

A WORKBOOK FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

By Joel Osler Brende, M.D.

Nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men. Self-report studies show that 20% of adult females and 5-10% of adult males recall an incident of childhood sexual assault or abuse. Over the course of their lifetimes 28% of youth ages 14 to 17 have been sexually victimized. According to a 2003 National Institute of Justice report, three out of four adolescents were sexually assaulted by someone they knew well. A study conducted in 1986 found that 63% of women who had suffered sexual abuse by a family member also reported a rape or attempted rape after the age of 14. Recent studies in 2000, 2002, and 2005 have all concluded similar results. It has been reported that 22% to 35% of women who visit emergency rooms have symptoms related to domestic abuse. Most of them are not asked whether or not they were traumatized and even if they were, many are afraid or ashamed to disclose it. While all of these women were survivors or traumatic events, not all of them continued to suffer as victims often do.

This workbook is designed for individuals who have been either a survivor or victim of a traumatic event. Josephine survived a rape at knife point in a major city park early one evening when she was 21 years old and newly married. She cried out for help, the attacker ran away, and thankfully, a couple quickly came to her rescue and called the police for help. She was treated with respect by the officer who responded quickly and called an ambulance. In the hospital Emergency Room, where her husband was waiting to meet her, she was treated with respect by a skilled and courteous staff and doctor. After the examination and treatment was completed, her husband helped her to make an appointment for counseling at the rape crisis center. The authorities, who talked with her in more detail about the crime, quickly instituted a city-wide alert. Within a few days, the rapist was caught, arrested, brought to trial, and convicted. Her testimony helped secure an appropriate sentence for the crime. She had nightmares and bad memories, typical for someone with an experience like hers, but they eventually cleared within a few months. Fortunately there were no long term consequences.

Margery was a victim at age 21 after she had been married for six months. She was raped at knife point while walking through the park on her way home. Unfortunately there was no one to rescue her and the rapist escaped. While in a state of shock, she tried to compose herself, ran to a nearby telephone, and called her husband. Instead of listening, her husband immediately criticized her for disturbing him from an important television program he had been watching. Convinced he wouldn't understand, she decided not to disclose what happened and merely asked him to come to the park and give her a ride home. He eventually came and after a silent automobile journey back to their apartment, she quickly ran in, undressed, and remained in the shower for an hour while her husband went back to his TV set. Feeling ashamed and tearful, she laid in bed awake half of the night, wondering what she should do. After her husband went to work the next day, she found a telephone listing for a psychiatrist and made an appointment. He listened carefully to her story, advised her to have a physical examination, notify authorities and tell her husband. She took his advice, saw a doctor, went to the police station, reported the rape, but regretted her decision when the impersonal officer did not believe her story. She left while choking back tears, feeling criticized by the authorities and victimized by the 'system'. When she finally told her husband what had happened to her he responded caustically, "I told you not to walk there after dark and after I saw what you were wearing last night you can blame yourself." An emotional wall sprung up between them in response to his rejection and precluded any emotional intimacy. Soon, she became very withdrawn and depressed, her nightmares worsened, and their sex life vanished.

Margery experienced more profound and long-lasting post-traumatic symptoms than Josephine. She was doubly victimized by a family member and 'the system.' Typical of victims, she felt shame, distrust, fragmentation, and loss of intimacy with her husband. Rather than experiencing healing, she harbored a deep-seated emotional and spiritual wound around which she erected a psychological 'wall.' She, like many other victims, experienced an internal 'death of the soul' and found it difficult, perhaps even impossible to become vulnerable or trusting with another man again.

Researchers have found that a high percentage of women who have been sexually abused are victims who suffer from physical symptoms like muscle pain, restlessness, general fatigue, or tension headaches. Chronic anxiety has also been associated with a variety of other disorders affecting the heart and circulatory system: hypertension, stress-related heart disease, migraine headaches, and Raynaud's disease (blanching and coldness in the hands and fingers). Some individuals traumatized during childhood or adolescence suffer from panic attacks causing rapid pulse, rapid breathing, and tightness of the chest. Others suffer from chest pain, heart burn, and some gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms including irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Research studies have revealed high correlations between histories of childhood trauma and IBS. There has also been research pointing to the fact that 40% to 60% of individuals who suffer from eating disorders have also been sexually abused as children.

Many adults do not remember their childhood traumatic experiences. In fact, adults who were abused as children may have blocked out (repressed) much, or even all, of their childhood memories. It's not uncommon for their 'forgotten' traumas to return to their minds in the form of nightmares or physical symptoms. For women this may be abdominal symptoms, unexplained pelvic pain, abnormal menstrual periods, or recurring vaginal or bladder infections. They may have alterations in their perceptions of pain such as periods of somatic numbing and may be tempted to hurt themselves (cut their wrists) in order to break through the loss of normal body sensations.

Some victims will block their emotions from awareness and feel emotionally numb or experience physical symptoms rather than emotional ones. For example, a woman who has never recovered from the grief of the loss of a child may come to the doctor for help with her chest pain, hypertension, and extreme fatigue rather than for her depression. Her physician may not be aware that her symptoms are associated with her unresolved grief if she doesn't talk about this.

What is the nature of a victim's experience?

First, a victim experiences loss of trust and tends to withdraw, become emotionally isolated, prone to failed relationships, and experience problems with drugs and alcohol.

Second, a victim feels like her physical and emotional boundaries have been violated.

Third, a victim experiences unresolved anxiety, grief, and anger related symptoms.

Fourth, a victim erects a 'wall' around his or her feelings:

Fifth, a victim has an altered self-concept, damaged self-esteem, easily depressed, unstable, emotionally fragile, and 'paranoid'.

Sixth, a victim may experience fragmentation - 'not together', 'feeling empty inside', feeling a sense of inner deadness, or a deep internal shame.

Seventh, a victim may become over-protective and over-aggressive: When this happens, it causes further victimization behavior.

Eighth: a victim may become 'addicted' to a cycle of risk and victimization.

To avoid feeling numb or depressed they often seek excitement, risky situations, and dangerous behaviors. Not infrequently they become 'hooked' on repeating stressful situations and risk taking.

A UNIQUE TWELVE STEP PROGRAM FOR VICTIMS & SURVIVORS

ONE: POWER vs VICTIMIZATION

"Our first step is to accept the fact that we have become powerless to cope with feelings of victimization and uncontrollable circumstances that have disrupted our lives."

TWO: SEEKING MEANING

"Our next step is to seek meaning in being alive in spite of what has happened to us."

THREE: TRUST vs. SHAME and DOUBT

"Our third step is to begin to find relief by seeking help from our Higher Power, God as we understand Him, and from persons we can learn to trust."

FOUR: SELF INVENTORY

"Our fourth step is to make a searching self-inventory, acknowledge those things within ourselves that contribute to continuing victimization and stressful circumstances, and seek help from our Higher Power to accept our positive qualities, and change our negative ones."

FIVE: ANGER

"Our next step is to admit to ourselves, to our Higher Power, and to a person whom we trust, the presence of destructive anger that contributes to continuing victimization."

SIX: FEAR

"Our next step is to open the doors to the past and reveal to our Higher Power and another person whom we trust our frightening, traumatic memories."

SEVEN: GUILT

"Our next step is to acknowledge any destructive actions that have hurt others and ask forgiveness from our Higher Power, God as we understand Him,, and find relief from self-condemnation."

EIGHT: GRIEF

"Our next step is to seek strength and support from our Higher Power and another person to finally grieve all of our losses including the deaths of those who have died and who we may have left behind."

NINE: LIFE vs. DEATH

"Our next step is to reveal to ourselves, our Higher Power, and someone we trust any suicidal or self-destructive wishes or behaviors we are unable to change and make a commitment to living."

TEN: JUSTICE vs REVENGE

"Our next step is to reveal to ourselves, God, and another person all remaining plans or wishes for revenge and ask for God's strength to turn these over to him."

ELEVEN: FINDING A PURPOSE

"Our next step is to seek knowledge and direction from God, for a renewed purpose for our lives."

TWELVE: LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

"Having experienced a spiritual rebirth, we seek strength from God to love others and help those who suffer as we have."

