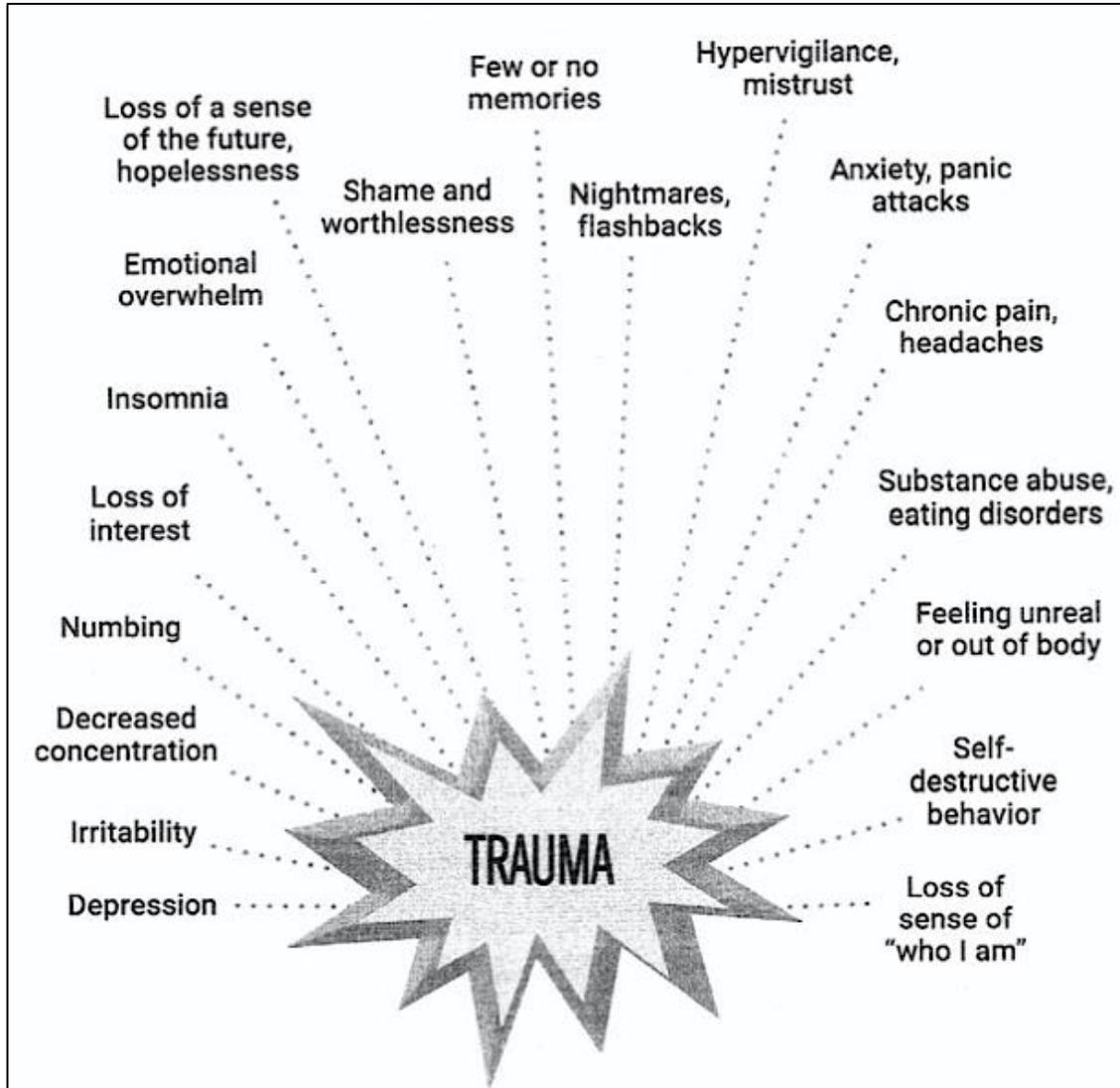


# Worksheet #1: The Living Legacy of Trauma

Circle the symptoms and difficulties that you recognize in yourself or have had in the past. Then put a check mark or asterisk next to those you never knew were the result of your trauma.



How do your feelings about yourself change when you see that these problems or symptoms are all part of the living legacy of the trauma?

