



How Do You Heal?

There are different therapies and theories focused on emotional healing, especially when it comes to trauma. Many of these approaches are effective when an individual in need of help puts the appropriate time and effort into the process of getting better in treatment. Seeking professional help can be extremely valuable in the pursuit of healing from past trauma.

Still, on a day to day basis, in addition to formal treatments, therapies and medications, some of the best forms of healing can also take place through the consistent and persistent use of basic coping strategies. These simple strategies used alone may not be the answer with more complex cases of emotional trauma. However, having a handful of basic yet effective coping tools to get through the short term can be a lifesaver when considering emotional survival on a day to day basis.

Taking it a step further, almost anyone with a history of trauma who has also had some success with overcoming a substance use issue can attest to the importance of having some basic skills to turn to instead of reaching for that drink or drug. Taking a drink, toke, smoke, sniff, pop, shot, or spike of a substance to escape difficult emotions associated with trauma may feel good in the short term, but it usually isn't a long term answer when it comes to healing. Instead, committing to a plan for basic healing-based safe care can have excellent long term benefits.

*So keeping it simple- consider the question: **How do you heal?***

First, in order to conceptualize your plan of action, think of the following **action** words – things you can DO

Breathing

Visualizing

Walking

Talking

Bathing

Exercising

Writing

Listening

Reading

Praying

Learning

Helping

Playing

Laughing

Loving

Making (Creating)



Using the list of action words provided, what do you do in order to go to that place of peace where you can rest and heal emotionally? Be descriptive of what you do and what it does for you

Examples:

“The half hour at the end of the day when I am playing my guitar, my mind is clear and I feel the positive energy that comes from the songs I am singing. For those 30 minutes I am not thinking about stress, worries, fears, or anything – It’s just me, my guitar and my songs”

“The other night I was tossing and turning due to stressful memories. Even though it was 1:00 am I lit a candle, dimmed the lights and took a long nice hot bath. Even though it took a few minutes to settle in at first, eventually a sense of peace came over me and for a little while I felt the escape I was looking for, without getting high.”

“After years of struggling with my emotions, I learned that an essential part of my healing was directly tied to nature. Nowadays I make sure that walking in nature is part of my day. Whether it is hot, cold, rainy or snowing, I do whatever I can to take my dog out for a walk on the beach at least for a few minutes. When my dog and I are out there walking on the beach, I am at peace and getting high is the furthest thing from my mind”

Take turns sharing your own basic methods for peace and healing



Closing Group Process Questions:

Now that everyone has shared, be honest: Have you been doing what you need to do to heal as you described, or have you gotten away from it and you need to get back on track?

What other ideas did you hear from others in the group that you may want to try?

Finally: Can you make a commitment to focus on healing? – If so complete the following:

*Starting today, in order to increase the sense of peace in my life
and give myself time for emotional healing,
I will do the following _____ at least _____ (frequency)*