

## LEC-5

Listed below are a number of difficult or stressful things that sometimes happen to people. For each event check one or more of the boxes to the right to indicate that: (a) it happened to you personally; (b) you witnessed it happen to someone else; (c) you learned about it happening to a close family member or close friend; (d) you were exposed to it as part of your job (for example, paramedic, police, military, or other first responder); (e) you're not sure if it fits; or (f) it doesn't apply to you.

Be sure to consider your entire life (growing up as well as adulthood) as you go through the list of events.

Age?                      Caused nightmares?    Still

<i>Event</i>	<i>Happened to me</i>	<i>Witnessed it</i>	<i>Learned about it</i>	<i>Part of my job</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Doesn't Apply</i>
1. Natural disaster (for example, flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquake)						
2. Fire or explosion						
3. Transportation accident (for example, car accident, boat accident, train wreck, plane crash)						
4. Serious accident at work, home, or during recreational activity						
5. Exposure to toxic substance (for example, dangerous chemicals, radiation)						
6. Physical assault (for example, being attacked, hit, slapped, kicked, beaten up)						
7. Assault with a weapon (for example, being shot, stabbed, threatened with a knife, gun, bomb)						
8. Sexual assault (rape, attempted rape, made to perform any type of sexual act through force or threat of harm)						
9. Other unwanted or uncomfortable sexual experience						
10. Combat or exposure to a war-zone (in the military or as a civilian)						
11. Captivity (for example, being kidnapped, abducted, held hostage, prisoner of war)						
12. Life-threatening illness or injury						
13. Severe human suffering						
14. Sudden violent death (for example, homicide, suicide)						
15. Sudden accidental death						
16. Serious injury, harm, or death you caused to someone else						
17. Any other very stressful event or experience <i>Including racial, gender and other discrimination/ abuse.</i>						

## PCL-5

**Instructions:** Below is a list of problems that people sometimes have in response to a very stressful experience. Please read each problem carefully and then circle one of the numbers to the right to indicate how much you have been bothered by that problem in the past month. (or past week )

e.g., 2x/mo | 2x/wk

<i>In the past month, how much were you bothered by:</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>A little bit</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Quite a bit</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
1. Repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
2. Repeated, disturbing dreams of the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
3. Suddenly feeling or acting as if the stressful experience were actually happening again ( <i>as if you were actually back there reliving it</i> )?	0	1	2	3	4
4. Feeling very upset when something reminded you of the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
5. Having strong physical reactions when something reminded you of the stressful experience ( <i>for example, heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating</i> )?	0	1	2	3	4
6. Avoiding memories, thoughts, or feelings related to the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
7. Avoiding external reminders of the stressful experience ( <i>for example, people, places, conversations, activities, objects, or situations</i> )?	0	1	2	3	4
8. Trouble remembering important parts of the stressful experience?	0	1	2	3	4
9. Having strong negative beliefs about yourself, other people, or the world ( <i>for example, having thoughts such as: I am bad, there is something seriously wrong with me, no one can be trusted, the world is completely dangerous</i> )?	0	1	2	3	4
10. Blaming yourself or someone else for the stressful experience or what happened after it?	0	1	2	3	4
11. Having strong negative feelings such as fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame?	0	1	2	3	4
12. Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy?	0	1	2	3	4
13. Feeling distant or cut off from other people?	0	1	2	3	4
14. Trouble experiencing positive feelings ( <i>for example, being unable to feel happiness or have loving feelings for people close to you</i> )?	0	1	2	3	4
15. Irritable behavior, angry outbursts, or acting aggressively?	0	1	2	3	4
16. Taking too many risks or doing things that could cause you harm?	0	1	2	3	4
17. Being "superalert" or watchful or on guard?	0	1	2	3	4
18. Feeling jumpy or easily startled?	0	1	2	3	4
19. Having difficulty concentrating?	0	1	2	3	4
20. Trouble falling or staying asleep?	0	1	2	3	4

# Beliefs about losing control.

Please rate the degree to which you believe these statements. (*circle the numbers*)

<i><b>If I allow my worst memories to play in my head, or if I allow myself to mourn my losses, I am afraid that I will...</b></i>	Not at all (0%)			50/50 (50%)			Fully (100%)
1. Choke or be unable to breathe.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Not be able to handle it.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Faint.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Never stop crying.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Start yelling.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Lose control.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Embarrass myself.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Have a heart attack.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Kill or hurt myself.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Do something violent.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Go insane.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Die.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Totals							