ASSESSING YOUR POST-TRAUMATIC SYMPTOMS

You may be wondering how your traumatic experiences have affected you. Please complete this survey of possible traumatic events. On a scale of 0 to 4, rank according to severity, the emotional after-effects by circling a number (0 = none, 1 = mild, 2 = moderate, 3 = severe, and 4 = devastating):

Traumatic Event	Age or date of event	Severity of after-effects:
1. Surviving a vehicular accident	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
2. Suicide of loved one	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
3. Explosion or fire	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
4. Witnessing violence	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
5. Being responsible for someone's death	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
6. Distressed by past traumatic memories	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
7. Being a victim of child abuse	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
8. Being with a friend or family member at time of death	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
9. Surviving death from using excessive alcohol/drugs	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
10. Victim of physical assault	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
11. Sudden death of family member	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
12. Witness to someone's traumatic death	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
13. Loss of unborn child	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
14. Surviving combat	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
15. Being locked up by a perpetrator or family member	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
16. Viewing dead bodies	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
17. Victim of kidnapping	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
18. Victim of sexual assault	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
25. Surviving a vehicular accident	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
26. Surviving a shooting	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
27. Charged with a felony	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
28. Escaping a violent situation	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
29. Witnessing exploding or burning bodies	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
30. Unexpectedly becoming homeless	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
31. Taken hostage	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
32. Perpetrating the destruction of someone's property	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
33. Witnessing violence at home	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4
34. Receiving medical care for life threatening illness	___ ___ ___	0 1 2 3 4

35. Surviving airplane crash	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
36. Wounded by a gun or knife	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
37. Loss of marriage or significant relationship	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
38. Serious work related accident	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
39. Violent death of loved one	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
40. Tortured by an assailant	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
41. Identifying a dead person	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
42. Aggressive outburst to family member	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
43. Victim of robbery or theft	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
44. Surviving a natural disaster	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
45. Family member abusing drugs/alcohol	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
46. Surviving war	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
47. Imprisonment	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
48. Receiving emergency medical care	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
49. Participating in physical conflict within families	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
50. Witnessing an assault	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
51. Locked up as a child	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
52. Suicide attempt	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
53. Inflicted injury to self	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4
54. Other _____	___	___	___	0	1	2	3	4

Number of Traumatic Events _____

Total Trauma Score: Add ___ + ___ + ___ + ___
= _____

Rank the numbers of your ten worst traumatic experiences from 1 to 10:

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

TWELVE THEME POST-TRAUMATIC SYMPTOM ASSESSMENT

The following assessment can be used to determine the severity of PTSD symptoms as well as the severity of theme specific problems. Please answer each of the following questions by circling the number (0 to 4) which comes the closest to describing your symptoms.

	0 Never	1 Occasionally	2 Some of the time	3 Most of the time	4 Nearly all the time
1. I can't stop the disturbing 'flashbacks' that seem to control my mind.	0	1	2	3	4
2. The trauma was so upsetting that I wonder, 'why did this have to happen to me?'	0	1	2	3	4
3. My disturbing memories make me feel shameful and bad about myself.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I have 'blackouts' or lapses of consciousness and do things without remembering what I did.	0	1	2	3	4
5. I feel anger more than any other emotion when I think about what happened.	0	1	2	3	4
6. I have rapid heart rate, chest tightness, upset stomach, and other symptoms that upset me.	0	1	2	3	4
7. I have guilty memories and dreams about what I did or should have done.	0	1	2	3	4
8. I stay numb and avoid people because I don't want to cry or have other feelings.	0	1	2	3	4
9. I have urges to hurt myself.	0	1	2	3	4
10. I have thoughts and dreams about hurting whoever was responsible.	0	1	2	3	4
11. I have lost my purpose in life and wonder what will become of me.	0	1	2	3	4
12. I often think that someone wanted this to happen to me.	0	1	2	3	4
13. I feel like a victim and am afraid it's going to happen again and again to me.	0	1	2	3	4
14. I often feel confused and have difficulty concentrating on anything.	0	1	2	3	4
15. I may trust persons that can't be trusted or distrust those who want to help.	0	1	2	3	4
16. It can seem like the traumatic event never happened.	0	1	2	3	4
17. I am easily provoked and can go into a rage.	0	1	2	3	4

18. I am hypervigilant, 'on guard' most of the time, and loud noises or sudden moves startle me. 0 1 2 3 4
19. I feel guilty that I survived and think, "it should have been me instead of ..." 0 1 2 3 4
20. Sometimes I feel numb and other times I can't keep from crying. 0 1 2 3 4
21. I feel sad, fatigued, listless, depressed, and have thoughts I'd rather be dead. 0 1 2 3 4
22. I am bitter and feel like hurting or killing those who were responsible. 0 1 2 3 4
23. I feel alienated from God for what happened and detached from contact with Him. 0 1 2 3 4
24. I feel distant or cut off from other people and have trouble getting close to anyone. 0 1 2 3 4

Having answered the questions as honestly as possible, you can now determine your score.

Add up all of the numbers you have circled: TOTAL SCORE: _____

To determine the severity of your symptoms, see where your score fits, as follows:

Most severe (Red):	70 - 96	Less Severe (Yellow):	20 - 39
Fairly Severe (Black):	40 - 69	Minimal (Green):	0 - 19

To determine twelve theme scores, write individual scores in the blanks below and add them:

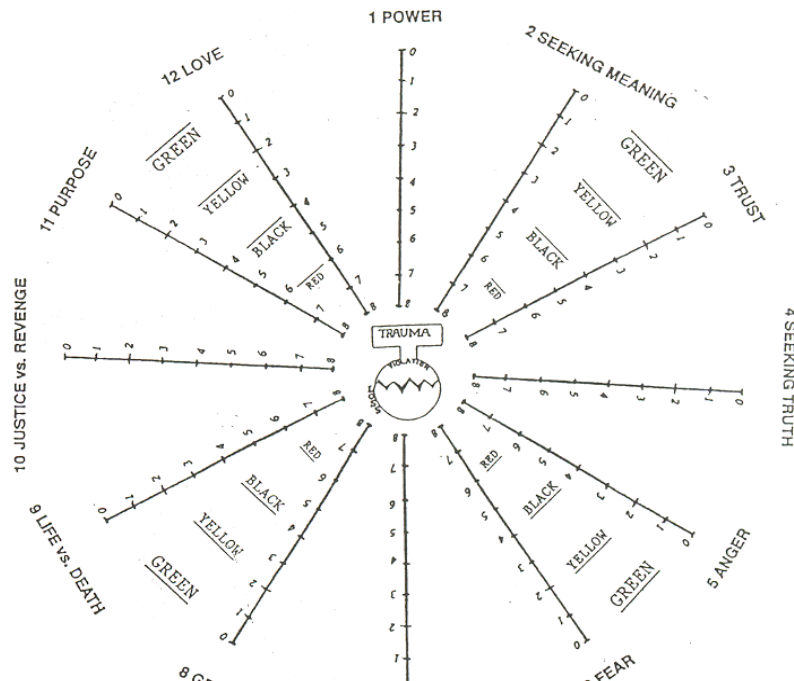
1+13, 2+14, 3+15, 4+16, 5+17, 6+18, 7+19, 8+20, 9+21, 10+22, 11+23, and 12+24.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____ 11 _____ 12 _____

13 _____ 14 _____ 15 _____ 16 _____ 17 _____ 18 _____ 19 _____ 20 _____ 21 _____ 22 _____ 23 _____ 24 _____

Add Totals: Themes 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____ 11 _____ 12 _____

Place each of your twelve number scores on the appropriate location on each of the twelve 'spokes' of the matrix. Connect each of the twelve scores with a pen or pencil to see your overall pattern. You will be able to determine the severity of our symptoms by looking at the position of the lines connecting each of the twelve spokes in the matrix. Lines drawn near the center - red zone - indicate the most severe symptoms. Lines in the black zone indicate moderate symptoms. Lines in the yellow zone indicate mild symptoms. Lines in the green zone indicate that symptoms are not significant.



