FREE

Reactivate the Trauma-Impacted Brain

Worksheets

With world-renowned trauma expert
Janina Fisher, PhD

Practical and engaging printable tools to use with your clients!

Brain scan research shows that when clients experience a trauma response such as being startled or recalling a painful memory, the **prefrontal cortex goes offline**. The result of this is that the client loses self-awareness, the ability to express themselves in words, and access to their memory centers. This is the reason that your client who had a powerful session one week comes back the next with no memory of the previous session's breakthrough work.

This is where my simple, take-home handouts are so effective in helping clients because they can get the brain working correctly again. These handouts give them a structured tool that will allow the prefrontal cortex to come back online so your clients can think and express themselves in words. But these handouts aren't just exercises, they speak directly to the trauma symptoms.

The first handout is the **Tracking Autonomic Arousal worksheet.**

This gives your client a chance to look at how her/his nervous system is reacting to the world. Is it overly reactive, which leads to anxiety, impulsive actions, or even rage? Or is it experiencing chronic low activation and becoming numb and disconnected?

Once they've been successful with this worksheet, they're ready for the next handout, **the Daily experiences log.**

The Daily Log will help your clients notice stimuli or triggers in the environment and determine if their responses are consistent with what they lived through in the past or what's happening in the present, which will help them move beyond their traumatic experiences.

When they're comfortable with daily experiences log, they're ready for the final handout, **the Somatic Awareness Log.**

This handout teaches your clients that they have the ability to change their states through movements or gestures so they're not stuck in anxiety and shame.

These handouts have proven effective with my clients and I'm certain they will help yours as well.

Janina Fisher, Ph.D.

Notice What Your Nervous System is Telling You

A traumatized nervous system develops patterns that reflect how individuals survived and adapted to a dangerous world. To respond to threat, the nervous system goes into high arousal states, making us tense, reactive, impulsive and on guard. Or it develops a habit of low arousal states, making us numb, passive, disconnected, and without energy.

Ask yourself: what do I do when I get hyper-activated? Do I get angry? Impulsive? Want to hurt myself? Do I need to talk to someone? Or do I want to retreat and isolate?

Write or diagram what happens: Eg, "First, I feel really scared, then I get a lot of racing thoughts, then I want to do something to make the feelings go away."

The nervous system does not develop much tolerance for emotion or stress.

Window of Tolerance
I can tolerate my feelings
I can think and feel at the same time

Am I hypo-activated? Do I feel numb, tired, passive, no feelings, no energy, can't think, disconnected, shut down, "not there," ashamed?

Write or diagram what happens when you are in hypoarousal: E.g., "I just want to sleep--I feel numb in the bed—now I don't care about anything anymore."

From Ogden, Minton & Pain, 2006

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Daily Experiences Log

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?

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Somatic Awareness Log

Triggering situation	What are you feeling? What thoughts go with it?	Where are you feeling it in your body? What sensations do you notice?	Notice what happens when you put aside the words or event?	Experiment: try shifting sensation—making a movement, breathing, changing posture, relaxing a bit

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Janina Fisher, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist and former instructor at The Trauma Center, a research and treatment center founded by Bessel van der Kolk. Known as an expert on the treatment of trauma, Dr. Fisher has also been treating individuals, couples and families since 1980.

She is past president of the New England Society for the Treatment of Trauma and Dissociation, an EMDR International Association Credit Provider, Assistant Educational Director of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute, and a former Instructor, Harvard Medical School. Dr. Fisher lectures and teaches nationally and internationally on topics related to the integration of the neurobiological research and newer trauma treatment paradigms into traditional therapeutic modalities.

She is co-author with Pat Ogden of *Sensorimotor Psychotherapy: Interventions for Attachment and Trauma* (2015) and author of *Healing the Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors: Overcoming Internal Self-Alienation* (2017) and the forthcoming book, *Working with the Neurobiological Legacy of Trauma* (in press).

Transform trauma treatment outcomes & your practice as a Certified Complex Trauma Treatment Professional!

Working with trauma clients often requires another level of training to offer healing and relief. In our online and self-paced **Complex Trauma Certification Training (CCTP/CCTP-II) Course**, you'll discover world-renowned expert and author Dr. Janina Fisher's proven approach to complex trauma treatment, based on 40+ years of research and clinical practice.

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