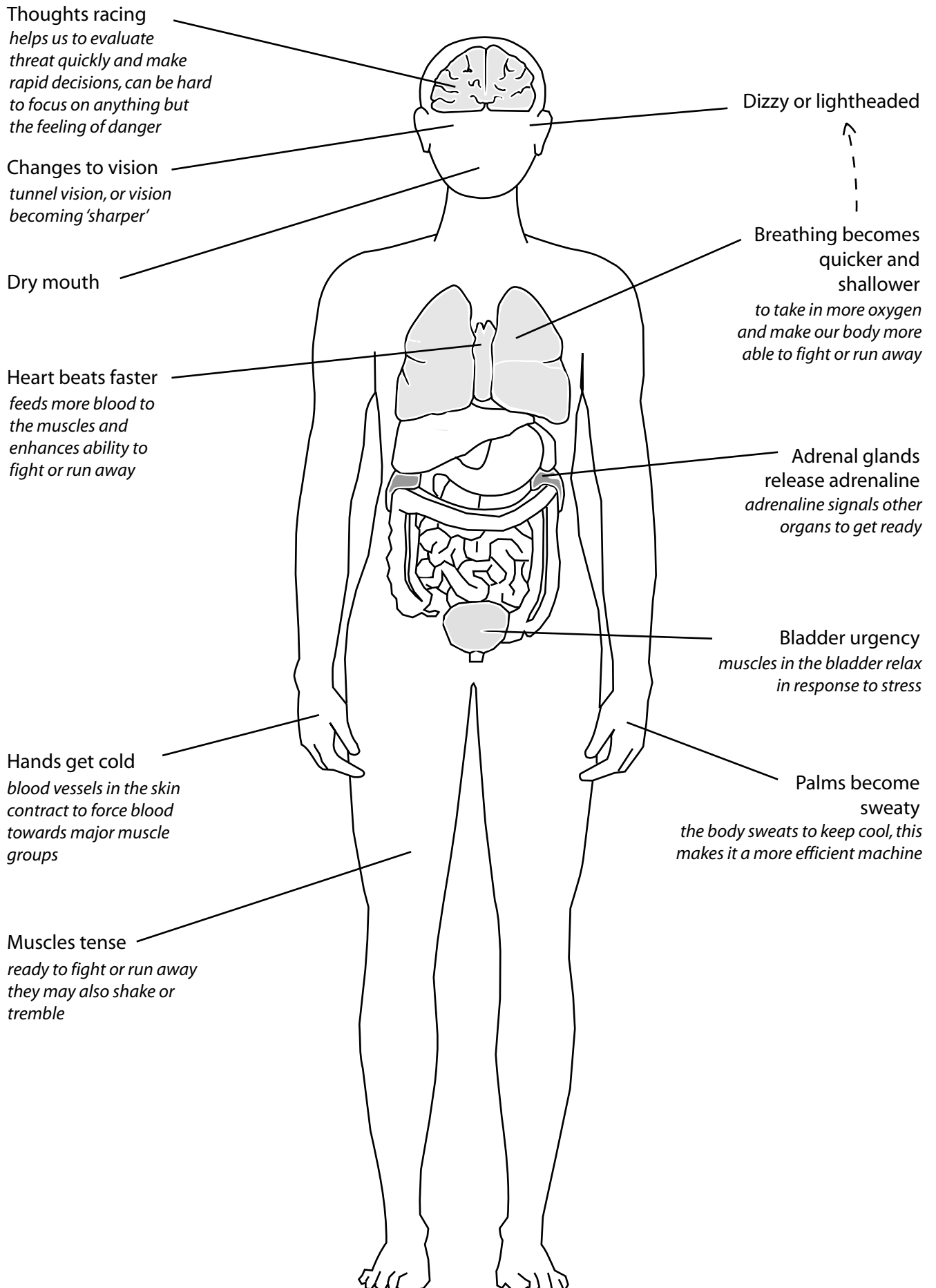
It is logical to avoid contact with things that can cause extreme reactions. What are some ways you currently cope with strong emotions and physiological reactions?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Threat System

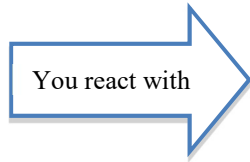
Circle whichever of these you experience when feeling anxious, uncomfortable, threatened, fearful, etc.

The 'fight or flight' response gets the body ready to fight or run away. Once a threat is detected your body responds automatically. All of the changes happen for good reasons, but may be experienced as uncomfortable when they happen in 'safe' situations.

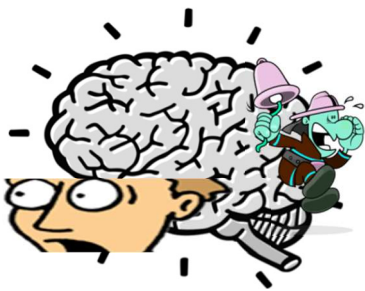


# Understanding Reactivity (Anxiety)

Imagine that walking in the woods alone, unarmed, you encounter a hungry lion.



Your lower, autonomic brain immediately sends out orders for your survival.



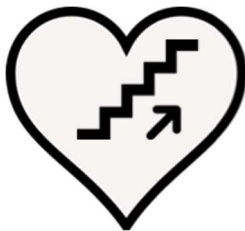
Your body revs up for fight or flight



Both of which require a lot of muscle power.



