



**Volunteer Training**

# Why do we need advocate to understand sexual trauma



# Understanding child sexual abuse - a testimony

<https://youtu.be/rQ4RoldUzHc>



# Seminar 107: Thursday, Oct 8, 2020

## *Session 2: Sexual Assault Victims' Trauma*

### **Objectives:**

- To discuss the six (6) **Guiding Principles of Trauma Informed Care**
- To provide four (4) essential elements that are conducive to any healing environment for victims.
- To help the victim identify with their thoughts, feelings and behaviors and what they can do to manage them through at least six (6) techniques/outreach services.

### **Learning outcomes:**

The participants will learn the basic tools for helping victims to understand the connection between their thoughts and feelings and how thoughts and feelings influence their behavior of the client.

### **Presenter:**

Dr. Patricia Ann Davenport, L.S.W., *Executive Director of Our House, Inc.*

***MS Coalition Against Sexual Assault Advocate Training Manual***  
***(2 General CEUs)***

# What is Trauma?

The word “trauma” is used to describe experiences or situations that are emotionally painful and distressing, and that overwhelm people’s ability to cope, leaving them powerless. For some groups of people, trauma can occur frequently and become part of the common human experience.

*“Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.”*

Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*



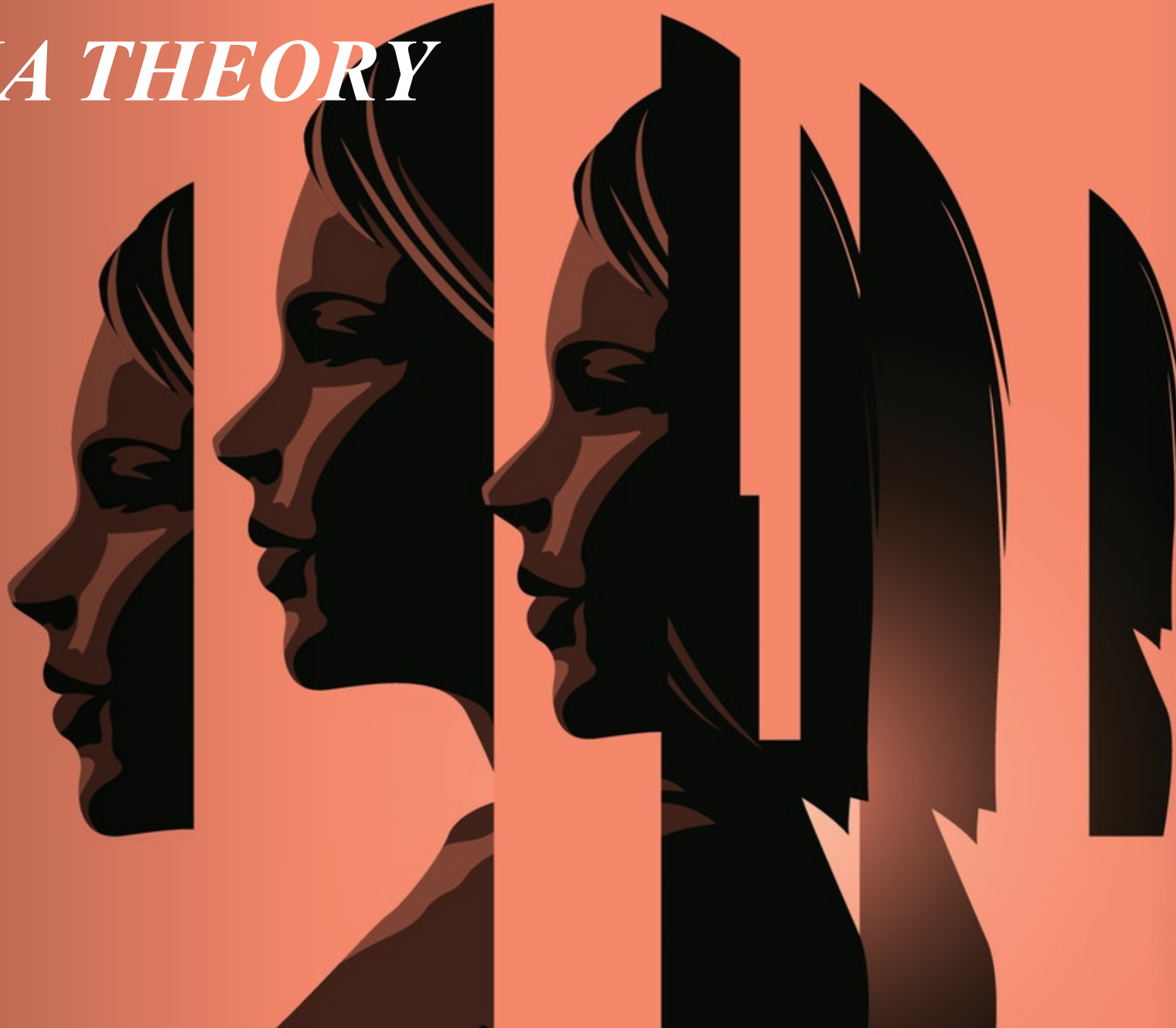
# Terrifying events

*In addition to terrifying events such as violence and assault, it is suggested that relatively more subtle and insidious forms of trauma—such as discrimination, racism, oppression, and poverty—are pervasive and, when experienced chronically, have a cumulative impact that can be fundamentally life-altering.*



# *TRAUMA THEORY*

*(a new concept)  
represents a  
fundamental shift  
in thinking from  
the idea that  
those who have  
experienced  
psychological  
trauma are either  
“sick” or  
deficient in moral  
character to  
reframe that they  
are “injured”  
and in need of  
healing.*



# An Advocate Role

*As an Advocate, it is significant to know how to reach out to a victim who has experienced the trauma of sexual assault.*

It is helpful to lend a compassionate, nonjudgmental ear.

Many people just want to be heard. They do not necessarily need comments.

