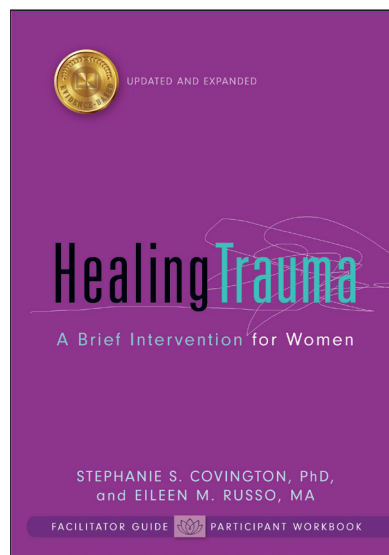


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# HEALING TRAUMA

A Brief Intervention for Women



Stephanie S. Covington, Ph.D.

Eileen M. Russo, M.A.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE



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### **What is *Healing Trauma*?**

*Healing Trauma* is a gender-responsive, six-session (90-minute sessions) curriculum for women, especially designed for settings in which a short-term intervention is needed. Examples are a community-based program, such as a mental health center; an addiction treatment program; a private practice setting; a correctional facility (jail or prison); and an agency addressing domestic violence.

This new edition of *Healing Trauma* includes

- new and updated foundational information for the facilitator
- new statistics about abuse and other forms of trauma
- new discoveries, publications, and insights in the field; particularly neuroscience
- an additional session, which includes more new lectures and activities for the participants that reflect current thinking and practice
- a variety of yoga poses, grounding activities, and self-soothing activities

This curriculum promotes a strength-based approach that seeks to empower women and increase their sense of self. In using this kind of model facilitators will help the women in the group see the strengths they have and increase the skills they need for healing. The curriculum also focuses on emotional development. Dealing with the expression and containment of feelings is a critical part of trauma work. The curriculum uses psychoeducational and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques, expressive arts, body-focused exercises, mindfulness, and relational therapy.

This program is designed to help women begin to recover from the effects of trauma and to help them find ways to grow, flourish, and enjoy healthy relationships and happier lives. The coping skills that it presents can be useful in dealing with a variety of traumatic events, although the emphasis is on interpersonal violence.

The women participating in *Healing Trauma* will go through a process of understanding what has happened to them and exploring how abuse has affected them. They will learn more about what abuse is and how widespread it is in women's lives. They also will learn coping mechanisms (activities and techniques) to help them feel grounded and safe.

### **What Are the Program Components?**

*Healing Trauma* includes a reproducible facilitator guide and a reproducible participant workbook (in both English and Spanish) on a CD-ROM or in a digital delivery format. The facilitator guide contains background information about trauma and session outlines that are similar to lesson plans. The six sessions in the program are:

- Session 1: Welcome and Introduction to the Subject of Trauma
- Session 2: Power and Abuse
- Session 3: The Process of Trauma and Self-Care
- Session 4: The ACE Questionnaire and Anger
- Session 5: Healthy Relationships
- Session 6: Love, Endings, and Certificates

### **What Approaches Does *Healing Trauma* Use?**

The *Healing Trauma* program uses a variety of therapeutic approaches: cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness, expressive arts, mind-body techniques, and guided imagery, creating a highly experiential environment. These approaches help the participants begin to link some of their current difficulties to their trauma histories. Also, many women do not know about the effects of abuse. A program such as this one often elicits a response such as, “Oh, someone knows about this? I’ve been hiding this for years,” or, “I just thought I was crazy.” Many women express relief when they find out that their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are normal responses to abnormal events.

The suggested number of participants for a group is between six and ten women. Ideally, each group would be a “closed group,” meaning the program will be closed to new members after the first session so the entire group begins and ends together (although this is not essential). A closed group helps to establish connection among the group members and reinforces the feelings of safety and group cohesion. The material in this program builds from session to session, and the first session lays the foundation for trust among the group members. Once the program is completed, it may be decided (depending on your setting and if the group members so desire) to let the group continue as an ongoing support group.

The program can be converted to five sessions by eliminating session 4. This would make it easier for shorter programs to utilize but would require careful consideration because important information will be omitted. This is not recommended unless it is absolutely necessary.

### **Who Are the Authors of *Healing Trauma*?**

**Stephanie S. Covington, PhD, LCSW**, is an internationally recognized clinician, organizational consultant, and lecturer. For more than thirty years, her work has focused on the creation of gender-responsive and trauma-informed services. Her extensive experience includes designing women's services at the Betty Ford Center, developing programs for women in criminal justice settings, and being the featured therapist on the Oprah Winfrey Network TV show titled *Breaking Down the Bars*. She also has served as a consultant to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, and was selected for the federal Advisory Committee for Women's Services (ACWS).

Educated at Columbia University and the Union Institute, Dr. Covington has conducted seminars for behavioral health professionals, community organizations, criminal justice professionals, and recovery groups in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Africa, Iceland, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand. She has served on the faculties of the University of Southern California, San Diego State University, and the California School of Professional Psychology. She has published extensively, including eight gender-responsive, trauma-informed treatment curricula. Dr. Covington is based in La Jolla, California, where she is co-director of the Institute for Relational Development and the Center for Gender and Justice.

