

DEVELOPING FOCUS EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with our book, “*What Is PTSD? 3 Steps to Healing Trauma*” for best effect. Please visit www.WhatIsPTSD.com for additional resources.

GOAL

The goal of the *Developing Focus Exercise* is to enhance your focus and trauma processing skills while working through the effects of the first cluster of trauma symptoms – re-experiencing. Because intrusive thoughts, dreams, perceptions, etc. are an issue in this cluster of symptoms, developing the ability to focus can extend into other areas of your daily life, and can help there as well!

TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and notice if you need a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

MATERIALS AND LAYOUT

Pen or pencil and the form we have provided on the following pages.

PATH TO COMPLETE

1. The next time you have an intrusive thought, take several breaths and remind yourself that you are no longer in danger. You are in the here-and-now. You are safe and you are in control. What words would you say to a close friend to reassure them at a time like this? Write out those words below:

2. Remind yourself that you are able to take care of yourself and that you recognize this as an intrusive thought caused by a trigger. Remember, trigger reactions might occur to something you have experienced in the moment, earlier in the day or even something you saw last night on TV. A trigger does not have to be close in time to your reaction to form the connection. What was this trigger?

3. Congratulate yourself on the progress you are making in being able to recognize the link between the trigger and the subsequent intrusive thought. Write the connection between the two here (i.e., I saw a movie last night where a child was hit and it reminded me of a time when I was vulnerable as a child):

End this section by reading through your thoughts from item #1 above.