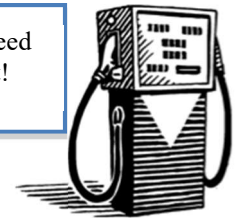
Muscles need adrenaline, fast!



Both are delivered by blood which is why your heart beats so fast.



They also need oxygen, fast!



Which gets you really hot.



Triggering sweat to cool you down.



- And other reactions:
- Racing thoughts
  - Dizzy/Lightheaded
  - Diarrhea, nausea
  - Tunnel vision
  - Chills
  - Fatigue

These occur even if you end up freezing in place and not moving.



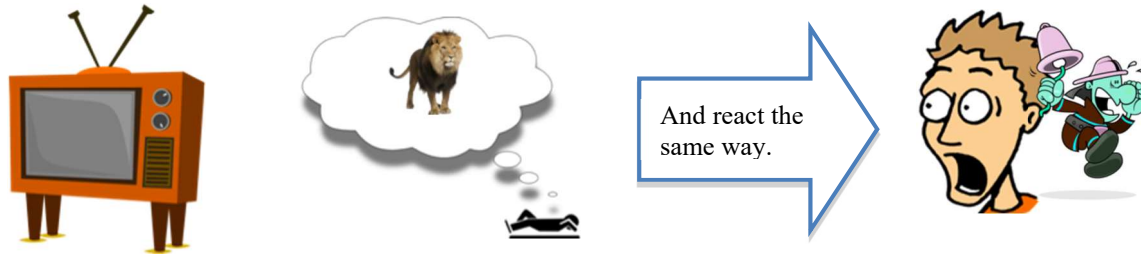
When we no longer perceive an immediate threat, our body tries to return back to normal, though then we are exhausted since our body just produced all those physical reactions. This is good and normal functioning when faced with immediate physical threats.



But sometimes we misperceive harmless things or delayed problems as immediate threats.



We can forget we are watching a movie. Not know we're dreaming. Or just be reminded...



Our higher brain needs to *re-train* our lower brain to hold back from running off at the first sign of threat.



Things like memories, dreams, and reminders of traumatic experiences are not dangerous in themselves and should not be treated as genuine threats. This re-training will not occur if you “numb out,” drink alcohol, or otherwise avoid strong feelings; your brain will interpret that avoidance as necessary life-saving behavior and then remain on the look-out. The key is to learn to *allow* memories and reminders to come and go no matter how much they stir up your autonomic system. If you wait out the reactions in situations that are not actually dangerous, your brain will start to adjust and no longer call for those reactions so often.

## What to do

Your brain will stop over-reacting if you:

1. Stay put despite reminders or memories,
2. Breathe deeply,
3. Track your autonomic adjustments, and
4. Ride out any changes in breathing and heart rate.

Talk to yourself like 2 pilots reading their instruments and making adjustments.



*“Heart rate? Speeding up.”*  
*“Breathing? Tight. Push long firm exhales.”*  
*“Shoulders? Neck? Jaw? Tense. Relax them.”*  
*“Focus? Danger!!! Instead? Look around!”*  
*“Thoughts? I’m gonna die! Reality? Turbulence.*  
*It’s uncomfortable but I will get through it.”*

# Turbulence Tracker for Trauma Reminders

Your brain and body will stop over-reacting to trauma reminders if you:

1. Stay put and not flee or clench teeth.
2. Breathe deeply.
3. Talk to yourself about each bodily change occurring (mark below by the minute) and counter them by slowing your breathing, stretching tight muscles, and reducing predictions of disaster.
4. Ride out the ups and downs until you feel more calm or even bored.



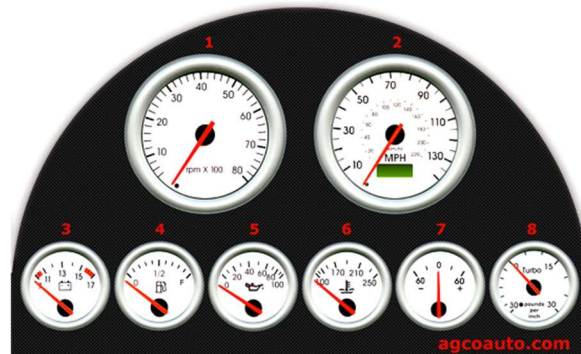
Example of Good Inner Dialog:

- "Heart rate? Speeding up."*
- "Breathing? Tight. Take deep breaths."*
- "Shoulders? Tense. Relax them."*
- "Jaw? Tight. Loosen it."*
- "Thoughts? I'm gonna die!"*
- "Reality? Discomfort. I got this."*

