

BRIDGE OF HOPE

Trauma & Dissociation

Happy New Year!

Welcome to 2022! I can't believe how fast last year went. I do love the first day of the new year however. While there are no do-overs, I love to consider the first day of the year as a clean slate day. It's a day to start over. It's a new beginning from right where I am. It doesn't matter where am I, it starts today, and it just gets better from here on out. For me, it's a new planner, setting a direction for what I'd like to accomplish this year (not something to do every day, but something I'd like to accomplish by the end of the year), and choosing a word that I want to lead my life this year.

Let's look at recovery. When I think about what the new year means for the road of recovery, I think it can offer some different things to look at. Here are some questions that might be asked starting this year.

What do I want for my recovery this year?

What are my options for achieving these things this year or working on them?

Is what I want to accomplish this year realistically attainable this year, or is it more likely to be able to be worked on, but attainable in the farther future and this year is when I can start it?

What has been working in my recovery that I want to continue doing?

What hasn't been working that I might want to try something new and different?

What has worked in the past that I haven't used for a while that I might want to put back in place?

What is the one step that I want to take to start with or to add in (this way I know if

If you're feeling **suicidal**, please contact 800-SUICIDE, Text HOME to 741741 or if outside the US, go to www.befrienders.org

If you are being **abused**, experiencing incest or rape, please contact RAINN at 800-656-HOPE. RAINN provides links to international agencies.

If you are in a **violent relationship**, call the Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE. For international contacts, go to www.hotpeachpages.net/a/index.html

this one works instead of multiple at one time)?

Who might or would support and encourage me in taking this step in my recovery?

There are several more questions that could be asked, but these are just a few to get the thoughts going. Another thought about recovery is to acknowledge that the recovery journey is slow and difficult to walk through. Something that has been helpful for some is to document the successes and positive steps that have been accomplished on the journey. This allows the opportunity to review it when the journey feels stuck and discouraging. For some this could be in the form of a list while for others it can be a journal that is written out. Others use an art journal.

I'm looking forward to 2022 and what it brings for Hope Recovery. We are working on new workshops, and are starting out the year with some of them in January. Over this year you will see more workshops offered by our program and a couple time limited groups.

I want to encourage you as you start this new year. This road to recovery is not an easy road, but it's doable. When you feel like it's too difficult to take the next step, try to remember that it's a small step at a time. Sometimes the step is forward and sometimes there is a step backwards a step. That doesn't mean loss, but the opportunity to regain footing. Sometimes this is the opportunity to review coping skills that have been used that helped, or the opportunity to use something that hasn't been tried yet.

Know that our team is here to continue to provide support. You're don't have to go through this alone. Remember, you are worth the fight for your recovery. We believe in you.

Happy New Year!

Take Gentle Care,
Kristen



Bridge of Hope—Winter 2022

Journaling Prompts

Sometimes it is helpful to do some light journaling to relax. Here are some journaling prompts to get your writing going and to start the new year with some light and fun thinking.

In winter I enjoy...

If I could play in the snow I would...

If I was a polar bear I would...

Given a box of beads, paints, pens, markers, glue, ribbons, and fabric, I would...

If I could do anything fun I would...

I have 24 hours free to do anything so I'm going to...

If I were a cat I would...

If I could build a castle it would have...

I'm looking forward to ...

For fun I am going to...

Just for one day I will...

.... makes me happy.

If I could have any toy right now it would be...

My favorite food is.... and it makes me feel...

If I was dancing to my favorite song...

My favorite color...

In front of me is a box of colored chalk, a sidewalk and...

My favorite animal is.... because...

I love...

I enjoy...

I want...

I can...

These are just a few prompts. There are a lot more to go with these ones, and I'm going to encourage you to let your thoughts flow.