RECOVERY GROUP PROCESS RECOVERY GROUP PROCESS

You will be meeting in a group with other individuals with problems like yours. You may be somewhat uncomfortable as you begin to attend the group meetings but keep coming because it is important that you not miss any of them. Be patient as you meet regularly with the group members. Trust will develop, you will feel more comfortable, and you will look forward to coming each week. You will also be asked to read and complete each of the twelve worksheets between meetings, that you will find at the end of this workbook.

This recovery program has some similarity to the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) founded in 1935. These twelve steps are different, yet in many respects also similar to the twelve steps of AA. Recovering persons are encouraged to begin or end each day by reading and meditating on a pertinent theme and spiritual step. As with other twelve step programs, participants are invited to believe in a Higher Power. Though they may struggle with the notion of a personal God because of the loss of innocence and ideals, persistent guilt and shame, and feelings of betrayal, they are encouraged to seek a belief in a Higher Power in his or her own unique way. Different possibilities may include: An external or internal spiritual strength, a power manifested by the group to provide support, protection, and guidance, or a spiritual force for good. However, it has been the experience of most recovering group members that it is most helpful to communicate with a personal God using language which is most comfortable and meaningful.

As survivors progress through recovery phases they eventually integrate their memories and emotions into their life experiences. This may take place over a period of time - several months to a year or longer. This integration process takes place when survivors experience support, understanding, and the opportunity to recall, cry, express a full range of emotions, and finally talk about their experiences. Those who recover may continue to recall their traumas (with lessened emotional pain), for years to come, particularly when similar events or sensory stimulants (touch, sounds, sights, and smells) trigger past memories.

There are many individuals, however, who have difficulty recovering and continue to feel like victims, as the following checklist indicates.

A CHECKLIST COMPARISON OF SURVIVOR vs VICTIM

Sometimes occurs	+	
Often occurs	++	
Frequently occurs	+++	
Nearly always occurs	++++	
	<u>SURVIVOR</u>	<u>VICTIM</u>
Traumatic Experience:		
Violation	++	++++
Loss	++++	++++
Post-traumatic responses:		
Outcry	++++	++++
Denial/numbing	++++	++++
Intrusions	++++	++++

Hypervigilance & Startle Response	+++	++++
Dissociation	++	++++
Relationships:		
Experience of Emotional Support	++++	+
Experience of Abandonment	+	++++
Emotional & Interpersonal Detachment	+	++++
Experience of Betrayal		++++
Emotions:		
Responds with appropriate emotions	++++	+
Grief and shedding tears	++++	++
Remains emotionally detached	++	+++
Guilt & shame	+	++++
Unresolved grief	+	++++
Angry outbursts	++	++++
Bitterness		++++
Self-Identity & Behaviors:		
Persistent Memory of Violation	+	++++
Ineffective Boundary Closure	+	++++
Fragmentation	+	++++
'Good-Bad' Split		++++
Repetitive self-destructive behaviors		++++
Controlled Risk-taking	++	++
Dangerous Risk-taking	+	++++
Repetitive Perpetration or Victimization		++++
Difficulties with memory	+	++++
Addictive Behaviors	+	++++

RECOVERY: As you embark on your recovery, your progress will be related to the following important components:

SAFETY: Recovery requires a protective environment wherein survivors are safe. Battered women need safe houses to escape from abusive or homicidal partners. Powerless individuals need to be separated from abusive persons in all ways possible. Survivors of natural disasters need to find refuge. Combatants need the safety of fortifications.

TRUST & EMPATHY: Recovery requires trustworthy and empathic individuals who listen, provide reassurance, and words of hope. A loving mother should hold her child protectively and listen attentively if she becomes aware her child has been a victim of a traumatic event - an accident, an assault, or a rape. A caring husband should care for and listen empathically if his wife has suffered a painful violation - an assault, a disfigurement, a rape.

SKILLED COUNSELORS: Recovery can be facilitated by therapists or counselors who are trained to listen, instruct, give advice, and help the healing process. A skilled trauma counselor knows of the importance of having a trusting relationship with a trauma victim. He or she knows what questions to ask, when to listen and encourage emotional expression and tears, and when to recommend a return to normal activities.

MENDING & GROWING: Recovery means: mending broken boundaries, healing devastating losses, and 'leaning and growing' from traumatic experiences.

RECOVERY INVOLVES YOUR FAMILY:

- Restoring honest communication.
- Supporting one another through difficult times.
- Freely expressing both painful and joyful emotions.
- Accepting, not blaming.
- Hugging one another.
- Telling each other, "I love you."

RECOVERY FROM PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS:

- Experiencing physical restoration and rehabilitation.
- Exercising and building strong and healthy bodies.
- Relaxing from tense and hyperalert conditions.
- Eating nutritionally restorative and balanced meals.

RECOVERY FROM EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS:

- Controlling and expressing anger normally.
- Controlling fear & terror and experiencing anxiety in an acceptable way.
- Resolving excessive and self-condemning guilt.
- Expressing and resolving grief.
- Expressing affection and love.
- Laughing once again.

RECOVERY FROM SPIRITUAL SYMPTOMS:

- Restoring contact with Your Higher Power, God as you understand Him.
- Healing shame and self-doubt.
- Healing lost innocence and idealism.
- Learning to forgive.
- Practicing regular prayer and meditation.

RECOVERY WITH THE HELP OF OUR HIGHER POWER:

Resolving feelings of victimization are best addressed when victims look outside of themselves to a 'Good Higher Power' for help. Since it was founded in 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and similar twelve step programs have helped millions of persons addicted to drugs, food, sex, gambling, and other self-destructive activities. The principles of these programs include anonymity of the recovering person, the importance of 'surrendering' to a 'Higher Power' (God, as individually understood), self examination, and helping other recovering persons. As with all twelve step recovery programs, this

unique 12 step trauma recovery program also encourages individuals to believe in a Higher Power in order to facilitate recovery from post-traumatic symptoms.

Many individuals struggle with the idea of surrendering one's problems to a Higher Power. The word 'surrender' when used in 12 step programs, is not synonymous with defeat, as many would tend to believe. Surrender refers to the process of 'letting go' of control when trying to be 'in-control' is ineffective or self-destructive. In fact, it has been found that 'letting go' of control is an effective way to begin the process of changing addictions, bad habits, or self-destructive ways of living and finding better ways of living.

The principle of faith and surrender did not originate with the founders of 12 step programs but are major teachings within the popular religions of the world. Asians and increasing numbers of adherents to "New Age" spirituality, believe in reincarnation. Adherents of Judaism have emulated Abraham who was noted for his blind obedience to God (Genesis 22:1-18). Muhammad, who founded Islam in 610 A.D., preached a message of submission and surrender to the will of God (Allah). Christians believe they are redeemed by Jesus Christ who, because of His obedience to God, His Father, submitted Himself unto death as the sacrificial 'lamb of the world' so that imperfect human beings who have been victims of their own misbehaviors or of circumstances outside of their control could have a relationship with God and receive spiritual & physical healing (Luke 24:7).

Each of you who are seeking to recover from victimization is encouraged to seek out your Higher Power in your own way. You may prefer to define Higher Power as an internal spiritual strength or the power of the therapist or group which supports and guides you. However you are encouraged to think of and communicate with God in a personal way, using language which is most comfortable and meaningful for you.

TRAUMA RECOVERY PHASES

This recovery process involves 12 themes and three recovery phases. If you have recently survived a traumatic event, your recovery may take place over a period of months. If you have suffered a sense of personal fragmentation caused by many significant traumas and losses in your life, expect your recovery to take many years. To embark on the recovery process, please pursue the following phases which are outlined as follows:

PHASE ONE BOUNDARIES:

**SEEKING PERSONAL
INTEGRITY**

1. Seeking positive power.
2. Seeking meaning from the traumatic experience.
3. Seeking someone to trust.

PHASE TWO:

**SEEKING EMOTIONAL
INTEGRITY**

5. Surrendering destructive anger:
Learning to be assertive.
6. Surrendering destructive fear:
Learning to be courageous
7. Surrendering destructive guilt:
Discovering and accepting
forgiveness.