Date:	Time In:	Put a horizontal line (-) to rate levels of your internal experience for each category at each minute/period.																					
	Minute→	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Anxiety/ Discomfort (0-100%)	100%																						
	75%																						
	50%																						
	25%																						
	0%																						
	Minute→	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Breathing Rate (0-100% above calm)	100%																						
	75%																						
	50%																						
	25%																						
	0%																						
	Minute→	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Heart Rate (0-100% above calm)	100%																						
	75%																						
	50%																						
	25%																						
	0%																						
	Minute→	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Sweating (0-100%)	100%																						
	75%																						
	50%																						
	25%																						
	0%																						
	Minute→	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Jaw & Shoulder Tension	100%																						
	75%																						
	50%																						
	25%																						
	0%																						
	Minute→	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Negative Thoughts or Voices	100%																						
	75%																						
	50%																						
	25%																						
	0%																						
	Minute→	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Calming Self-Talk	100%																						
	75%																						
	50%																						
	25%																						
	0%																						

# Understanding and Processing Your Emotions

Understanding what we are feeling is like understanding what is happening to a car. We feel less powerless and out of control when we understand what is happening.



Circle words that describe how you feel right now, or how you felt while something really bad was happening. Start with, *“I feel...”* or *“I felt...”*

- |              |               |               |             |             |               |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Surprised    | Helpless      | Fake          | Annoyed     | Worthless   | Unclear       |
| Shocked      | Insignificant | Grotesque     | Angry       | Dirty       | Uneasy        |
| Unbelieving  | Miserable     | Abnormal      | Furious     | Filthy      | Uncomfortable |
| Confused     | Devastated    | Burdened      | Hateful     | Polluted    | Exhausted     |
| Alone        | Broken        | Stressed      | Resentful   | Cheap       | Overwhelmed   |
| Abandoned    | Off Balance   | Blind         | Distrusting | Ashamed     | Avoiding      |
| Forgotten    | Ruined        | Dumb          | Tired       | Blameworthy | Jumpy         |
| Sold         | Lost          | Ignorant      | Cold        | Guilty      | Fearful       |
| Hated        | Cursed        | Foolish       | Empty       | Abused      | Scared        |
| Robbed       | Imprisoned    | Idiotic       | Numb        | Bullied     | Shaky         |
| Cheated      | Crippled      | Stupid        | Far         | Attacked    | Sickly        |
| Foiled       | Choked        | Gullible      | Lifeless    | Hurt        | Queasy        |
| Disgusted    | Damaged       | Pathetic      | Dead        | Bruised     | Anxious       |
| Betrayed     | Unfixable     | Absurd        | Floating    | Heartbroken | Nauseated     |
| Naked        | Hopeless      | Ridiculous    | Meaningless | Sad         | Sweaty        |
| Defenseless  | Despairing    | Humiliated    | Unloved     | Unlucky     | Tense         |
| Unprepared   | Futureless    | Mocked        | Unlovable   | Discouraged | Terrified     |
| Unsafe       | Doomed        | Embarrassed   | Rejected    | Crushed     | Cowardly      |
| Weak         | Defeated      | Scolded       | Neglected   | Depressed   | Stuck         |
| Tiny         | Defective     | Accused       | Friendless  | Bitter      | Trapped       |
| Powerless    | Flawed        | Judged        | Unsupported | Fed Up      | Paralyzed     |
| Violated     | Useless       | Condemned     | Unheard     | Tormented   | Conflicted    |
| Disrespected | Freakish      | Misunderstood | Silenced    | Worried     | Punished      |
|              |               | Frustrated    |             |             |               |



# Negative recurring thoughts

Sometimes we ask *why* something happened to us, or make *negative predictions* about our future, or focus on those *responsible* for the event(s), including God. Identify **thoughts that recur a lot** regarding your most disturbing event. Don't hold back any emotions that arise. Let them ride themselves out the way you let your heartrate rise and fall during exercise.



- *(Maybe) I should have* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *(Maybe) I should NOT have* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *If only* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *Why* \_\_\_\_\_?
- *I can't believe* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *Where was* \_\_\_\_\_ *when this was happening?*
- *How could* \_\_\_\_\_?
- *I'm so* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *Now I'll never* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *I'll always be* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *I am so* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *It was* \_\_\_\_\_ *my fault.* \_\_\_\_\_ *being punished.*
- *I would be dishonoring* \_\_\_\_\_ *'s memory if I* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *This will probably keep me from* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *No one* \_\_\_\_\_ *can understand what I've been through.*
- *I don't deserve to* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *If I* \_\_\_\_\_ *then I am afraid I will* \_\_\_\_\_.
- *I now have these rules or procedures I follow (for safety, not getting hurt, etc):* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- *Add any other thoughts/conclusions that are hard to live with:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Addressing Negative Recurring Thoughts

1. If you hear the term, “Special Forces,” where does your mind go? This depends on your past, not on the words themselves. Someone interested in military things will likely think of military forces. A physicist, however, may think of gravity or momentum or relativity.

2. Thoughts are often based on facts and experiences but they can also be guesses, opinions or based on repetition or habit like advertisements. Should we believe them all equally?