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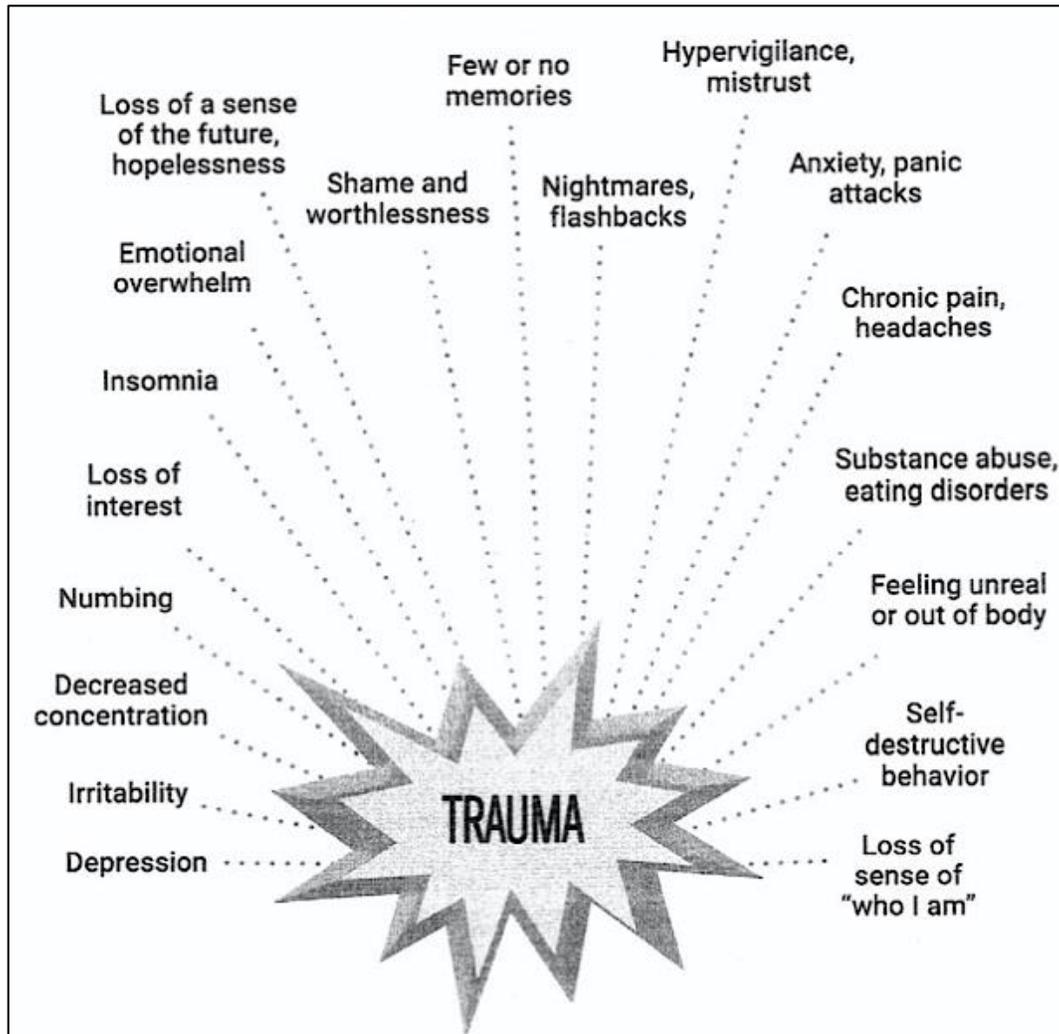
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Atreyi Mukherji, MD, ELM Medicine, 2021

Reference: Fisher, G. (2021). *Transforming the Living Legacy of Trauma: A Workbook For Survivors and Therapists*. PESI Publishing & Media.

## Worksheet #2: How Did Your Symptoms Help You Survive?

Chooses four of your most troubling or difficult trauma symptoms and then ask yourself: “How did the shame help me survive?” “How did the depression help me get through?” “How did losing interest in things help me?” “How did not sleeping help?” “How did using drugs help me survive?” “How did it help to want to die?”



Write in whatever you discover below.

If you are unsure of an answer, just ask yourself, “What would it have been like if I had not been depressed [or irritable or ashamed or wanted to die]?”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