Be patient, considerate and offer to be there. Don't try to force the victim to act if he or she is not yet ready for it.

As simple as it may seem, your presence alone can make a significant difference. Your reaction can have an impact on his or her recovery from the trauma.

One of the most important things you can say to a victim of sexual assault is **"I believe you."**

## A traumatic event impacts an individual:

- Emotionally – causing anxiety, fear, worry, anger, helplessness, powerlessness
- Physically – causing nausea, light headedness, increase in BP, headaches, stomach aches, increased heart rate
- Behaviorally – causing crying, uncooperativeness, unresponsiveness, argumentative, restlessness
- Cognitively – causing memory impairment or forgetfulness, inability to give adequate history

This image shows many ways in which people can experience the trauma and how they may react, including fear, sadness, isolation, loss of control, disbelief, denial, startle responses, and flashbacks.







## Guiding Principles of Trauma Informed Care

**1. Safety:** Throughout the organization, staff and the people they serve, whether children or adults, feel physically and psychologically safe; the physical setting is safe and interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety. Understanding safety as defined by those served is a high priority.

**2. Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of building and maintaining trust with clients and family members, among staff, and others involved in the organization.

## Guiding Principles of Trauma Informed Care



**3. Peer Support:** Peer support and mutual self-help are key vehicles for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration, and utilizing their stories and lived experience to promote recovery and healing.

**4. Collaboration and Mutuality:** Importance is placed on partnering and the leveling of power differences between staff and clients and among organizational staff from clerical and housekeeping personnel, to professional staff to administrators, demonstrating that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. The organization recognizes that everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach. As one expert stated: “one does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.”

