**Dealing With Past Trauma**

Posttraumatic Growth Path (PTGP) is a four-step tool developed to help individuals overcome past traumatic experiences. It was developed by Nelson in 2011 for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder but has been adapted and works for other types of trauma survivors. Note: this exercise is best completed in the presence of another individual to help provide emotional support.

| **Deal** Writing a Trauma Narrative * Write out the facts surrounding the incident.
* Who was there?
* What happened?
* Where did it happen?
* When did it happen?
* Write out your thoughts and feelings that arose during the experience to create a comprehensive narrative.
* After creating the account, write out a paragraph reflecting on your:
* Current emotional state
* What you have learned
* Did you think you have grown from the experience?

Note: if you can complete this stage with a professional or someone who can provide emotional support as distressing feelings may arise.  | **Feel** Imaginal Exposure Through the help of a professional or a trusted individual (friend or family)have them read aloud your trauma narrative. This step is considered a type of exposure therapy which works by desensitizing individuals to distressing or uncomfortable feelings associated with the original trauma. During this exercise, try to imagine the experience in your mind’s eye using the vivid sensory capacity of the imagination. The goal is to fully process your feelings with the support of a counsellor or a trusted individual. Take your time, and make note of specific triggers when imagining the scenario.  |
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| **Heal** Channeling PTG Freedom of Choice:* Understand that you did not choose this traumatic experience, but you can choose to go forward
* Rewrite your ending to this experience

Finding Meaning: * What have you learned? What did you learn that may help others?
* What does this make possible?

The Hero Archetype: * Try to re-write this experience as you being the hero. Try re-imagining it as a step in order for the hero to become stronger
 | **Seal** The Mind as a Filing Cabinet In this step, you are going to organize this experience in your mind. Take all past and previously scattered emotions and organize them as you just have in a consolidated experience. Imagine sealing the memories away as files and storing them away safely. Files can be consulted in the future but are no longer anything more than one of the many files that are stored in the cabinet of your mind.  |