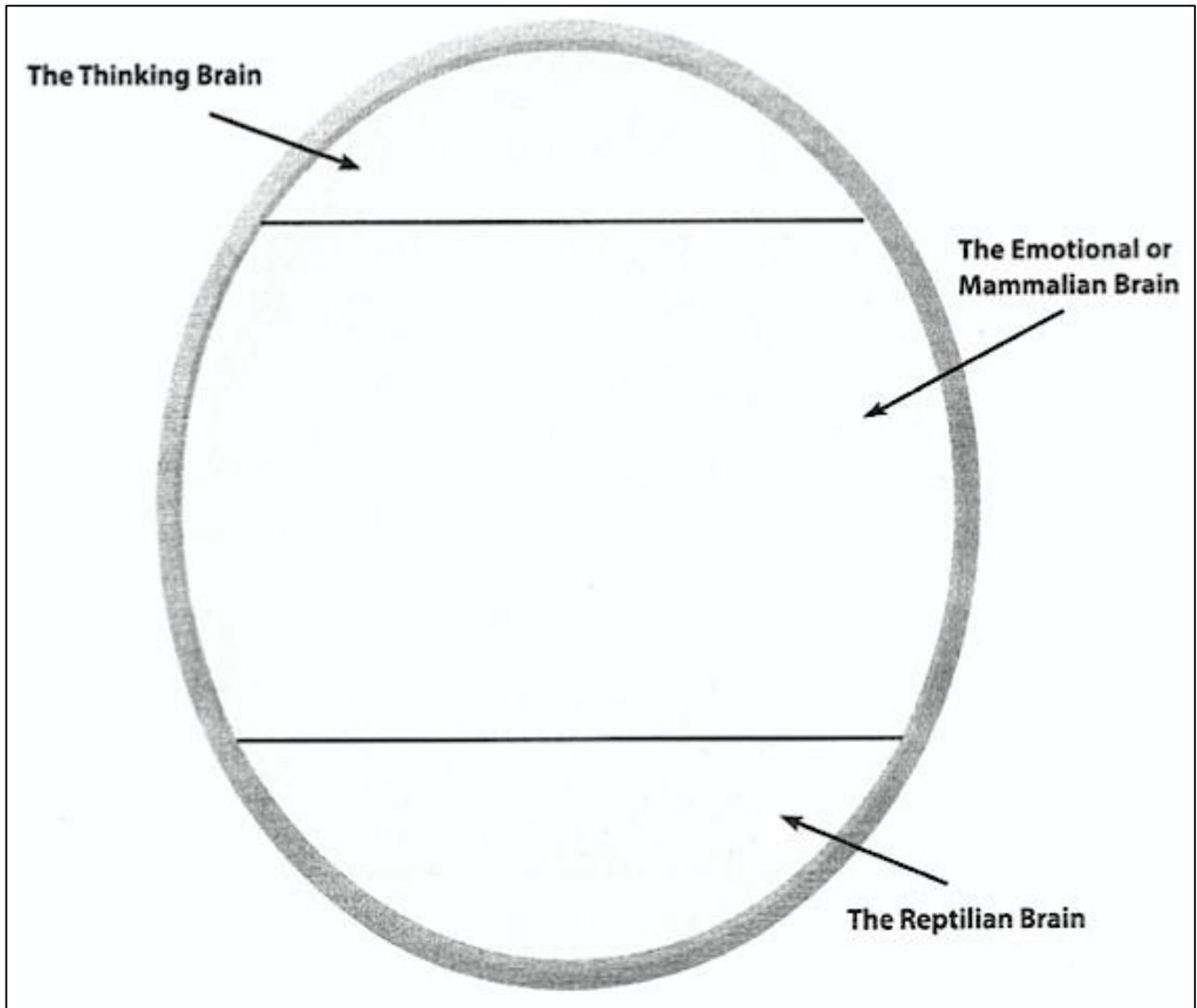
Atreyi Mukherji, MD, ELM Medicine, 2021

Reference: Fisher, G. (2021). *Transforming the Living Legacy of Trauma: A Workbook For Survivors and Therapists*. PESI Publishing & Media.

## Worksheet #3: Getting to Know Your Brain

Write on the diagram what each part of your brain contributes to your everyday life. Perhaps your thinking brain is a resource, or maybe it goes in circles or never turns off. Maybe your emotions are a strength, or maybe they are overwhelming. Maybe your reptilian brain overreacts, or it freezes and cannot allow you to take action when you want to.

Write down whatever you notice.



What parts of your brain are a resource to you?

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What parts give you the most difficulty or cause the biggest problems?

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Reference: Fisher, G. (2021). *Transforming the Living Legacy of Trauma: A Workbook For Survivors and Therapists*. PESI Publishing & Media.

## Worksheet #4: How Your Brain Remembers the Trauma

Write in what each part of your brain remembers. **There is no need to write in all the details.** Just a few words or sentences is fine, such as, "I remember what happened" or "I don't remember my childhood" or "I can talk about it without any feelings" or "I only have overwhelming feelings and reactions."