3. Building on the last exercise, what is your worst or most disturbing thought or conclusion about what your disturbing experience(s) mean(s) about you, your future, or the world? For example, “Because this thing has happened, now I will never have a normal life.”

*My worst conclusion:* \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is this thought an undebatable fact? By that we mean that 100 out of 100 people would agree. Circle the appropriate category for your thought above: **Opinion Feeling Guess Fact Habit**

5. Is this thought balanced versus extreme? Objective versus biased? Circle any observations that apply: **Extreme/Exaggerated All/None/Black/White Oversimplified Balanced**

6. Does this thought leave out important information or context? (E.g., My danger was due to armed insurgents, in a war, overseas. Not every Middle Eastern man, woman, and child is a threat.)

7. If you had a lawyer arguing for this idea in court, what would they say is evidence that supports this conclusion or prediction? (“Your Honor, my client now will never... *because...*”)

8. What would an opposing lawyer say about that evidence? (E.g., “It was only 1 time out of 10” or, “They didn’t have the skills back then but they can learn them now.”)

9. Is my statement above confusing something that is POSSIBLE with something that is LIKELY?

Yes, it’s possible that \_\_\_\_\_ BUT \_\_\_\_\_.

10. Disturbing events can make us feel very isolated. If you have not told anyone else about this important aspect of your life, how would you go about doing so? (1) Who would it be? (2) Would you do it one-on-one or in a group? (3) In what setting: over coffee, taking a walk, etc? (4) What could you say first that might help them be ready to be supportive?

# Reducing Shock about Flawed Behaviors

Who do you blame for what occurred? \_\_\_\_\_ How much, 100%? \_\_\_\_\_ %

Imagine it was a friend in your/their shoes. How much would you blame them? \_\_\_\_\_ %

Explain any differences in level of blame: \_\_\_\_\_

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This section is about anger, blame, shame, and guilt. These emotions can contribute to keeping disturbing events present and powerful in our lives. Anger is a special emotion in that it does not necessarily lessen by “venting”. We often don’t have all the information.

With any past event, there may have been several factors contributing to the outcome. For example, imagine you are driving and another car slams into you and then races off. Perhaps you even get hurt and need medical attention. You might feel anger towards that driver, not only at first but every time you recall the incident. However, imagine later you found out that the other driver was bleeding to death and racing to the emergency room. This new information might lessen your anger, even though the harm to you and your car had been real and undeserved.

If your anger is toward yourself, imagine you were that bleeding driver and ran over a child. You might have trouble accepting that you could do such a thing, while others would understand that you cannot be bleeding to death and still function at a normal level. It’s hard to accept how impaired we and others can be, yet it can help to consider limitations involved.

Could any of the following help explain why the disturbing event(s) occurred? (*Circle words as appropriate. Estimate percentages on some.*)

1. We were at **war**. In **hostile** territory. (Explains at least 50% of how it could happen?)
2. There was a **perpetrator**. I was deliberately **targeted**.
3. **Deception** occurred. **Information** was flawed.
4. There was **no time to think** or gather more **information**. It happened in \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
5. They/I were/was **very young** (even though we **thought** we were mature).
6. They/I had been severely **abused** and never got treatment for it.
7. They/I had **a mental situation** that kept them/me from functioning normally.
8. They were/I was **too scared to know what to do** about the situation.
9. **Nothing had prepared** them/me for such an experience.
10. The situation was very **confusing** and they/I **did not know whom to turn to**.
11. They/I had gone **too many days without enough sleep**.
12. They were/I was **overwhelmed** by pressures coming from all sides.
13. They/I **did not have the coping skills** needed for that situation.
14. They/I were/was **addicted** to something that had a powerful hold on them/me.
15. They/I **would know what to do now** but **didn’t know back then**.
16. The situation was **inevitable** (not that surprising) **under those circumstances**.
17. I/they were **unable to listen or understand at the time**, but maybe could now.
18. They/I did not seek professional help **but can now**.
19. Think of a special circumstance that would leave you less shocked. For example, after a perpetrator’s death the autopsy shows they had a rare disease that caused their behavior.

# Sensory Cues & Anniversaries

There are probably some physical or sensory reminders plus anniversaries that you would rather forget and never experience again. These could be visual images, odors, sounds, names of people, and more. They probably have the power to “trigger” your disturbing memories, dreams, and emotions—and often not consciously. It can be as subtle as a stain on a wall. This exercise is about *undermining* the power of reminders and making them less disturbing to us.

Living by avoiding them keeps you vulnerable when you do encounter them. Plus, trying to avoid all reminders can really limit your life. Instead, looking *right at* reminders over and over again, in all sorts of contexts, *while letting your reactions exhaust themselves*, can make sensory items less tied to a single memory. For example, there may have been a doorway where your event occurred, but your daily experience of doorways probably keeps them from becoming triggers for that memory. However, if there was a *red* door, then maybe red doors trigger you and you try to avoid them. That very avoidance might be keeping the *association* strong between red doors and your disturbing memory. Instead, if you spend a week often looking for red doors and letting your reactions ride themselves out you might weaken that association and fear.