# Guiding Principles of Trauma Informed Care

**5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice:** Throughout the organization and among the clients served, individuals' strengths and experiences are recognized and built upon. The organization fosters a belief in the primacy of the people served, in resilience, and in the ability of individuals, organizations, and communities to heal and promote recovery from trauma. The organization understands that the experience of trauma may be a unifying aspect in the lives of those who run the organization, who provide the services, and/ or who come to the organization for assistance and support. As such, operations, workforce development and services are organized to foster empowerment for staff and clients alike. Clients are supported in shared decision-making, choice, and goal setting to determine the plan of action they need to heal and move forward. They are supported in cultivating self-advocacy skills. Staff are facilitators of recovery rather than controllers of recovery. Staff are empowered to do their work as well as possible by adequate organizational support. This is a parallel process as staff need to feel safe, as much as people receiving services.

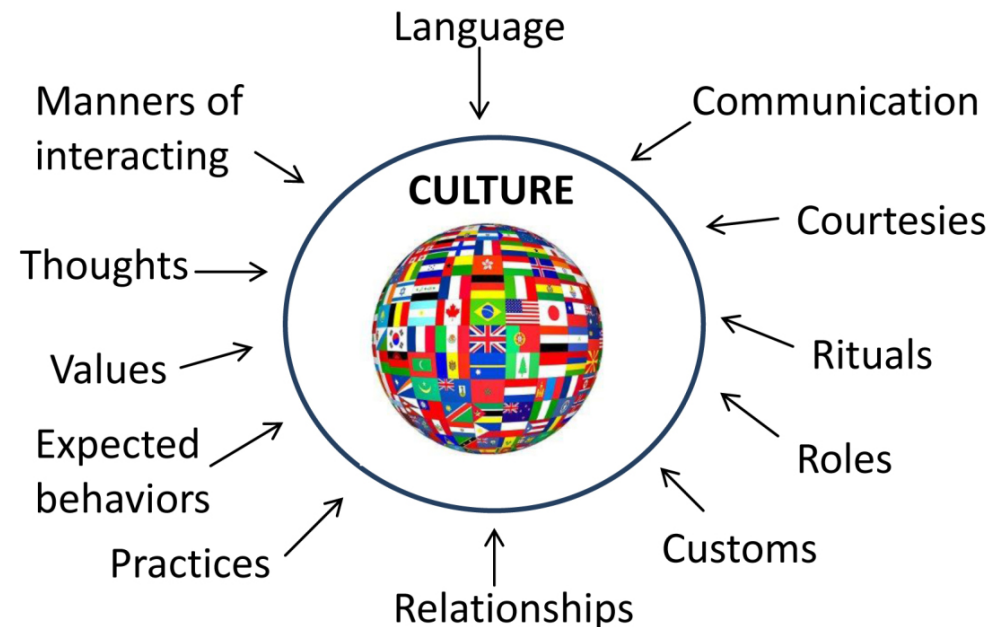
## 2014 Brave New Voices (Finals) "Rape Joke" by Los Angeles Team Get Lit



<https://youtu.be/j4m3AJamQYM>

# Guiding Principles of Trauma Informed Care

**6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues:** Actively move past cultural stereotypes and biases (e.g. based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, gender identity, geography, etc.); offer, access to gender responsive services; leverage the healing value of traditional cultural connections; incorporate policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to the racial, ethnic and cultural needs of individuals served; and recognize and addresses historical trauma.



**Four (4) essential elements that are conducive to any healing environment for victims. It should include the following:**



### **Sense of Safety**

Advocates can help establish safety by having clear, consistent boundaries with victims and allowing survivors to progress at their own pace.



### **Empowerment**

Survivors are encouraged by allowing them to be in charge of their own healing process, reminding them that they can make their own choices.



