- ❑ Overview of Disclosure & Amends process

Rubber Bands: As a Metaphor for Attachment Bonds in Marriage

Rubber bands of connection:

- Each Date night
- Small Moments of connection
- Overcoming life challenges
- Supporting one another
- Encouraging one another



Attachment Injuries=cutting bands of connection

- Broken promise
- Criticism
- Demanding tone
- Blaming
- Over-spending
- Pattern of Selfishness
- Addiction
- Secret Relationship
- Emotional Affair

Discovery/Betrayal cutting bands – barely connected relationship

- Addict response
- Denial
- Fear
- Hide
- Damage control
- Intense Shame



- Partner Response
- Shock-anger
- sadness
- betrayal
- real vs. lie
- Detective
- Shame= not enough...
- Triggers= fear, worry,

Couple Recovery: Relationship needs careful attention

Stage 1 Crisis stabilization

- ❑ REACTIVITY in both addict and partner is VERY HIGH.
- ❑ Betrayed partner is often over-reactive by being a detective to learn the truth, interrogating their partner for long periods of time, and making many demands on on Addict. Need: less pain – more safety
- ❑ Addict's reactivity shows up in being super compliant, doing damage control, and making promises and hoping partner doesn't leave him. Need: increase hope – be validated for recovery work
- ❑ Stage 1 of couples work is to create safety & stability. This is a challenge because trauma can hijack each spouse's sense of self, overwhelm their emotions, and make empathy more difficult.

LifeSTAR Creating Safety Workbook

- ❑ Betrayed spouse wonders: Will I ever trust again? How will I know my spouse is in recovery? I fell for lies in the past, how can I really know if partner is being truthful?
- ❑ Unhelpful responses to trauma: defensiveness, victim stance, turning the tables, ignore/avoid, logic only.
- ❑ Helpful responses: Lean into spouses pain, reassure spouse you are deeply remorseful and “she is your one and only” and ask what you can do to comfort her.
Be transparent & proactive about your recovery

LifeSTAR Beginning Repair actions

- ❑ Transparency: allow access to phone, email, daily schedule, and prepare for disclosure.
- ❑ Proactivity: shift from a passive stance to an active approach to recovery. Examples: find a 12 step, specialized therapist, daily check-ins, disclose slips 24hr.
- ❑ Fighting for your spouses heart: reassure her in many ways that she is “your’e one and only love.” Listen, don’t pressure, defend spouse with others, good behavior over-time can build trust. Need to be patient and consistent.

“Time-Out” Tool for Couple Stability & Safety

- Time-outs when either partner is over-stimulated and the conversations will be hurtful to the relationship. Time-out is at least 20—30 min. Person calls time-out on him/herself
Person calling time-out must reconnect with partner after T.O.
- Person calling time-out cannot say something hurtful such as “I am done...I can’t deal with you...Name calling...etc.
- Sometimes time-outs needs to be longer. Person taking time out needs to communicate that need at 30 min mark.
- When you reconnect, process what triggered your reactivity and what you need to help things go right in conversation

“Check-in” Tool for Couple Stability & Safety

- F.A.S.T. Recovery Check-ins can help create a sense of progress and accountability during early recovery.
 1. **Feelings:** each partner share feelings experienced recently or currently
 2. **Actions-** report on recovery actions you each are doing to build a strong recovery plan. Betrayed partner shares self-care actions taken to cope with trauma triggers. Addict shares recovery rituals done regularly to improve recovery. Couples discusses what couple relationship recovery needs.
 3. **Sobriety check-in:** addict shares # of days of sobriety, if a relapse occurred discuss what he/she feels was the reasons for relapse. Share ideas he/she has to strengthen this weak or vulnerable area that lead to relapse.
 4. **Tools of Knowledge.** What insights are you learning about yourself and recovery. What are you learning to safeguard & nurture your marriage.

Stage 2: Disclosure & Amends

- ❑ Partner makes a list of questions she feels she needs answers for her healing and accountability (beware of details issue).
- ❑ Addict starts creating a sexual/relationship history. We ask addicts to answer spouses questions about each sexual behavior to identify patterns (Spotlighting/Imaginary Line)
- ❑ Amends letter- 2-3 paragraphs ownership, remorse with sincere apology commitment toward repair & recovery
- ❑ It is common for Addict and Partner to need 3-4 months to Prepare for and complete a therapeutic disclosure

Stage 3: Boundaries & Healthy Sexuality

- ❑ After disclosure and Amends letter, betrayed partner writes a victim impact letter and proposes boundaries for couple relationship. (read example—notice the boundaries are about safety not control)
- ❑ Emotional Intimacy— In-to-me-see (Intimacy) As reactivity decreases and the couple gets more sobriety and recovery, each spouse can be more vulnerable in their communication and ask for their needs with understanding and compassion. Emotional intimacy rebuilds over-time
- ❑ Sensate Focus Model: for couples with complex trauma around sex. This model slows down physical intimacy and encourages the couple to focus on their own sensory perceptions and sensuality (example: start with holding hands-non-sexual touch, massage with clothes-on, lots of safe communication and gradual progress toward sexual intimacy).

COUPLE RECOVERY: OVERVIEW

Stage 1 of couple recovery: crisis stabilization & beginning repair actions

- Encourage couple to not make decision regarding marriage for 1 year. Group work, individual, and couples can work together for stability.

Skill of Empathy “Lean into Pain,” being proactive about recovery and transparency are great recovery habits to build safety & stability

- Time outs protect the couple relationship and provide an opportunity for each spouse to practice emotional awareness/regulation F.A.S.T
Recovery Check-ins build accountability for the progress being made

Stage 2 of couples recovery: disclosure, amends, victim impact

Stage 3 Boundaries & Maintenance & Healthy Sexuality

“Couple recovery is possible with care & work”