Recalling sensory details about your experience can be uncomfortable. Remember to let any feelings ride themselves out. **List any current reminders. Try to put yourself in the memory and write every sensory detail you can notice in terms of:**

1. Sounds

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2. Smells

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3. Touch

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4. Tastes

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5. Sights

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6. Anniversaries

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To fully reduce the power of the above, now practice seeking them out and allowing them to capture your full attention until that naturally dwindles. For anniversaries, try thinking and grieving about the event(s) on that day of *every month* instead of only the month in which it occurred, so that the mind no longer associates it so firmly with the actual month.

## Anticipating Acceptance

Acceptance of what occurred, and allowing thoughts and emotions to come and go without fighting them, are 2 important steps in recovery. Imagine yourself as a ***much older person***, like in 20, 30, even 50 years from now. A lot more life has gone by. What will your relationship with your disturbing event(s) probably look like? Will you be...

Denying or not believing it happened?	Yes	No	Maybe
Acting as if it did not affect me much?	Yes	No	Maybe
Desperate to know <i>why</i> it happened?	Yes	No	Maybe
Suppressing thoughts about it?	Yes	No	Maybe
Seeking distractions from it?	Yes	No	Maybe
Getting upset at reminders of it?	Yes	No	Maybe
Focused on blaming someone?	Yes	No	Maybe
Hoping that memories will stay tucked away and not bother me again?	Yes	No	Maybe
Unwilling to examine aspects that still bother me and “ride out” related feelings?	Yes	No	Maybe
Unwilling to discuss the event(s) with others?	Yes	No	Maybe
Thinking the event(s) made you weak?	Yes	No	Maybe
Afraid of the possibility of other difficulties?	Yes	No	Maybe
Feeling unprepared for whatever else life may bring?	Yes	No	Maybe
Afraid of life?	Yes	No	Maybe

Write any thoughts about this section. \_\_\_\_\_

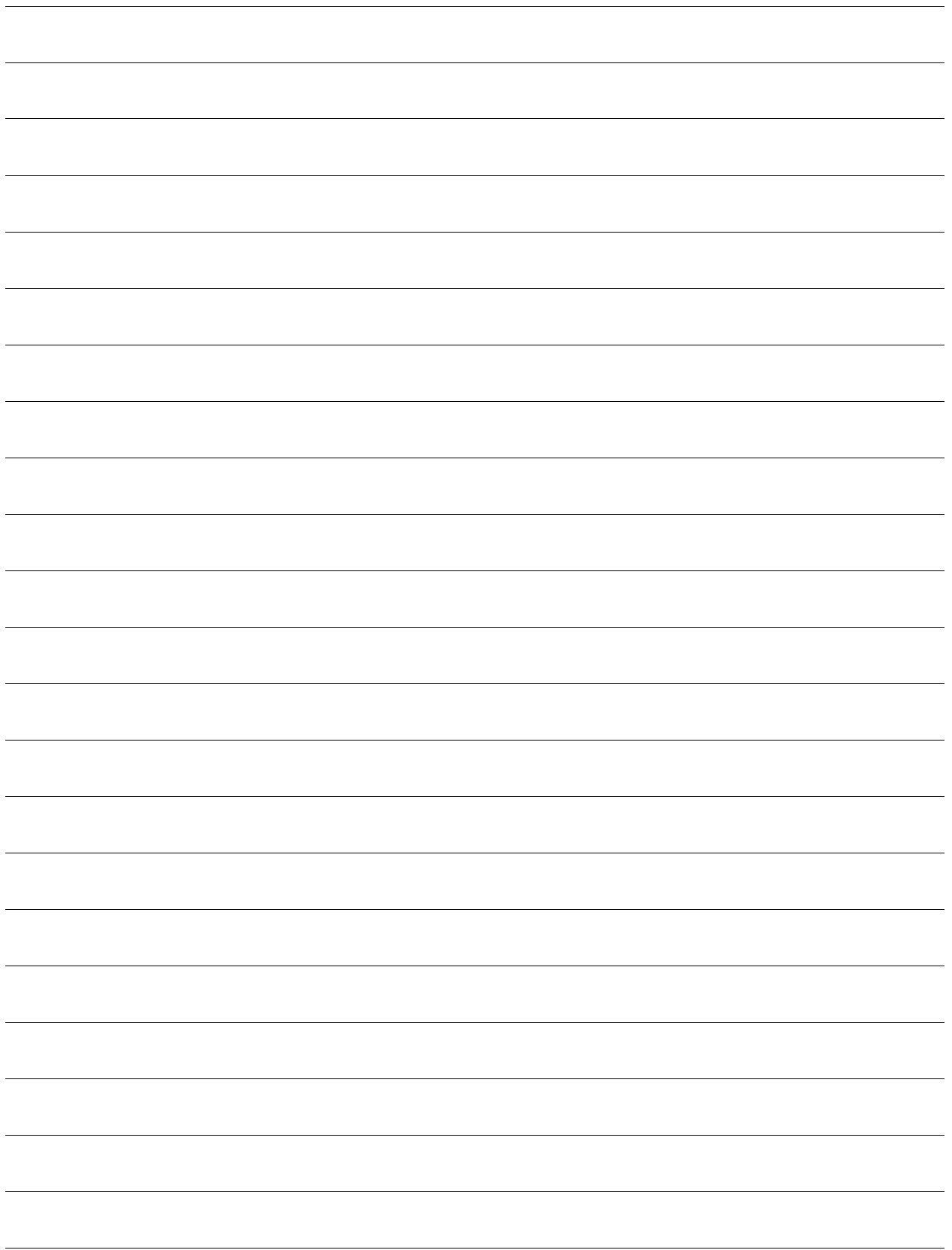
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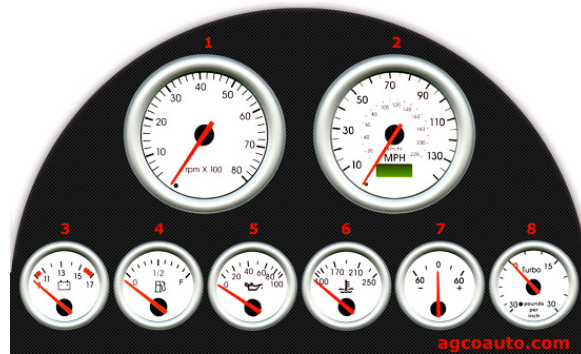
If the thoughts are bothersome, consider using the page on addressing recurring negative thoughts.