**How much does your thinking brain recall of what happened?**  
Whole events or just fragments?

**How much does your emotional brain remember?**  
Do you suddenly feel emotions that do not make sense coming out of nowhere?  
Feel sick to your stomach?  
Or angry or afraid?  
You might remember a lot with your feelings and your body.

**How much does your reptilian brain remember?**  
Do you startle easily? Pull away from people? Brace for no reason? Go numb?  
Does your heart race?

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Reference: Fisher, G. (2021). *Transforming the Living Legacy of Trauma: A Workbook For Survivors and Therapists*. PESI Publishing & Media.

## Worksheet #5: Recognizing Triggers and Triggering

Each time you think you might be triggered, write in your reaction (feelings, thoughts, physical responses), its intensity, what was happening just before, and how you coped. Did you try to ignore it or suppress it? Did you judge yourself or the trigger? Do not judge, just notice.

<b>Date, time, situation</b>	<b>Feelings, thoughts, and physical sensations that get triggered</b>	<b>Intensity: 0-10</b>	<b>Trigger: What was happening just before?</b>	<b>Coping: What did you do to cope?</b>

## Worksheet #6: How Can You Tell You Are Triggered?

Recognizing the signs of being triggered helps us to know our reality. Am I triggered, or am I really in danger? Do I need to leave my job, or am I just experiencing being triggered? Recognizing that we are triggered does not mean our feelings are unimportant. It means that our feelings are remembering something far worse than what triggers them.

**Check the signs of being triggered that you recognize:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shaking, quivering                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to run away                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelming emotions                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Teeth clenching                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty breathing                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Feels unbearable                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Body wants to collapse                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Terrified, panicky                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling "possessed"                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hating myself                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to give up or die                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Hating others                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to hurt myself                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling rage                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to drink or use drugs                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling overwhelming shame                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knee knocking                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotions do not fit the situation         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going numb all over                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Actions do not fit the situation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sudden intense physical or emotional reactions | <input type="checkbox"/> Clenching, or churning, or pit in stomach |

When you recognize the signs of being triggered, just keep reminding yourself that “It’s just triggering—I am triggered—that’s all that is happening.”

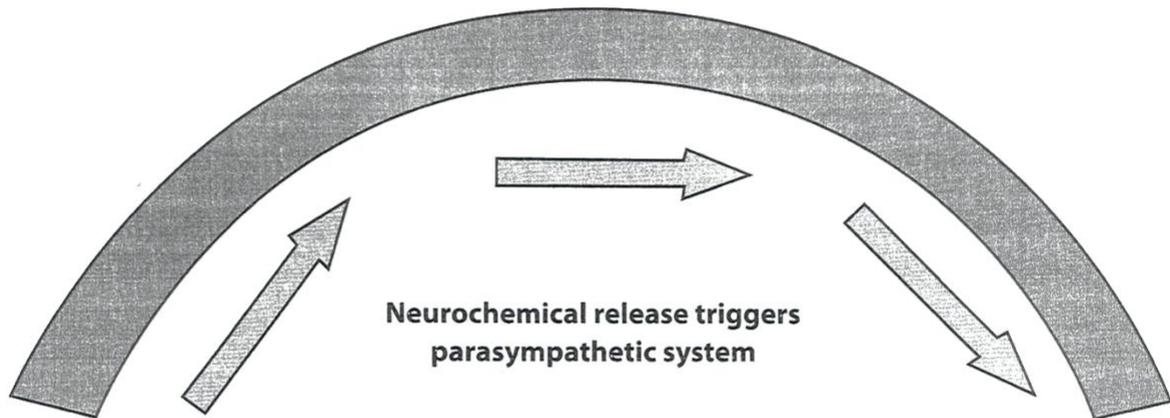
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## Worksheet #7: How Our Nervous System Defends Us

Describe how your nervous system works. When you get triggered, what does your sympathetic nervous system do? What are your fight-or-flight responses like? What does your parasympathetic system do? Which is more familiar?

<b>Fight-Flight Responses:</b>	<b>Freeze-Submit Responses:</b>
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<b>Sympathetic Nervous System:</b>	<b>Parasympathetic Nervous System:</b>
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## Worksheet #8: Trauma and the Window of Tolerance

Underline the signs of autonomic hyper- or hypo- arousal that you notice in yourself, and add any other signs not listed here. Write in the situations that seem to stimulate these different states. For example, are you more hyperaroused when alone or when around people? Are you more in the window of tolerance at work?

### Signs of Chronic Hyperarousal:

Emotional overwhelm, panic, impulsivity, hypervigilance, defensiveness, feeling unsafe, reactive, angry, racing thoughts, AND:

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### When do I find myself hyperaroused?