PHASE THREE:

**SEEKING SPIRITUAL
INTEGRITY**

9. Commitment to life.
10. Commitment to justice
and forgiveness.
11. Commitment to God and
to life's purpose

4. Seeking truth.

8. Surrendering destructive grief:
Learning to shed tears

12. Commitment to love
and relationships.

PHASE ONE: BOUNDARIES SEEKING PERSONAL INTEGRITY

THEME ONE: SEEKING POSITIVE POWER

As a survivor of one or more life-threatening experiences, you undoubtedly have suffered from or continue to have post-traumatic symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks, startle reactions, disturbing memories, and physical outbursts. If you have been abused, assaulted, abandoned, or betrayed, your symptoms may include distrust of individuals in power, including abusive parents, employers, supervisors, leaders, and even God. You may feel as if you have no boundary to protect yourself from others in power or you may have lost the ability to seek power in healthy or non-destructive ways. Some of us have become helpless to control those sudden impulses to hurt those who annoy us. We may even hurt those who try to love us, making it impossible to love and care for our friends and family.

Theme one focuses on recognizing that, in many respects, we are powerless to control our post-traumatic symptoms or change victimization patterns. We may find it difficult to trust others who have positions of power or to accept that we are helpless to gain control over symptoms that may be destructive or self-destructive.

Thus, to take this first step, we relinquish all destructive ways of seeking power and look outside of ourselves for sources of positive power.

SPIRITUAL STEP ONE

"We acknowledge that we are powerless to gain control over our post-traumatic symptoms and seek your help, God, as a source of positive power."

THEME TWO: SEEKING MEANING

Having survived one or more traumatic events, we want to believe we have endured for a purpose. We would like to believe our lives will serve a better purpose, not in spite of but because of our traumatic experience. So we seek to find meaning in the fact that we have suffered, and hope to find life a privilege rather than a burden.

How do we find a sense of meaning? In drugs or alcohol? In surviving dangerous situations? In taking risks? In being victims again and again? No! Thus, each of us must seek meaning in our own individual ways: It may be from those who wish to help us; from our own creativity; or from God.

SPIRITUAL STEP TWO

"We seek to find meaning in our traumatic experiences and open our minds to Your help, God, so that we can find meaning."

THEME THREE: SEEKING TO TRUST

Researchers have discovered that traumatized individuals who have been abandoned or betrayed by those from whom they expected help and protection have more difficulty resolving their post-traumatic symptoms. Children abused and betrayed by family members are particularly vulnerable to depression, distrust, and emotional problems throughout life. Rape victims who feel betrayed by authorities or the legal system often feel 'doubly victimized'. They may harbor deep wounds of distrust, anger, and shame, doubting themselves and others. They may also feel ashamed, not only about what happened but also because of their inability to restore joy and successful living. If you suffer from shame and doubt, you may have any of these symptoms: Isolating yourself. Avoiding interpersonal closeness. Acting as if you don't need anyone. Driving others away. Inability to trust a family member, friend, or supervisor. Inability Keeping others to show love or affection. Believing God has abandoned or condemned you.

SPIRITUAL STEP THREE

"We seek your help, God, for healing of mind, spirit, and emotions, that we may become free of distrust, shame, and doubt."

THEME FOUR: SEEKING TRUTH

Our wish is to seek truth which involves a self-inventory of our negative and positive traits. This can be facilitated by joining a trusting group where members provide honest "feedback" to help one another see their "blind spots" about positive or negative traits. We might discover we are excessively self-critical which prevents us from accepting positive feedback. As individuals we may learn we're too sensitive and don't trust anyone else to provide helpful criticism or suggestions about change. Yet, as we seek honestly about ourselves it is very important that we learn from others and be open to "feedback" - both positive and negative - about inner qualities we may not have been previously not aware of.

SPIRITUAL STEP FOUR

"We will make a searching self-inventory of negative and positive traits, acknowledge them to you, God, and someone we trust. We seek Your help to accept what is positive and change what we believe to be negative."

PHASE TWO: SEEKING EMOTIONAL INTEGRITY

THEME FIVE: SURRENDERING DESTRUCTIVE ANGER

Learning to be Assertive

Those of us who know we have been victimized are often very angry. Our anger may be close to the surface or it may be buried very deep. If it's close to the surface, people can easily upset us so that even the littlest things are likely to make us mad. If our anger is deep, we may not even be aware it is there even though it can cause anxiety, depression, self-destructive behaviors, or physical illnesses. For some of us, who are always angry, it may be the only fuel that keeps us going or makes us feel alive. We may even find it easier to feel anger than to face other feelings within us like grief, fear, or guilt. We also may have become so fearful of expressing anger that we suppress it, can't recognize its normal aspects, and don't know how to express it constructively. As a result, we are frequently passively aggressive when we should be assertive. If we are going to change it's important to take the risk of revealing the problems we have with anger to a person we trust. We hope to gain insight into the reasons we are angry, ask for help to 'let go' of any self-destructive anger, and seek ways to express it constructively through appropriate limit-setting and assertiveness.

SPIRITUAL STEP FIVE

"We acknowledge our anger toward those we feel abandoned or betrayed us. We seek God's help to understand its sources, control it's destructive effects, express it constructively, and learn to be assertive."

THEME SIX: SURRENDERING DESTRUCTIVE FEAR

Learning to be Courageous

For many of us, unresolved and persistent fear causes a variety of symptoms. We may suffer from physical pains and abnormal bodily functions. We wake up terrorized in the middle of the night, or we feel panic when we attempt to be among people we don't know. We may be afraid of unknown enemies when we are really afraid of ourselves and the crazy or destructive things we might do. It's important for us to seek help to discover the origins of our fear, to find relief from frightening memories and dreams, from the terror of losing control, being alone, or doing things that have frightened us before. We seek the help of God and others to accept the normality of helplessness, to feel safe so that we need not fall back on our old instincts to protect ourselves, and to take risks in constructive rather than destructive ways."

SPIRITUAL STEP SIX

"We seek Your help, God, to relinquish 'the wall' around our feelings,

Your comfort to withstand moments of terror, and Your strength to take risks in constructive ways."

THEME SEVEN: SURRENDERING DESTRUCTIVE GUILT
Learning to Accept Forgiveness

To feel guilt is not only normal but essential for those of us who live in a civilized world. Having a conscience facilitates appropriate guilt feelings following irresponsible or destructive behavior and is a sign of being fully human. But there are some, including many victims and survivors, who are guilt-ridden or feel guilty for the wrong reasons, including feeling guilty when others were hurt or lost their lives. On the other hand there are others without the capacity for appropriate guilt feelings who cause the suffering and potential destruction of families and society. Some victims, often of childhood physical or sexual abuse, later become perpetrators, exhibitionists, prostitutes, pornographers, and lawbreakers without conscience. Victims are encouraged to seek restoration from inappropriate or excessive guilt and gain the capacity to experience normal guilt feelings. If you suffer from a burden of guilt or have guilt-ridden memories, it may require time and patience to face this pain, experience emotional and spiritual renewal, and experience healing and forgiveness.

SPIRITUAL STEP SEVEN

"We face our guilt feelings and guilty secrets and are willing to reveal them to someone we trust. We ask for and accept forgiveness from You, God, and ask Your help to forgive ourselves."

THEME EIGHT: SURRENDERING DESTRUCTIVE GRIEF
Learning to Shed Tears & Accept Losses

To feel grief is a normal response to loss. There may be many causes for grief: injury or death, loss of a relationship with family member or loved one, loss of good health, loss of financial security, loss of innocence, loss of trust, and the loss of expectations. Victims often are prone to experiencing persistent unresolved grief in the form of excessive crying and intrusive thoughts about the loss, separation, or death, as well as the opposite - numbing, emotional detachment, and 'emptiness.' Those who have experienced painful losses may avoid establishing meaningful relationships for fear of another loss. The resolution of grief begins when the survivor recognizes that he or she is stuck in one of the normal grief phases: denial/disbelief, 'numbing', bargaining to bring the lost one back, guilt, anger, and depression.

SPIRITUAL STEP EIGHT

"We seek Your help, God, to grieve those we have lost, face our painful memories and emotions, and let our tears heal our sorrows."