## Putting it all together

Now it's time to put it all together into a coherent story. ***Use the back of this page or simply tell it verbally.*** Include details of what happened, who was involved or missing, how old you were, what you heard, saw, smelled, tasted, and felt. Also what you were thinking at each moment, and bodily reactions and emotions you were having. Include things from the previous pages that help tell the complete story. Tell it like a movie, as if it's happening right now. Start with what you were doing and feeling before the event(s) interrupted that day, and how those thoughts, feelings, and activities changed because of it. Don't just tell the external facts; try to describe all that went through your mind. At the end, include things you have learned, and recent changes regarding thoughts about what this event means for your life. Do not worry about grammar or even full sentences; key words are enough.



# Follow-Up On Processing Your Emotions



Which of these are you still feeling?

- |              |               |               |             |             |               |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Surprised    | Helpless      | Fake          | Annoyed     | Worthless   | Unclear       |
| Shocked      | Insignificant | Grotesque     | Angry       | Dirty       | Uneasy        |
| Unbelieving  | Miserable     | Abnormal      | Furious     | Filthy      | Uncomfortable |
| Confused     | Devastated    | Burdened      | Hateful     | Polluted    | Exhausted     |
| Alone        | Broken        | Stressed      | Resentful   | Cheap       | Overwhelmed   |
| Abandoned    | Off Balance   | Blind         | Distrusting | Ashamed     | Avoiding      |
| Forgotten    | Ruined        | Dumb          | Tired       | Blameworthy | Jumpy         |
| Sold         | Lost          | Ignorant      | Cold        | Guilty      | Fearful       |
| Hated        | Cursed        | Foolish       | Empty       | Abused      | Scared        |
| Robbed       | Imprisoned    | Idiotic       | Numb        | Bullied     | Shaky         |
| Cheated      | Crippled      | Stupid        | Far         | Attacked    | Sickly        |
| Fooled       | Choked        | Gullible      | Lifeless    | Hurt        | Queasy        |
| Disgusted    | Damaged       | Pathetic      | Dead        | Bruised     | Anxious       |
| Betrayed     | Unfixable     | Absurd        | Floating    | Heartbroken | Nauseated     |
| Naked        | Hopeless      | Ridiculous    | Meaningless | Sad         | Sweaty        |
| Defenseless  | Despairing    | Humiliated    | Unloved     | Unlucky     | Tense         |
| Unprepared   | Futureless    | Mocked        | Unlovable   | Discouraged | Terrified     |
| Unsafe       | Doomed        | Embarrassed   | Rejected    | Crushed     | Cowardly      |
| Weak         | Defeated      | Scolded       | Neglected   | Depressed   | Stuck         |
| Tiny         | Defective     | Accused       | Friendless  | Bitter      | Trapped       |
| Powerless    | Flawed        | Judged        | Unsupported | Fed Up      | Paralyzed     |
| Violated     | Useless       | Condemned     | Unheard     | Tormented   | Conflicted    |
| Disrespected | Freakish      | Misunderstood | Silenced    | Worried     | Punished      |
|              |               | Frustrated    |             |             |               |