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### Window of Tolerance:

My feelings and reactions are tolerable; I can think and feel simultaneously; my reactions adapt to fit the situation; AND:

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### When do I find myself in the window of tolerance?

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### Signs of Chronic Hypoarousal:

Numb, "dead", passive, no feelings, no energy, unable to think, disconnected, shut down, not present, ashamed, unable to say "no", AND:

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### When do I find myself hypoaroused?

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# Worksheet #9: How Do You Try to Regulate Your Traumatized Nervous System?

## Hyperarousal

How do you try to regulate your hyperarousal? Without judging yourself, list all the things you do to bring your activation down or to stop your emotions from becoming overwhelming.

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## Narrow Window of Tolerance

Even a little bit of emotion feels intolerable.

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## Hypoarousal

How do you try to regulate your hypoarousal? Does it regulate you, or do you regulate it? Without judging yourself, list all the ways you try to bring your activation up or keep yourself numb and detached.

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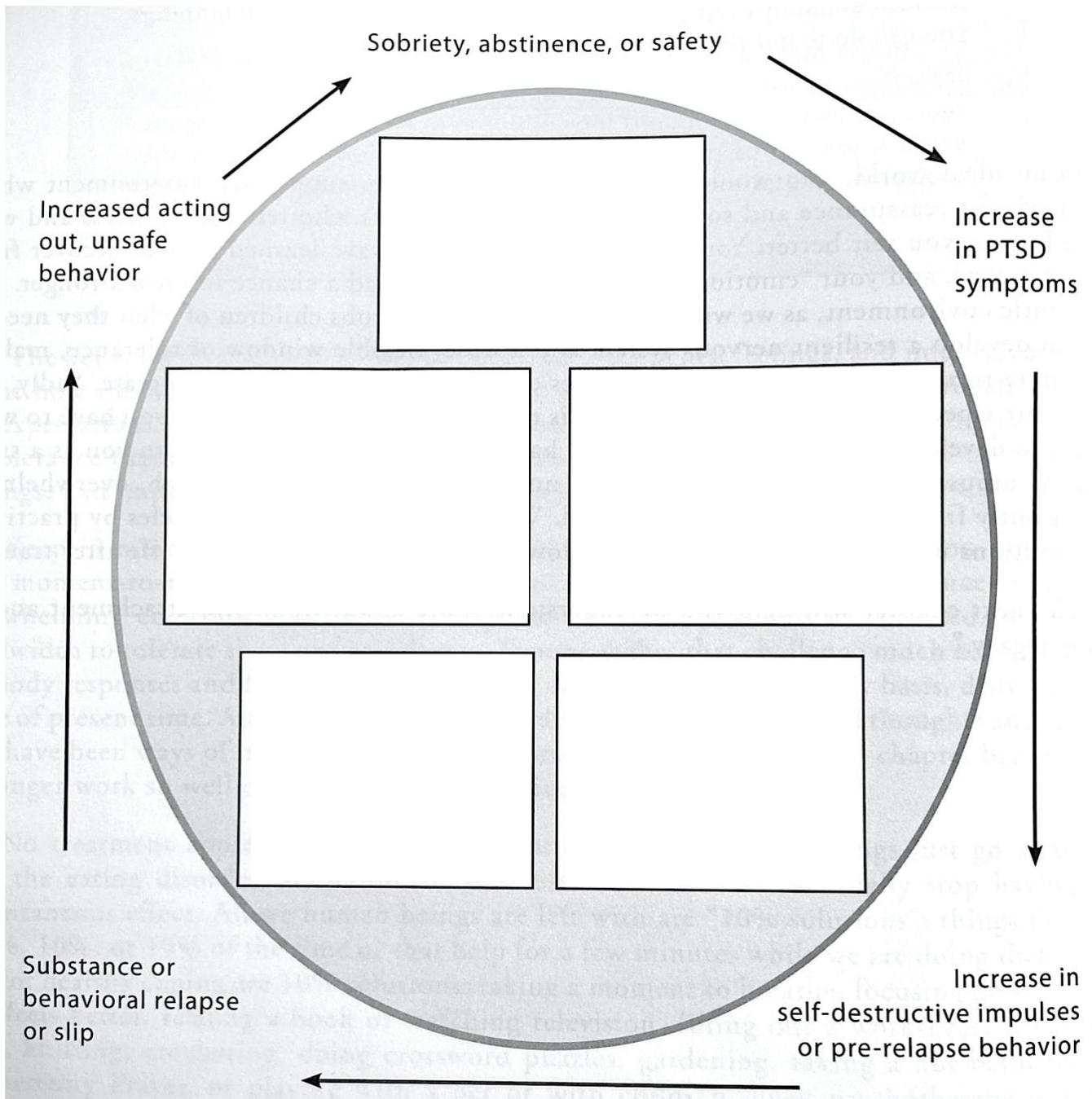
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## Worksheet #10: Tracking Your Abstinence/Relapse Cycle