PHASE THREE: SEEKING SPIRITUAL INTEGRITY

THEME NINE: COMMITMENT TO LIFE

We may be indirectly self-destructive or may have either thought of or tried to kill ourselves before. Some of us have suicide plans in the back of our minds to fall back on if we can't find any escape from our emotional pain, keeping us from enjoying life fully. Some of us may be killing ourselves slowly - with drugs, alcohol, over-eating, smoking, and other bad habits. We wish to expose and purge those negative forces within us which still may prevent us from making a complete commitment to life. Thus we seek the desire to live and the freedom to believe that others care about us and also want us to live. Thus, after further self-evaluation, we reveal to ourselves, to our Higher Power, and to those whom we trust all remaining suicidal wishes, and ask to be purged of the remaining destructive, death forces which have hurt ourselves and others.

SPIRITUAL STEP NINE

"We reveal to you, God, and someone we trust, all remaining self-destructive wishes and, with Your help, make a commitment to life."

THEME TEN: COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE & FORGIVENES

If we've been victimized and have not resolved our angry feelings we may feel revengeful and become 'victims' of our own bitterness. We may hope to get revenge at the perpetrator who killed a friend or family member. We may harbor bitterness toward those who once abandoned us – parents, friends, leaders, or society. That makes it important for us to learn to relinquish our hostilities. If you are blocked in resolving your symptoms, learn to seek help from others as well as your Higher Power. "We may still feel the bitterness of having suffered at the hands of many people. professionals, and our Higher Power, which for some you is a personal God. As a result, there may be a potential 'killer' inside of each of us which is fueled by that deep-seated hostility. If so, we continue to suffer the consequences - broken relationships, isolation, illness, drugs, violence, mental hospitals, and even prison. But the rage within is the real enemy that has imprisoned us. Are we ready to 'let go' of that bitterness? We may have been angry for such a long time that we'd feel strange if the anger was gone from within us. If so, we must find something to replace it. We seek and accept the presence of a Higher Power, which for some people is a personal God, in our lives to neutralize the bitterness within us that resulted from having been hurt or from losing our friends and loved ones - so that we can learn the full meaning of true justice. We seek the help of God to regularly pursue the cause of justice rather than revenge, to turn away from hatred, and to be channels of forgiveness to those who have wronged us."

SPIRITUAL STEP TEN

"We seek Your help, God, to pursue the cause of justice, to gain freedom from our revengeful wishes, and to be a channel of Your forgiveness to those we once hated."

THEME ELEVEN: COMMITMENT TO GOD & LIFE'S PURPOSE

Throughout history many of the most successful or productive persons have suffered greatly during their lives but were able to transform their suffering into positive outcomes. We have sought positive power, meaning, trust, and truth, we have surrendered our destructive anger, fear, guilt, and grief, and we have committed ourselves to life and justice. Now, having been freed from those burdens which have kept us from having meaningful lives, we are ready to find a renewed purpose. This may be uniquely different for each of us but it is usually found by moving ahead and taking constructive risks with help from our Higher Power - replacing old victimization patterns with positive life styles, making new friends, learning new information, developing new skills, and being of service to others. Recognizing that our Higher Power also can be a source of strength for our lives, we will daily seek freedom from old burdens or new problems through prayer, meditation, and a daily surrender to God, as we understand Him. In this way we can continue to find daily freedom from the past prison of rage, guilty memories, and impacted grief, in order to gain a knowledge of His purpose for our lives and the endurance to carry it out. By surrendering ourselves to His leadership each day, each of us can continue the daily discovery of His will and purpose for a rewarding and exciting life.

SPIRITUAL STEP ELEVEN

"We seek knowledge and direction from You, God, and commit ourselves to Your leadership in order to discover a renewed purpose for our lives."

THEME TWELVE: COMMITMENT TO LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS

This theme is perhaps the most important since the experience of receiving and giving love is so essential to a fulfilling life. What is the meaning of love? Unconditional love is what most mothers have for their children. Husbands and wives take matrimonial vows to love each other under all conditions. Friendship may encompass different degrees of love, yet may be unconditional between very special friends. Erotic love is often over-idealized and short-lived. God's love, as believers have described, is always unconditional, everlasting and completely forgiving. "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we seek to carry this message and to help all those who suffered as we have suffered. We seek to understand the true meaning of love, to become open to accept the love others have for us, and to renew our commitment to friends and family. Thus, we ask for the help of God to renew our commitments, love those we have found difficult to love, and help those who have been victims as we once were. Finally, we would like to spread the message of hope to all victims and survivors - that freedom from victimization can be found in a day-to-day spiritual step program."

SPIRITUAL STEP TWELVE

"We seek Your love and Your help, God, to renew our commitment to our friends and family, love those we find difficult to love, and help those who have been victims as we once were."

RECOVERY WORKSHEETS

Beginning on the next page is the first of twelve worksheets designed to help individuals during their recovery process. Each worksheet fits an appropriate recovery theme and corresponding spiritual step. These worksheets will be most helpful for individuals participating in a recovery group that meets regularly. Participants can study and complete each of them at home between group meetings.

Each recovery theme will contain four groups of color-coded items or questions to complete. Those color-coded red are the most serious or destructive symptoms. Black signifies persistent but less serious than red symptoms. Yellow includes recovery goals and green signifies methods for meeting these goals.

THEME ONE WORKSHEET: POWER vs VICTIMIZATION

Give three examples of a destructive power: This could be a person, an organization, a movement, a group, an inanimate object, or an attitude: _____

Give examples of times you were a victim of one or more traumatic events or powerful forces you could not control. _____

Give examples of times or events during which you continued or continue to be a victim of traumatic circumstances or a powerful force you can't control. _____

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Do you worry that you could use your power to hurt someone?	Yes ___ No ___
Are your symptoms painful enough so you could take your own life?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you think you are sometimes a victim of your own power?	Yes ___ No ___
Do other people worry that you might use your power to hurt them?	Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Are you accident prone?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you repeat behaviors that cause you to be victimized again and again?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you repeatedly feel victimized by others in power?	Yes ___ No ___
Does your anger toward those in power cause you to become a victim?	Yes ___ No ___

To help put your goals and plans into more specific action in your life, complete the following:

YELLOW-GOALS:

List three goals to help you enhance your positive power: _____

List three goals to help you improve your physical health: _____

List three goals to help you break patterns of victimization in your life: _____

List three goals to help you modify undesirable emotions or behaviors. _____

What is your goal to help you improve your contact with your Higher Power (God, as you understand Him). _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Discuss in your counseling or group sessions, ways you have found will successfully break your patterns of victimization.

Discuss in your counseling or group sessions, ways in which you can draw on sources of positive power in your life.

Describe the most effective way you are making positive power work for you.

How are you using your Higher Power to help you? (Ways can include honest communication with God as you understand Him, such as continued study, prayer, and meditation).

ASSIGNMENT: Keep a daily diary of the actions, thoughts, and feelings associated with building positive power: This can include meditation, exercise, helping others, seeking and accepting help, activities, hobbies, and readings.

COMMITMENT: "I seek freedom from victimization and from using power destructively. I have taken steps and will continue to learn new ways of breaking victimization patterns and gaining positive power in my life."

SPIRITUAL STEP ONE: (Reflect on this step, say it aloud when alone, & make it personal.)

"I acknowledge that I am powerless to gain control over my post-traumatic symptoms and I seek your help, God, as a source of positive power."

THEME TWO WORKSHEET: SEEKING MEANING

Have you ever wondered why some survivors can go on with their lives in more meaningful ways after they have suffered from extreme adversities? Victor Frankl, a survivor of a Nazi death camp, discovered that his horrific prison camp experiences strengthened him rather than destroyed him. These events became the theme in his book - *Man's Search for Meaning*. Not surprisingly however, many suffering victims and survivors who are emotionally distressed, confused, depressed, and angry can see nothing meaningful in what they have experienced. If you have been a victim believe that there will come a time when you can experience personal growth or renewed meaning in your life. Perhaps you will be able to say, like many other survivors: "I have become stronger, more empathic, and discovered new meaning for my life because of what I went through." To help you understand how to do this, please answer the following questions and discuss the answers with your counselor or members of your support group. If you marked yes to any of the answers in the red section, you are in need of immediate help. If you feel blocked, seek help from a counselor, helpful book, committed friend, your Higher Power, and utilize this twelve step program.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

- Are you so depressed that you believe you shouldn't have survived? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you seek meaning in your survival by taking very dangerous risks? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you feel like nothing has meaning and you'd be better off dead? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

- Do you tend to feel that life has no meaning? Yes ___ No ___
- Does your loss of meaning interfere with your recovery? Yes ___ No ___
- Are your positive experiences generally balanced by negative ones? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you feel caught in a cycle of chaotic events? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you frequently ask the question - 'why did this happen to me'? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

Describe your plan about how you will seek meaning from a troubled relationship. _____

Describe three ways in which you can begin to seek meaning from stressful events you have experienced.