# Balancing Out Emotions

*On the positive side, when I think about my traumatic or disturbing experience, at this point I am also feeling...*

Absolved	Content	Harmonious	Present	Satisfied
Accompanied	Contrite	Healed	Processing	Seasoned
Accomplished	Delighted	Honored	Productive	Secure
Achieving	Dependable	Hopeful	Profound	Serene
Acknowledged	Determined	Human	Protected	Sharpened
Adventurous	Devoted	Humbled	Proud	Significant
Affirmed	Dignified	Immunized	Purified	Spirited
Amazed	Driven	In Control	Purposeful	Strong
Amused	Effective	Insightful	Radiant	Stable
Appreciated	Encouraged	Inspired	Ready	Sturdy
Assertive	Enduring	Intelligent	Realistic	Successful
Aware	Energetic	Interested	Reassured	Supported
Balanced	Enlightened	Knowledgeable	Rebuilding	Surviving
Beautiful	Enthusiastic	Liberated	Recharged	Tall
Believing	Equal	Likable	Recognized	Thoughtful
Blameless	Excited	Limitless	Reconciled	Touched
Blessed	Experienced	Lovable	Reconnected	Transformed
Bold	Extraordinary	Loved	Recovering	Triumphant
Brave	Faithful	Lovely	Redeemed	Undeclared
Brightened	Fixed	Loving	Reflective	Understood
Calm	Flexible	Lucky	Refreshed	Undisturbed
Capable	Flourishing	Motivated	Regenerated	Upbeat
Clean	Focused	Noble	Rejoicing	Useful
Clear	Forgiving	Normal	Relaxed	Validated
Coherent	Fortunate	Nostalgic	Released	Vibrant
Comforted	Free	Nurturing	Relieved	Victorious
Committed	Fruitful	Open	Resilient	Vindicated
Compassionate	Fulfilled	Passionate	Resourceful	Warm
Competent	Generous	Patient	Rested	Whimsical
Complete	Genuine	Peaceful	Rewarded	Whole
Confident	Grateful	Persistent	Rugged	Wise
Connected	Happy	Positive	Safe	Youthful
Conquering	Hardened	Prepared	Sane	



## Actual losses of control.

Please rate the degree to which you believe these occurred. (*circle the numbers*)

<i>When I let my worst memories play in my head, I...</i>	Not at all (0%)			50/50 (50%)			Fully (100%)
1. Choked/was unable to breathe.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Was not able to handle it.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Fainted.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Was not able to stop crying.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Started yelling.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Lost control.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Embarrassed myself.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Had a heart attack.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Killed or hurt myself.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Did something violent.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Went insane.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Died.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Totals							

Compare these outcomes to your initial expectations.

# Recap

Throughout these exercises you learned about principles related to trauma recovery and you practiced several skills you can take with you. To recap, they are:

1. We may not be able to control what pops into our head or senses, but we can make choices about fighting, allowing, or even seeking them out. Our responses are important to notice because active ignoring, avoiding, suppressing, or minimizing may be feeding the tendency to think about or expect them *even more*.
2. We can weaken the effect of certain triggers. For example, imagining a lemon produces saliva but only initially, so to keep imagining lemons reduces this effect. Likewise, recalling your event(s) also had physical effects, but if we allow or even summon these images repeatedly (in a safe place) our body will not continue producing physical reactions. Your autonomic brain will begin to “hold out” for an *actual* lemon or an *actual* threat to your survival before stirring up all your physical resources.
3. You experienced that intense feelings such as fear or sadness are not permanent; they arise quickly and then slowly taper down. Just as repetitions of physical exercise leads to conditioning, allowing negative feelings tends to make them less intense over time.
4. Losing our physical reactions does not mean we no longer care. It only means the event no longer interferes with you being “present” and attentive to the people and events *now* in your life. You get to *choose* your direction rather than always be *pulled* or *torn*.
5. Using a rich emotional vocabulary list can help us fully acknowledge and mourn our losses. Untangling feelings *now* may help reduce their ability to trigger you in the future.
6. Negative experiences can make us biased toward expecting excessive negative things in the future. But thoughts are not always facts. They can be guesses, opinions, feelings, habits. Thus, troubling conclusions and predictions need to be *identified* and *cross-examined*. Evidence *for* and *against* their accuracy or likelihood should be considered. This helps achieve a more objective outlook. This can also initiate problem-solving and doing things differently to increase our control.
7. Anger, blame, shame, and guilt can be especially hard to navigate. By understanding the “bigger picture” of all the circumstances involved, including things that occurred long before these events, we might realize that the disturbing experience(s) can rarely be attributed to a single cause. Human beings are limited in so many ways.
8. You have been willing to examine specific memories and sensory cues carefully, and you have put the whole experience together into more of a coherent, logical memory. What are some things you are now more hopeful about? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_