Write in what you notice at each stage of the cycle. How do you feel when you first get sober or abstain from unsafe actions? Then, what are the signs that your PTSD symptoms are worsening? What tells you that you are having unsafe impulses again? How do relapses usually happen? And then what? Do not judge yourself! Be curious and interested in the cycle that has driven you so many times.

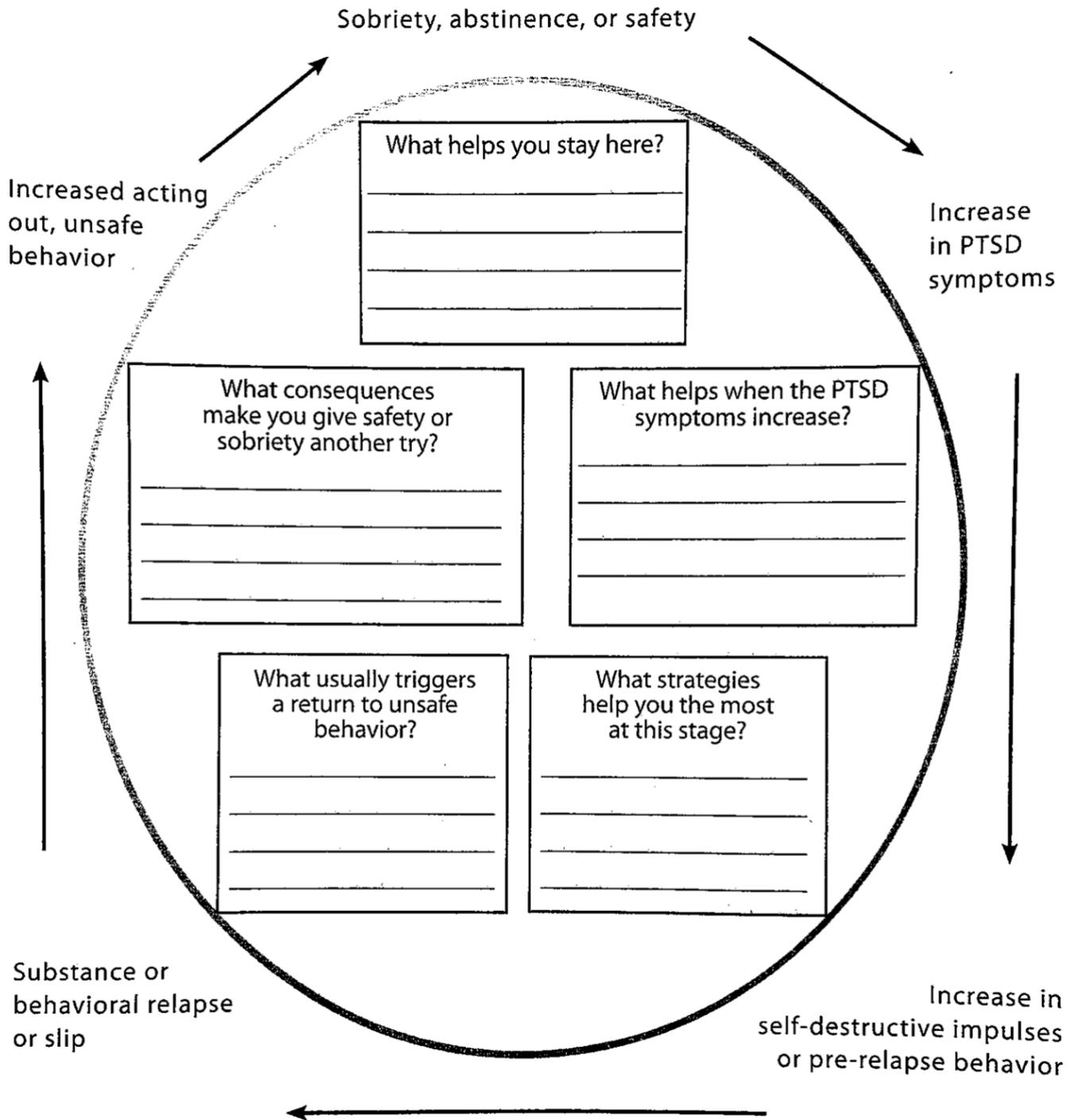


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Reference: Fisher, G. (2021). *Transforming the Living Legacy of Trauma: A Workbook For Survivors and Therapists*. PESI Publishing & Media.

