

TELLING YOUR STORY 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 *Telling Your Story Exercise* incorporates exposure to a difficult memory and our thoughts. The goal of this exercise is to confront and challenge beliefs and thoughts that may be a result of a trauma. This exercise is especially helpful with feelings of survivor guilt and self-blame. In addition, it can help you face strongly held, distorted beliefs whether they are about trust, power, control, self-esteem, or intimacy that are no longer working at this point in your life. Continue to work through the stages of the exercise until you begin to notice a lessening of feelings of being *stuck* so you can begin to move ahead in your recovery.

TIME OUT

Do not use this exercise if you feel overly confused or are overly stressed, actively dissociated, or if you find yourself dissociating during the exercise. 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, timer, and the form we have provided on the following pages.

PATH TO COMPLETE

1. Identify an unresolved memory, concern or situation. Use the SUDs rating scale (1-10). Select the number that reflects your feelings of distress regarding the memory right now. SUD rating = ____

2. For one minute, remain in quiet reflection, letting your thoughts run with no judgment on the content. This should be a timed minute, ending when the buzzer goes off.

3. Now set the timer for five minutes. Use this time to write out the details of the thoughts that surfaced during your one minute re-flection, allowing yourself to do this without judgment or suppression so you can capture everything you recall (add paper if needed) [Stop at the end of five minutes].

4. Repeat items 2 and 3 until your SUD's ratings are a five or less.
5. Remember to work with exercises to relax and lower stress whenever needed. Be deliberate about this and always notice changes in your emotional and physical state.