What is the first step you can take to begin to resolve your confusion about a significant traumatic experience? _____

From whom can you learn as you begin to seek meaning (counselor, pastor, friend, author, other survivor)? _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Read or talk to someone whose traumatic experience led to enhanced meaning in his or her life.

Where can you tell someone why you believe your life has meaning? _____

Write about a traumatic experience which became a source of meaning in your life. _____

ASSIGNMENT: Keep a daily record of thoughts, readings, and other materials that are meaningful. Write down any disturbing experiences you've had which eventually resulted in something positive happening in your life.

COMMITMENT: I will seek meaning in my traumatic experiences, why I have suffered and/or why those I care about have suffered or have died. I will ask God and persons I trust for help.

SPIRITUAL STEP TWO: (Reflect on this spiritual step and make it personal.)"**I seek to find meaning in my traumatic experience and survival and open my mind to Your help, God, so that I can find meaning.**"

THEME THREE WORKSHEET: TRUST vs SHAME & DOUBT

Researchers have discovered that traumatized individuals who have been abandoned or betrayed by those from whom they expected help and protection have more difficulty resolving their post-traumatic symptoms. If you have been a victim and suffer such emotional wounds, you may have lost your trust in a family member, a spouse, a friend, an official, a supervisor, or the organization

or system. Please complete the questions below and if you have answered yes to any of those in the red section, it is important that you seek help from someone who can protect you from self-destructive activities. Discuss the answers to all of the following questions with members of your group or counselor and don't forget to seek help from your Higher Power.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Do you take dangerous risks and risk your life to see if someone will care? Yes ___ No ___
Is your sense of shame so profound that you would rather not live? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you often trust certain individuals & groups only to be disappointed? Yes ___ No ___
Are you afraid to trust someone to protect you when you feel vulnerable? Yes ___ No ___
Do you often take repeated risks to test out who will help you? Yes ___ No ___
Do you isolate yourself rather than openly talk about your feelings? Yes ___ No ___
Do you keep your traumatic memories a secret? Yes ___ No ___
Have you discovered you frequently can't trust your own judgment? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

What is your goal for improving your trust with a person who has expressed a desire to help you?

What is your goal to help you begin to resolve your feelings of shame, doubt, and distrust? _____

What is your goal to help you improve your trust in your Higher Power? _____

What is your goal to help you build trust with someone you care about? _____

What is your goal to help you improve a sense of trust in your own thoughts, feelings, and actions? _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Talk about whether or not it's easy for you to trust God, in your group.
Talk with group members or your counselor about improving your trust level, if that's important for you.
Suggest that members of your group do a trust-building exercise (leading someone blindfolded, fall backwards into group members latched hands and arms, for example).

ASSIGNMENT: List persons you do trust, and explain why you trust them.

If you improve your level of trust with one or more persons, how would you do it?

COMMITMENT: I am taking the following steps to gain freedom from distrust, shame, and doubt, and to enhance my capacity to trust God and those who wish to help me:

SPIRITUAL STEP THREE: (Reflect on this step, say it aloud when alone, make it personal.)
"I seek your help, God, for healing of mind, spirit, and emotions, that I may become free of distrust, shame, and doubt."

THEME FOUR WORKSHEET: SELF-INVENTORY

It has been said that to 'know one's self' is the most important information a person can have. Individuals who have been traumatized or abused frequently forget much of what happened to them. That fact may cause them to have difficulties knowing the truth about their own past experiences and have an accurate self-perception. They may exaggerate the significance of some negative qualities, overlook the significance of other positive qualities, and find it difficult to accept compliments or constructive criticism. Unfortunately, they may become 'stuck' in negative behaviors and self-concepts. To help you improve your self-understanding, answer the following questions and discuss the results in counseling or group discussions.

Assess Your Capacity For Truth And Openness:

- Do you suffer from large gaps in your memory? Yes ___ No ___
Do you have secrets which you will never talk about? Yes ___ No ___
Are you afraid of the consequences if you reveal too much? Yes ___ No ___
Do you have a problem avoiding, exaggerating, or distorting the truth? Yes ___ No ___

Assess The Quality Of Your Relationships:

- Do you knowingly or unknowingly hurt others? Yes ___ No ___
Do you have problems acknowledging your faults or shortcomings? Yes ___ No ___
Is it difficult for you to accept constructive criticism? Yes ___ No ___
Are you reluctant to express your 'feelings' for fear you'll look weak? Yes ___ No ___
Do others accuse you of acting 'self-righteous'? Yes ___ No ___
Do you ignore or resist accepting compliments from others? Yes ___ No ___

List Those Personal Traits Which Are Destructive To Yourself or Others:

List Those Personal Traits Which You and/or Others Believe Are Positive:

ASSIGNMENT: Keep a daily diary of traits you notice in yourself that you would like to change, of compliments others give to you, and of constructive criticisms spoken by those who care about you.

Make a list of individuals to whom you would like to apologize or make amends. _____

COMMITMENT: "I will seek help toward accepting my positive traits and changing the negative traits I have listed and am taking steps to change myself and make amends to others, when it is appropriate to do so".

MEDITATION: Reflect on the significance of the spiritual step. When alone, say it aloud and make it personal.

SPIRITUAL STEP FOUR: "I will make a searching self-inventory of negative and positive traits, acknowledge them to you, God, and someone I trust. I seek Your help to accept the positive and change the negative."

THEME FIVE WORKSHEET: ANGER

To feel and express anger appropriately is desirable but it may be difficult for many trauma victims. They may be prone to exploding aggressively and are frightened of losing control. Individuals who withhold their angry feelings will likely feel the pressure of 'caged' anger until it spills over in uncontrolled explosive rage attacks - both verbal and physical - and hurts others; or it may remain 'bottled-up' and cause emotional distress or high blood pressure, chronic pain, headaches, or other physiological symptoms. Please evaluate your own problems with anger, should you have any, by answering the following questions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Do you have explosive anger that could cause physical injury? Yes ___ No ___
Do your words sometimes cause emotional wounds when you get angry? Yes ___ No ___
Do you avoid expressing any anger for fear of hurting others? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you walk out of rooms because of fear that you will explode? Yes ___ No ___
Do you believe that it is wrong for people to express anger? Yes ___ No ___
Do you rather feel anger instead of fear, guilt, grief, or affection? Yes ___ No ___
Does your anger cause high blood pressure or physical symptoms? Yes ___ No ___
Do you remain passive to avoid expressing anger? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

What goals do you have to improve your capacity to assert yourself or channel your angry feelings more constructively? _____

Do you have any goals about learning to express all of your feelings more openly? Can you list them. _____

List two or more ways you can better control your physical or verbal outbursts when you feel angry. _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

* Describe in your group session those different levels of anger which you can recognize within yourself -- to include explosive or bottled up rage, moderate anger, mild anger, or annoyance.

* Discuss how you may find it easier to express anger rather than another emotion such as fear, guilt, or grief.

- *Think of someone you may wish to verbalize anger directly to. Use role playing if you choose.
- *Think of someone who is angry at you and how you can listen and respond to that person's feelings – including the possibility he is verbally abusive, threatening, or intimidating.
- * Practice listening, responding, and accepting the angry feelings of someone who is angry at you-- by role playing.
- * Practice expressing your own angry feelings to a group member by role playing an actual interchange with someone you feel angry toward.

COMMITMENT: I will seek freedom from destructive outbursts of anger & learn to recognize and express it in constructive ways.