# Worksheet #11: Breaking the Cycle

Because the brain and body tend to default to old patterns under stress, you may notice the same cycle occurring each time you try to use new healthier coping strategies. Write in what you notice when you try to change trauma-related patterns.



# Worksheet #12: How Working Memory Interprets Our Experience

Write in the kinds of interpretations that your working memory usually makes when you feel distress. Then notice. Do the feelings get better or worse? Do your sensations and impulses increase or decrease?

How does your working memory interpret distressing feelings?

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```
graph TD; WM[Working Memory] --- NB[The Noticing Brain]; NB -.-> A[Amygdala]; WM -.-> A; A --- EMC[Emotional Memory Center];
```

Do the feelings feel better or worse?

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Do the impulses and sensations get less or more intense?

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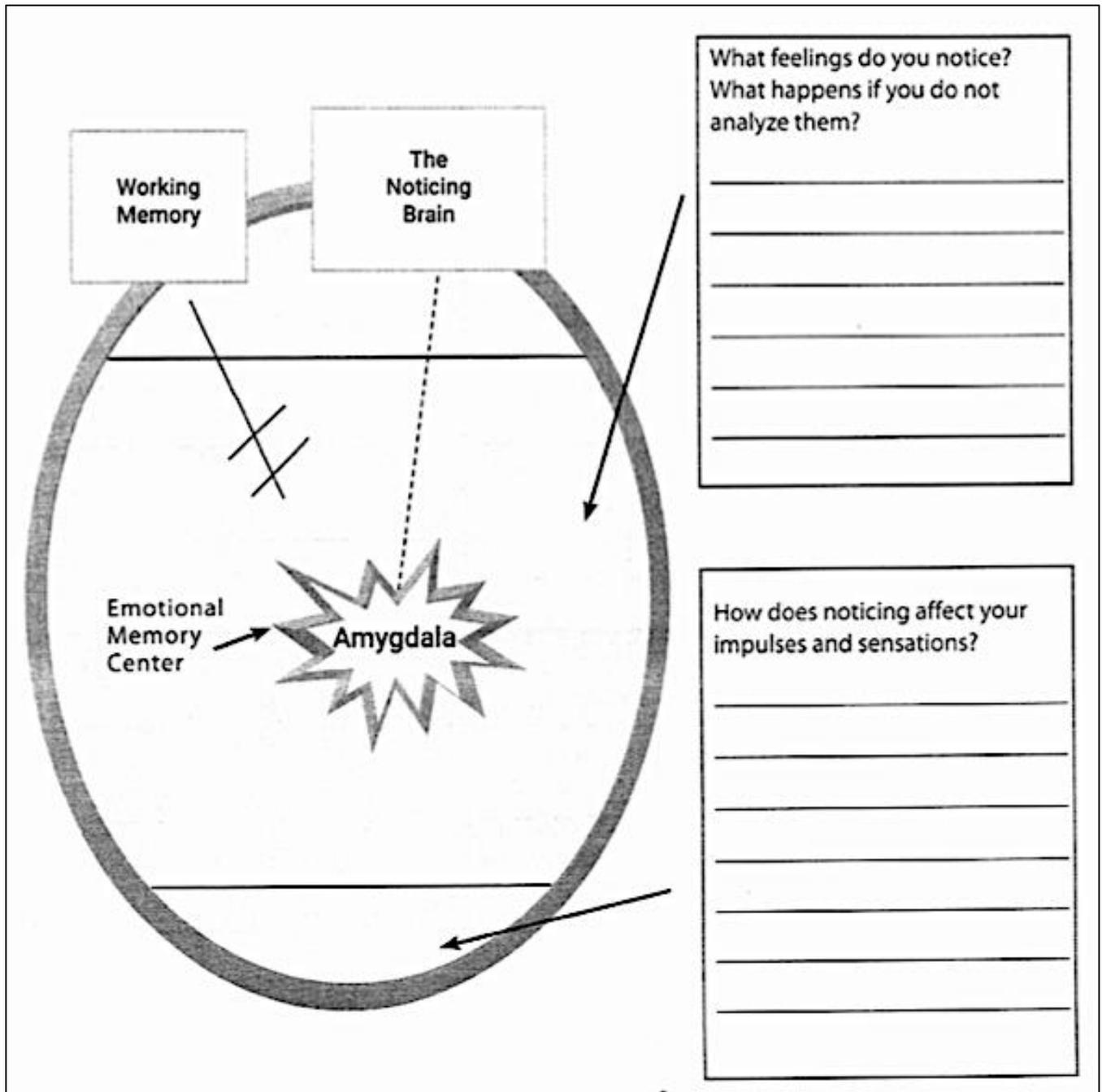
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## Worksheet #13: Getting Help from the Noticing Brain

What is different when you use your noticing brain? What happens when you use your noticing brain to observe your feelings, thoughts, and body sensations without judgment?



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Reference: Fisher, G. (2021). *Transforming the Living Legacy of Trauma: A Workbook For Survivors and Therapists*. PESI Publishing & Media.



# Worksheet #15: Noticing Your Reactions to Closeness and Distance

What did you learn about closeness as a child?

What happens when you get close now?

Safety

Parent Figure

Danger

What did you learn about keeping a distance from others?

What happens when there is more distance now?

## Worksheet #16: Traumatic Attachment Patterns

Recognizing the signs of traumatic attachment can help us in adult relationships. Am I putting up with too much? Or am I not willing to put up with anything? Am I confusing my partner with my reactions to distance and closeness? Do I need to leave this relationship, or am I just triggered?

**Check the signs of traumatic attachment that you recognize:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with not being listened to                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to run away when we get close                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty when people don't understand me                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Can't bear being alone/apart                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying that he or she doesn't love me                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling suffocated                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being abandoned  | <input type="checkbox"/> Putting up with abusive behaviour                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being cheated on   | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to put up with rude behaviour                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not wanting to be touched  | <input type="checkbox"/> Not letting my partner in; unable to share my feelings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to be held all the time; only feeling safe when someone is there | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling rage when feelings are hurt                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying I am not good enough  | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling unlovable                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying the other person isn't enough for me                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to tolerate partner's anger                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to leave bad relationships but I can't                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to tolerate partner's silence                   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to set boundaries or say "This is not okay"     |

Remember that these patterns developed as a way to survive when you were very young. They were the best you could do in a bad situation.