### **Creativity**

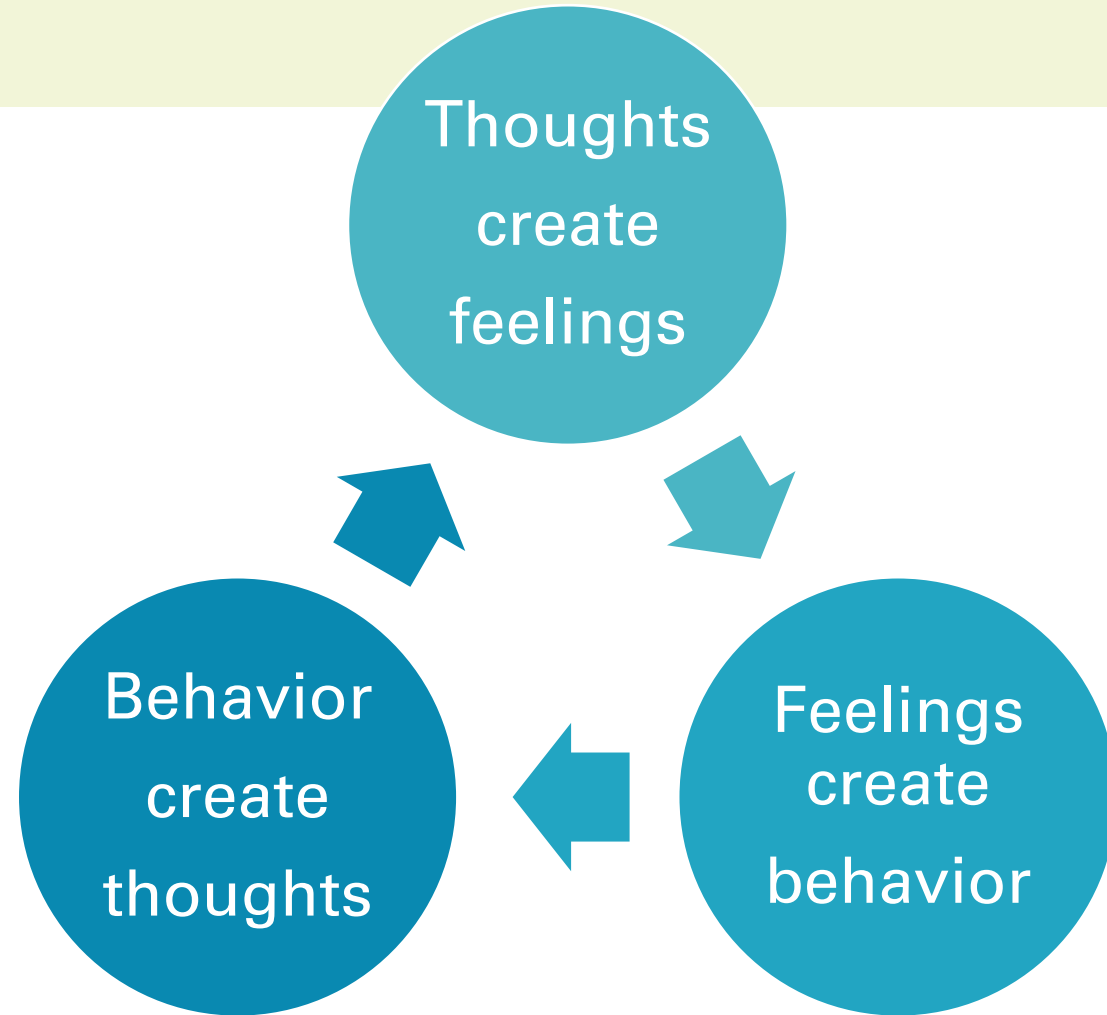
Creative methods of healing (art, movement, writing, etc.) allow expression of these feelings that words may not communicate.