**Eileen M. Russo, MA**, is a licensed addiction counselor, a certified clinical supervisor, and a certified co-occurring disorders professional who has worked in the addiction and mental health field for the past thirty years. Ms. Russo is an associate professor for the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Counselor program with Gateway Community College and, for the past ten years, has served as a trainer-consultant with the CT Women's Consortium for the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Trauma Initiative. In addition to teaching and training, she specializes in treating co-occurring PTSD in those with mental health and substance use disorders and assists agencies across Connecticut in developing trauma-informed mental health/addiction treatment programs for men, women, and children. Ms. Russo has coauthored articles on the integration of trauma-specific services into addiction treatment.

She is the principal consultant for the implementation of *Healing Trauma* in the York Correctional Institution and for treatment programs in Connecticut. She also is an adjunct faculty member at the University of Bridgeport.

### **What is Trauma?**

Trauma is a response to violence or some other overwhelmingly negative experience. It can happen in many ways: through the oppression of an entire group of people; through discrimination based on gender, race, poverty, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, or age; through the repeated sexual abuse of a child; and so on. It can be a result of emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse, as well as assault, war, natural disasters, and political terrorism.

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, or DSM-5*, defines trauma as exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence in one or more of four ways: (a) directly experiencing the event; (b) witnessing, in person, the event occurring to others; (c) learning that such an event happened to a close family member or friend; (d) experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of traumatic events, such as with first responders. In addition, a traumatic event, regardless of its source, causes significant distress or impairment in the individual's social interactions, capacity to work, or other important areas of functioning (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 271–280).

Trauma occurs when an external threat overwhelms a person's coping resources. The type of trauma addressed in *Healing Trauma* occurs as a result of repeated trauma, such as active discrimination, sexual abuse, physical battering, and emotional abuse. Trauma also can result from the threat of abuse and from witnessing violence.

A traumatic event can affect a person in multiple ways. It can affect both the inner self and the outer self. The inner self includes one's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and values. For example, some women may come to believe that they can't trust anyone and that the world is a very unsafe place.

Trauma also can affect the outer self, which consists of one's relationships and behavior. Many women who have experienced trauma struggle in their relationships with family members, friends, and sexual partners. For example, parenting is a relationship that can become even more complicated by the experience of trauma. Some women who have experienced abuse in childhood may find that their children remind them of their previous abuse; consequently, they are flooded with the feelings they experienced at that time. It is particularly risky when a woman's child becomes the age the mother was when her abuse began.

A woman may be triggered in her current life by reminders of a past traumatic event. There may be nightmares and flashbacks to the earlier experience. This creates a painful emotional state and affects subsequent behavior. The behaviors we often see

can be placed into four categories: retreat, harmful behavior toward oneself, harmful behavior toward others, and physical health issues. Women often internalize their feelings and are more likely to retreat or harm themselves, while men often externalize their feelings and are more likely to engage in outwardly harmful behaviors. Both men and women who suffer trauma are at risk for physical health problems.

### ***Disorders Related to Trauma***

Health care professionals now recognize that a history of serious traumatic experiences plays an important, and often unrecognized, role in an individual's physical and mental health problems. A number of disorders are related to trauma, including depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

### ***Trauma and Substance Abuse***

A history of abuse drastically increases the likelihood that a woman will acquire a substance use disorder. Also, a history of family violence may be the most influential risk factor for abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

Survivors of traumatic experiences may become dependent on alcohol and other drugs as a way of managing their trauma symptoms and reducing the tension and stress from living in violent situations. In other words, many addicted women are trauma survivors who use alcohol or other drugs to medicate the pain of trauma. They are also more vulnerable to violence because of relationships with others who use substances and impaired judgment while using alcohol or other drugs, finding themselves in risky and violence-prone situations. These situations create a cycle of victimization, substance use, interrupted emotional development, limited coping skills, more substance use, and increased vulnerability to further victimization.

**Scope and Sequence**

Session Title	Participant Learning Objectives
<p><b>Session 1: Welcome and Introduction to the Subject of Trauma</b></p>	<p>At the end of this session, participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe the purposes of this program.</li> <li>• define what trauma is.</li> <li>• explain the purpose of group agreements and what is included in their group agreement.</li> <li>• identify personal goals.</li> <li>• begin to know the group members and facilitator(s).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session 2: Power and Abuse</b></p>	<p>At the end of this session, participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain how gender roles and expectations affect women’s lives.</li> <li>• describe the connection between power and abuse.</li> <li>• identify the characteristics of a battering personality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session 3: The Process of Trauma and Self-Care</b></p>	<p>At the end of this session, participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain the process of trauma.</li> <li>• define what it means to feel grounded.</li> <li>• describe grounding and self-soothing activities.</li> <li>• explain the concept of personal boundaries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Session 4: The ACE Questionnaire and Anger</b></p>	<p>At the end of this session, participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain how the trauma they experienced in the past affects their present behavior and well-being.</li> <li>• describe ways to identify and effectively manage the feeling of anger.</li> </ul>

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<b>Session 5: Healthy Relationships</b>	<p>At the end of this session, participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• define what a healthy relationship is.</li><li>• explain how respect, mutuality, and compassion are the basis of a loving relationship.</li></ul>
<b>Session 6: Love, Endings, and Certificates</b>	<p>At the end of this session, participants will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• explain how relationships can be enhanced by understanding oneself.</li><li>• describe love in one's life.</li><li>• describe how to end a relationship in a healthy, respectful way.</li></ul>