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## Worksheet #17: Changing Our Attachment Patterns

Not every survival pattern *has* to be changed. Check those that, if changed, would help you to have easier or better relationships.

### Preference for Relationships:

- Wanting to run away when we get close
- Feeling suffocated
- Not trusting my partner
- Believing I'm being cheated on
- Not wanting to be touched
- Feeling rage when feelings are hurt
- Worrying the other person is not good enough for me
- Unable to tolerate neediness, sadness, or insecurity in my partner
- Not putting up with rude or insensitive behaviour
- Getting angry, pushing my partner away
- Stop talking when I'm upset

### Preference for Closeness:

- Unable to bear being alone/apart
- Difficulty with not being listened to
- Putting up with abusive behaviour
- Difficulty when people don't understand me or aren't concerned
- Fear of being abandoned
- Wanting to be held all the time; only feeling safe when someone is there
- Feeling unlovable when my feelings are hurt
- Unable to tolerate anger or silence
- Unable to set boundaries or say, "This is not okay"

Assume that these are triggered reactions. What happens when you notice them as just signs that you are triggered? What changes?

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## Worksheet #18: Differentiating Past and Present

Learning to recognize when we are reacting to the past helps us to know when we are safe (but triggered) *versus* when we are in real danger. It helps us to feel less hopeless, less afraid, less angry, less depressed, and less crazy. It helps to know when we are remembering. Any time you feel distress, study what is going on by filling out this worksheet.

Time of day	What are you doing?	What feelings and sensations are you aware of?	What belief seems to explain why you are feeling this way?	Do these thoughts/feelings make more sense in the present or in the past?

What happens when you identify a feeling as making more sense in the past than now?

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## Worksheet #19: Welcoming Your Younger Selves

Use this worksheet to develop a clearer picture of the child you were at different ages and stages. He or she does not have to be connected to any specific event—just to the environment as a whole at that age.

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### Younger Self

How old is this child?

What is his or her face and body language telling you?

What is this child still thinking and feeling?

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When you see your younger self, notice how you feel toward him or her.

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If you notice a judgment or negative reaction, assume that the hostility comes from a different part of you. What do you notice about this part of you?

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What happens if you welcome this younger self as you would any child?

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### Youngest Self

How old is this child?

What is his or her face and body language telling you?

What is this child still thinking and feeling?

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What happens when you imagine and welcome your very youngest self?

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What happens if you welcome this part of you too?

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