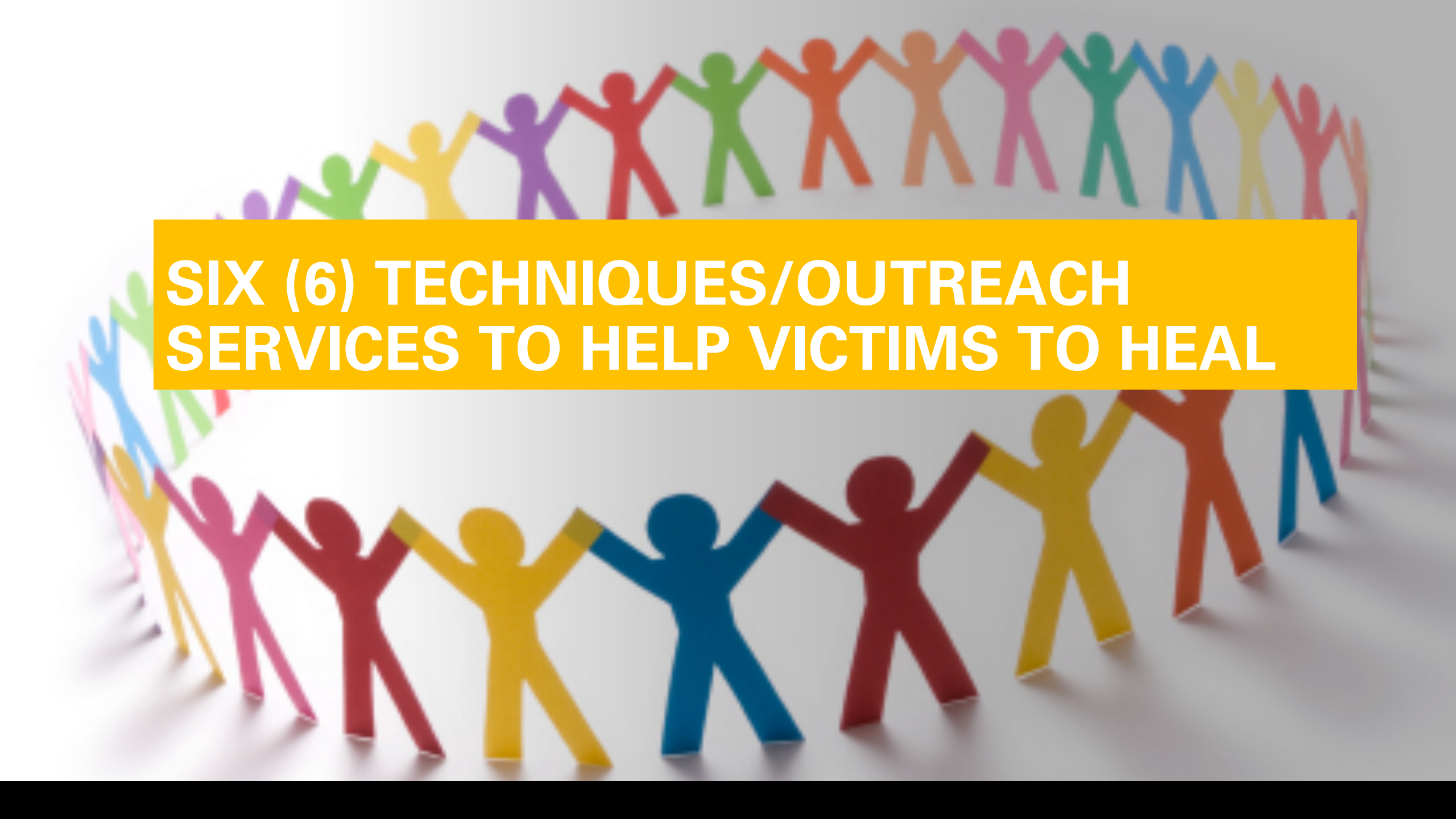


### **Holistic Approach**

This approach allows the body, mind and spirit to integrate the trauma as a painful experience that can be healed.

Once the healing environment is created, healing is allowed to begin. It is important for the Advocate to remember that the avenue to healing almost always coincide with the persons' interest and/or cultural background.