MEDITATION: Reflect on the significance of the spiritual step. When alone, say it aloud and make it personal.

SPIRITUAL STEP FIVE: "I acknowledge my anger toward those I feel abandoned or betrayed me. I seek God's help to understand the sources of my continuing anger, control its destructive effects, and express it constructively."

THEME SIX WORKSHEET: FEAR

To feel fear is not only normal but essential for one's basic survival since it activates the body's automatic fight, flight, or freeze reactions to combat or escape terrifying events. Most victims harbor some degree of fear which can be imprinted in the form of emotional or physiological memories. As a result, they may suffer from symptoms such as anxiety, panic attacks, phobias, nightmares, depersonalization, emotional detachment, physical symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath, chest pain, and fear that one might die. Some individuals take dangerous risks in order to prove to themselves that they have mastered their fears. To facilitate and enhance the process of your self-understanding and recovery, answer the following questions and discuss the answers in your group and or individual counseling sessions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

- Does your fear turn into explosive and life-threatening anger? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you take life-threatening risks? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you do dangerous things and endanger other peoples' lives? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

- Do you often have frightening memories, nightmares and night terrors? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you put up a 'wall' to 'numb' yourself from 'feeling'? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you have panics-rapid pulse, chest tightness, shortness of breath? Yes ___ No ___
- Do your fears & phobias prevent you from doing things you'd like to do? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you have a fear of dying which seems abnormal to you? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you ever have out-of-body or dissociative experiences? Yes ___ No ___
- Do frightening events paralyze you physically or emotionally? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

- What is your goal to desensitize yourself from one or more phobias? _____
- What is your goal to help yourself overcome feelings of panic? _____

What is your goal for improving your ways of relaxing, exercising, meditating, reading, or other means of reducing your level of anxiety? _____

How can you improve conscious contact with God to reduce your fear and anxiety? _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Practice going places you were afraid to go - with someone you trust.

Talk about normal fear and how that is different from destructive fear -- in your group or with someone you trust.

Practice methods of reducing and controlling your panic and fear through techniques such as desensitization, positive thoughts, memorizing scripture, and other means. Consider taking medication if necessary.

Practice taking healthy rather than unhealthy risks (applying for school or a new job, saying something that will improve a relationship, etc).

ASSIGNMENT: Compare and list three kinds of situations from your past or current experiences:

Normal Frightening Situations (challenges)	Dangerous Risk-taking	Normal Risk-taking
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

SPIRITUAL STEP SIX: (Reflect on this step, say it aloud when alone, and make it personal.)

"I seek Your help, God, to relinquish 'the wall' around my feelings, Your comfort to withstand moments of terror, and Your strength to take risks in constructive ways."

THEME SEVEN WORKSHEET: GUILT

To feel guilt is not only normal but essential to live in a civilized world where one must learn to be responsible for one's behavior. Yet victims often are either prone to experiencing excessive guilt and depression or the opposite - guiltless exhibitionism, self-righteous condemnation, depersonalization, insensitivity, or perversions of conscience. Please answer the following questions to determine if you have problems with guilt and discuss the answers with members of your group or your individual counselor. Don't forget to seek help from your Higher Power.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

- Do past memories cause overwhelming guilt and suicidal thoughts? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you ever hurt others but not experience guilt about it? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you ever do foolish things that endanger other peoples' lives? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

- Do you have frequent guilt-ridden memories or nightmares? Yes ___ No ___
- Are there times when you feel you've lost your conscience? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you have periodic guilt feelings which cause depression? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you have problems apologizing or asking for forgiveness? Yes ___ No ___
- Have you felt guilty about a trauma where someone died or was killed? Yes ___ No ___
- Has your guilt caused you to feel alienated from God? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

Describe your plan to help you recognize and resolve unrealistic or excessive guilt. _____

Describe your plan to help you recognize and resolve your insensitivity toward others. _____

Describe your plan about resolving guilt feelings on a day-to-day basis (This may include improving communication with others, seeking forgiveness from those you have injured, and asking your Higher Power to forgive and relieve your guilt. _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Talk about your guilt feelings in your group and with someone you trust when you're ready.

Talk about the times when you were insensitive to others.

Talk about how you have found ways to resolve your guilt.

Practice methods of resolving guilt on a day- to-day basis.

ASSIGNMENT:

Describe situations in your life which fit into the following two categories:

Situations that made you to feel guilty _____ Times you avoided guilt by blaming someone _____

COMMITMENT: "I will seek help for symptoms/problems caused by excessive guilt or insensitivity and take steps to find forgiveness and/or resolve my insensitivity to others."

SPIRITUAL STEP SEVEN: (Reflect on this step, say it aloud when alone, and make it personal.) **"I face my guilt feelings and guilty secrets and am willing to reveal them to someone I trust. I ask for and accept forgiveness from You, God, and ask Your help to forgive myself."**

THEME EIGHT WORKSHEET: GRIEF

To feel grief is a normal response to loss. There may be many causes for grief: injury or death, loss of a relationship with family member or loved one, loss of good health, loss of financial security, loss of innocence, loss of trust, and the loss of expectations. Victims often are prone to experiencing persistent unresolved grief in the form of excessive crying and intrusive thoughts about the loss, separation, or death, as well as the opposite - numbing, emotional detachment, and 'emptiness.' Those who have experienced painful losses may avoid establishing meaningful relationships for fear of another loss. The resolution of grief begins when the survivor recognizes that he or she is stuck in one of the normal grief phases: denial/disbelief, 'numbing', bargaining to bring the lost one back, guilt, anger, and depression. Please answer the following questions and discuss them in your counseling or group sessions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Do memories of death trigger overwhelming grief and suicidal thoughts? Yes ___ No ___

Are you hardened and destructive in your relationships with others? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you feel unending emotional pain because a loved one has died? Yes ___ No ___

Do you have frequent memories & dreams about your lost loved one? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you attempt to keep a 'wall' around your emotions? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you feel unable to establish close relationships with others? Yes ___ No ___
 Are you unable to accept that your loved one has died or was killed? Yes ___ No ___
 Does your unresolved grief interfere with your relationship with God? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

List relationships where persons you cared about have died or with whom you've had a prolonged separation for an unexpected reason. List one positive memory. But also an unpleasant 'feeling' if there is one, such as pain in the heart, guilt, remorse, anger, or depression.

Relationships	Positive memories	Unresolved grief
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What is your goal about completing the grieving process for those individuals who are no longer a part of your life but their memories are associated with 'bad feelings'? _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Open yourself to talking about your grief and shedding tears - with someone you trust.
 Relinquish your guilt, your anger, and your tears to your Higher Power.
 Say 'goodbye,' when ready. If it's appropriate, you may wish to do this at the grave site.
 Provide your empathy and support to someone you know is still grieving.

COMMITMENT: I will face my unresolved grief, experience and express my emotions, and say "goodbye," when I'm ready, in the presence of someone I trust.

SPIRITUAL STEP EIGHT: (Reflect on this step, say it aloud when alone, and make it personal.) **"I seek Your help, God, to grieve those I have lost, face my painful memories and emotions, and let my tears heal my sorrows."**

THEME NINE WORKSHEET: LIFE vs DEATH

Those who have resolved their feelings of victimization feel thankful about being alive and can often appreciate life more fully than they did before their upsetting circumstances. In contrast, victims suffering unresolved post-traumatic symptoms often feel spiritually and emotionally dead. They may feel less committed to life and more aligned with 'death forces'. Rather than thankful 'survivors,' they are depressed 'victims' - burdened with depression, self-destructive behaviors, destructive activities, suicidal thoughts, and addictions. Please complete the following questions and discuss them in your counseling or group sessions. If you have answered yes to any of the red section, you may be at high risk for self-destructive behavior and should seek help from a mental health professional. If you are blocked in resolving your self-destructive symptoms, continue to seek help and take the recommended recovery steps.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Do past memories and painful emotions often trigger suicidal thoughts? Yes ___ No ___

Do you do very risky things, endangering your life? Yes ___ No ___
 Have you made a suicide attempt in the past? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you have a suicide plan in your mind now? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you have memories or nightmares filled with themes of death? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you have a suicide plan in your mind for when all else fails? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you have mood swings or periodic feelings of significant depression? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you think about others dying and wish you could join them? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you feel guilty about a trauma where someone died or was killed? Yes ___ No ___
 Have destructive 'death forces' caused you to block God out of your life? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you have self-destructive habits or addictions? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

List those situations and memories that stir up self-destructive thoughts and feelings and your goal for coping:

Situations and memories	Goal for coping
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Write down the number between 1 and 10 that describes how effective you are at achieving your goal of embracing life fully: (1 = not at all and 10 = as well as I possibly can).