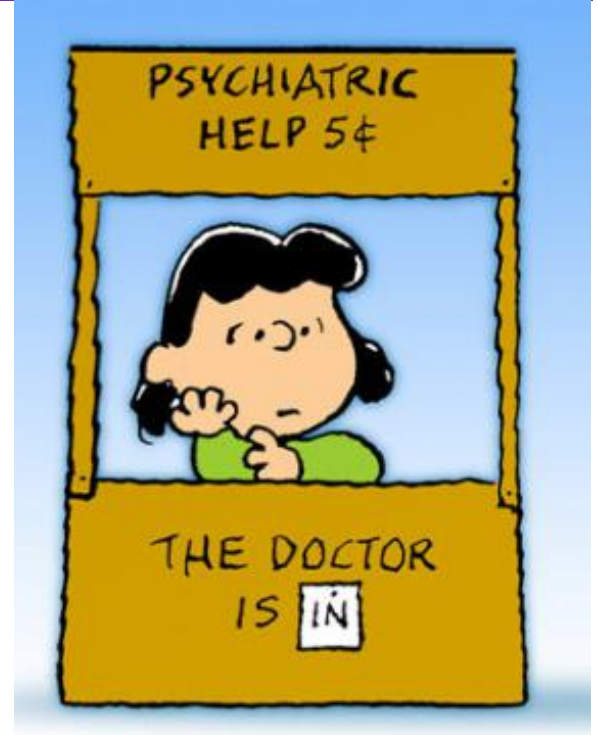




# **SIX (6) TECHNIQUES/OUTREACH SERVICES TO HELP VICTIMS TO HEAL**

# Counseling and Therapy

- Counseling and therapy provides individual guidance and psychoeducation in understanding the effects of trauma in a private setting.
- Through exploration of feelings, supportive listening, validation and empowerment victims of sexual violence may be able to find trauma centered resolutions concerning the victimization and initiate the recovery process.
- There are planned interventions and goals, ongoing evaluation of counseling and therapy delivery, and documentation of outcomes.
- Specific models and evidence based best practices in the field should be used. Counseling and/or therapy are to be provided by a trained and/or licensed Counselor or Therapist.
- The Advocate may assist with referrals to appropriate or a Licensed practitioner and/or the scheduling of individual sessions.



# Support Groups

- Support groups may be helpful in healing if the victim is willing to exchange information, share techniques for problem-solving and explore feelings in a group setting.
- Peer led support groups may be powerful, in that it allows others in the group who have experienced the same trauma to share how they cope.
- The support groups may be curriculum or non-curriculum based, open or closed, short-term or ongoing.
- Culturally relevant groups or talking circles may be extremely important to some individuals as the expression of feelings may be better understood by those of the same culture, race or ethnic background.
- Regular scheduling of support groups is vital to the healing process.



# Creative Healing Methods

- Victims may utilize healing arts opportunities such as art therapy, music therapy, etc. \
- Creative arts opportunities may be made available such as knitting circles, and writing groups.
- Exercise classes, mindfulness and meditation classes, Yoga, outdoor based healing activities, culturally-based approaches to healing, spirituality may be explored and/or created for the victim.
- There must be ongoing evaluation of victim interests, delivery of services and outcomes.



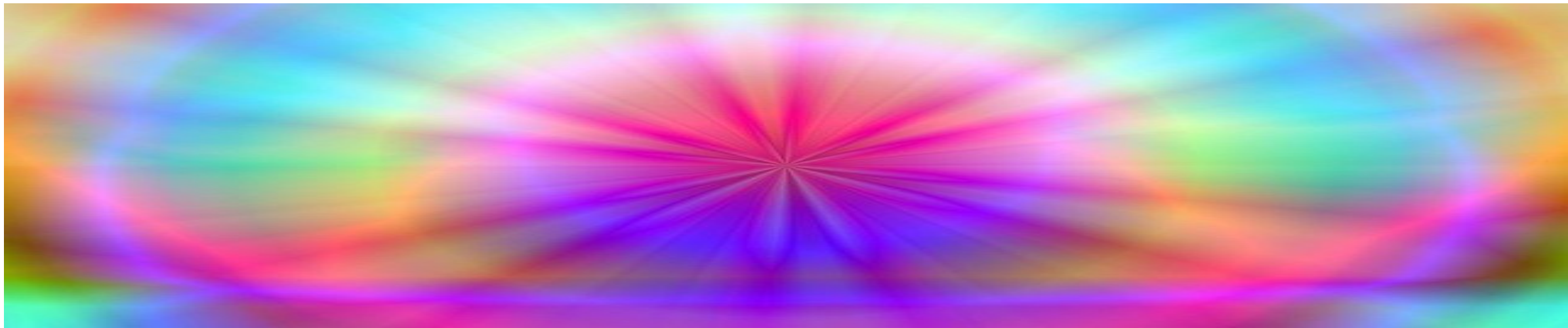


# Self-help

- Victims may also be open to self-help books and guidance.
- One reference suggests that looking in the mirror and speaking affirmations may empower a person to reflective positively on oneself and change their attitude and behavior.
- There are other self-help options (books, organizations or groups) that may be explored with the victim.

# Spirituality

- Some victims may tap into their spirituality for healing, that which affects the human soul or spirit, as opposed to material or physical things.
- This may include individual and/or group prayer, reading religious material, meditation, daily confessions, praise songs and/or dance.
- However, the type of methods utilized in spirituality may vary as it is often associated with the beliefs, culture and customs of the victim.



# FOCUSING YOUR EMPATHY

- Your empathy for others helps you do your job.
- It is important to take good care of your feelings and thoughts by monitoring how you use them.
- The most resilient workers are those that know how to turn their feelings to work mode when they go on duty, but off-work mode when they go off duty.
- This is not denial; it is a coping strategy. It is a way they get maximum protection while working (feelings switched to work mode) and maximum support while resting (feelings switched off-work mode).

From CBC Nova Scotia: Watch Kayley Dixon, 14, read "A Touch of Sexual Assault," a powerful and troubling poem she wrote about what it's like being a teen girl today.



<https://youtu.be/C6ONugTPF6s>

# References

- [www.cestudy.org](http://www.cestudy.org)
- <http://www.nonviolenceandsocialjustice.org/FAQs/What-is-Trauma/41/>
- [www.LouiseHay.com](http://www.LouiseHay.com); [www.YouCanHeal.com](http://www.YouCanHeal.com) Louise Hay
- <http://www.nctsn.org/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207203/>
- [www.ChildTrauma.org](http://www.ChildTrauma.org)
- <http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/SAMHSA%20TIC.pdf>
- [www.sanctuaryweb.com](http://www.sanctuaryweb.com)

# CARING FOR YOURSELF IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULT WORK

Our work can be overwhelming. Our challenge is to maintain our resilience so that we can keep doing the work with care, energy, and compassion.

## 10 things to do each day

- Get enough sleep.
- Get enough to eat.
- Vary the work that you do.
- Do some light exercise
- Do something pleasurable.

- Focus on what you did well.
- Learn from your mistakes.
- Share a private joke.
- Pray, meditate or relax.
- Support a colleague.

For More Information see your supervisor or visit [www.istss.org](http://www.istss.org), [www.proqol.org](http://www.proqol.org) and [www.compassionfatigue.org](http://www.compassionfatigue.org)

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# *How to become better at switching between Work and Off-Work Modes*

Make this a conscious process. Talk to yourself as you switch.

Use images that make you feel safe and protected (work-mode) or

connected and cared for (non-work mode) to help you switch.

Develop rituals that help you switch as you start and stop work.

Breathe slowly and deeply to calm yourself when starting a tough job.