Letting go of self-destructive habits _____
 Letting go of thoughts of suicide _____
 Making a commitment to life _____
 Daily practicing life-enhancing thoughts, activities, and prayer. _____
 Seeking a close friend or counselor, when I am feeling depressed _____
 Asking for God's help during times when I am feeling depressed _____
 Asking God to help me be fully committed to life. _____

Make a list of telephone numbers of individuals and or places to call if and when you extremely depressed or suicidal.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

COMMITMENT: "I will seek help for all self-destructive symptoms, thoughts, feelings, and addictions and promise that I will choose not to take my own life and contact someone I trust when I'm depressed or suicidal."

SPIRITUAL STEP NINE: (Reflect on this step, say it aloud when alone, and make it personal.)
"I reveal to you, God, and someone I trust, all remaining self-destructive wishes and, with Your help, make a commitment to life."

THEME TEN WORKSHEET: JUSTICE vs REVENGE

Those who have not resolved their feelings of victimization often feel bitter and revengeful about their upsetting circumstances. If so, they will likely become 'victims' - of their own bitterness. To continue the process of enhancing your self-understanding, it is important that you learn to relinquish hostilities. If you are blocked in resolving your symptoms, learn to seek help from God and others. Complete the following questions and exercises and discuss the answers in your counseling or group sessions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Do past traumatic memories often trigger violent thoughts? Yes ___ No ___
 Have you ever hurt someone out of the desire for revenge? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you have a plan in your mind now to hurt someone? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you have memories or nightmares filled with themes of violence? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you have an attitude of coldness and bitterness toward people? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you often have thoughts that you'd like to hurt those who hurt you? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you still feel enraged because someone you love died or was killed? Yes ___ No ___
 Has your anger & bitterness blocked God out of your life? Yes ___ No ___
 Are you hoping for a time when you can finally get even? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

List whoever has rendered an injustice to you or a loved one. Describe how to achieve justice.

Rendered an injustice to you or your loved one	How to achieve justice
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

List whoever you continue to hate	List ways to learn how to forgive
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Discuss a time you wanted revenge and how you obtained or still hope to obtain justice.
 List those individuals you would you like to be able to forgive. If you have difficulty doing so, discuss it in your group or with your pastor or therapist. _____

Seek help from God to take the step of seeking His power to forgive those who have harmed you.

COMMITMENT: I will seek help for my continuing bitterness and hope to be a channel for forgiveness to the following individuals: _____

SPIRITUAL STEP TEN: (Reflect on this step, say it aloud when alone, and make it personal.)
"I seek Your help, God, to pursue the cause of justice, to gain freedom from my revengeful wishes, and to be a channel of Your forgiveness to those I once hated."

THEME ELEVEN WORKSHEET: FINDING A PURPOSE

Throughout history many of the most successful or productive persons have suffered greatly during their lives but were able to transform their suffering into positive outcomes. Are you open to the possibility that resolving your own traumatic experiences can be aided by finding a new purpose for your life? To continue the process of enhancing your self-understanding, it is important that you learn to convert adversity into opportunity. If you are blocked in being able to do this, learn to seek help from God and others. Complete the following questions and exercises and discuss the answers in your counseling or group sessions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Do you believe your purpose will be better fulfilled if you die? Yes ___ No ___
Do you feel fulfilled when you take life-threatening dangerous risks? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you feel that your life is empty and without purpose? Yes ___ No ___
Is your sense of purposelessness interfering with your recovery? Yes ___ No ___
Do you often feel blocked in your pursuit to find a purpose for your life? Yes ___ No ___
Do you believe God has no interest in whether you find fulfillment? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

Describe your goal for achieving each of the following:

To improve your training, knowledge and education. _____

To be of more service to others. _____

To improve the quality of your relationships. _____

To enhance your awareness of God's purpose for you. _____

To be a part of a group, family, or important activity. _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

As you participate in your individual or group recovery sessions, talk about the following:

How someone has helped you find more purpose in your life.

How you can help someone else through adversity.

What it means to commit yourself to God's will for your life.

What it means to be a part of something greater than you are.

What do you need to be able to carry through on your goals and plans for your life? _____

ASSIGNMENT:

Keep a daily record of thoughts, readings, and other ways in which you can find purpose. Spend time each day practicing your contact with God. Make a list of personal future goals for yourself:

What would you like to be doing a year from now? _____

Five years from now? _____

Ten years from now? _____

COMMITMENT: List those activities and plans which can provide a sense of purpose:

SPIRITUAL STEP ELEVEN: "I seek knowledge and direction from You, God, and commit myself to Your leadership in order to discover a renewed purpose for my life."

THEME TWELVE WORKSHEET: LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS

This theme is perhaps the most important since the experience of receiving and giving love is so essential to a fulfilling life. What is the meaning of love? Unconditional love is what most mothers have for their children. Husbands and wives take matrimonial vows to love each other under all conditions. Friendship may encompass different degrees of love, yet may be unconditional between very special friends. Erotic love is often over-idealized and short-lived. God's love, as believers have described, is always unconditional, everlasting and completely forgiving. To help you learn what blocks you from receiving and giving love, complete the following questions and discuss the answers in your counseling or group sessions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Do you frequently put your life in danger to see if someone will care? Yes ___ No ___
Do you feel so unlovable that you would rather not be alive? Yes ___ No ___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you often withdraw when people show you love or affection? Yes ___ No ___
Do you think it's potentially dangerous to be emotionally close to others? Yes ___ No ___
Do you think that you can't trust your own judgment about relationships? Yes ___ No ___
Are you feeling alienated from God's love? Yes ___ No ___
Do you find it difficult to express genuine love? Yes ___ No ___

YELLOW-GOALS:

From whom would you like to receive more love? _____

Toward whom would you like to express a deeper and more loving commitment? _____

With whom would you like to build a more satisfying relationship? _____

What individuals are in need of your care and concern? _____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Name at least one person you know who loves you. _____
Describe how you understand God's love. _____

Give at least one example of how you have improved your capacity to love. _____

Talk about one or more relationships where you comfortably give and receive love and affection.

ASSIGNMENT:

Make a list of three groups of people in the space below. Toward the special people in your life, practice giving and receiving love and, when appropriate, say "I love you". Toward those you have taken for granted, demonstrate your love toward them through specific actions. Toward those who are hard to love, reach out to them and become a channel for God's love.

SPECIAL PEOPLE

TAKEN FOR GRANTED

HARD TO LOVE

COMMITMENT: "I will seek help for my difficulties about receiving and expressing love. I will be open to receiving God's love in my life, loving those who are special and becoming a channel of God's love to those I have found difficult to love, through some positive actions."

SPIRITUAL STEP TWELVE: "I seek Your love and Your help, God, to renew my commitment to my friends and family, love those I find difficult to love, and help those who have been victims as I once was."

TRAUMA SURVIVORS ANONYMOUS

TSA is a fellowship of men and women who share their experiences, strengths and hopes with each other in order to solve common problems and help one another deal with their traumatic experiences. Anonymity is important for participants as they share their experiences.

The primary purpose for members is to help one another understand themselves and find freedom from victimization. The only requirement for members' participation is a desire to remain free from victimization and find meaning in their daily lives and personal relationships.

TSA is not allied with any sect, denomination, political organization or institution, does not wish to engage in any controversy, and does not endorse or oppose any causes. The spiritual foundation of TSA is its emphasis on the need to depend on a higher power.

TSA is self-supporting through the contributions of its members and there are no dues or fees for members.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

Lord grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can and
The wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.
Taking, as He did, the world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that He will make all things right.
If I surrender to His will;

That I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with Him in the next.