Let Me Go

I'm having trouble letting go
Memories flood my mind
And I hold to only those that are good
Or those that I somehow think I can make good if I think about them long enough,
hard enough, or in the right way
“If only I could find the answer to your problems...
Mine would be solved”

I wish the faulty reasoning in that logic would jump out at me
But while I recognize it, I dismiss it away. Thinking that somehow...
Somehow...

My force of will

Will **will** you to be better

Will **will** you to love and respect me

In the way that you always should have

That you **knew** you should have

You love me because I am comfortable

You love me because while I challenge you, I never forced you to change

You love me because when I forced you to change, you know it was only for a time

And then you could go back to your comfortable uncomfortability

My mind is taken, stretched across the plane of your indifference

Trying to hold in any bits of love that try to escape

Trying to hold in any bits of your OWN self preservation which would bring you
running to my cause

My cause was to save you

But you won't save yourself

And instead, you are helping me drown

How can I love you? How can I want you?

You are nothing but heartache and hurt

And yet I run to you, hoping that my open, willing heart

And outstretched arms will be enough healing for the both of us

Not realizing that my outstretched arms prolong the pain

When I find them empty again

When your arms are holding a bottle, or flailing in rage, or clicking mindlessly towards mindlessness

You said you loved me

Well

Prove it

Let me go

Submitted by:

Johanna Certo



Reclaiming Me

As I take a step back into my body for the first time in ages, my heart still feels restless. It is like I am living on the surface of myself, and this is where I have been for about two years. Right there underneath the skin, I can feel parts of me grasping for air.

For the first time in two years, I pay for a yoga class. I go alone and do not tell anyone beforehand because this for me and me only. How is it that I used to go five times a week to yoga? 7 AM, 4:15 PM, flows, meditations, nidra, everything. As I step into the studio ready to receive I remember exactly what it feels like to pay for an unlimited membership and go to yoga five times a week. It feels exciting and nourishing and not at all like a chore. This is what it is like to not teach. This is what it is like to have a space designed for my reception. This is what it is like to have a body that I can thank. This is what it is like to have a body. This is what it is like to have a mind.

When I do step back into my body, I am almost never all the way there. My heart still feels restless. It feels like I'm watching myself do yoga and simultaneously waiting for a meteor to hit. I drop into certain poses and think about myself in the mirror. I think about my ex. I think about the present moment and how I might be completely and totally mentally ill. Like, more so than my diagnosed amount. By by savasana, I weep. The teacher reads a quote and reminds me that one day joy will run through my veins much more readily than pain. She says that I will wake up and things will feel strange, but good. And that all of the growing and healing and pain is worth it. I cannot help but believe her and her purple hair. I cannot help but weep softly as I lay there, the pressure of the uncirculated air depressing me into the earth. I feel as though maybe this time, if I close my eyes, I will not slip into the ether. I will slip into myself.

Submitted by:
Mary Ellen Tokar

C O W C H W A M S C F A I T H Y S A C A
 L N O O L A N R U O J O Y Z T X C C C B
 A L U L L A D E S H E L P Z I P H C V S
 Y C O L O R S R A S K L P I P M O H O H
 E D B C O N R G R O U P W P E U O O L A
 E R B C A L N Y O U F S R A N T L O U G
 A R O S E I R V I L L G N T I R S S N N
 P H A I P E R Y O U F S R A N T L O U G
 S H A O V D O S W T R B R I A H I N E W
 S E C O L D H N R A I S T B A A T E E A
 W A C K E B N O X L A M N P C B E Y R R
 A E M R A E P P I A P H O P E I P T S D
 R K E C U P P T T F R E R G E L D O O H
 S R K E U T Y E G O R O K R F I L O L O
 T S T S R Y D I N R G S U A F T F A D R
 U L O H A E R B E U Z Y R N R A E H C S
 D D R A R Z O R S M W I P T E I R V A E
 I S V U D I L O S R E P S E I R O M E M
 E A T T R I N G S T R A I R N I N G V E
 S U U R E H A B I L I T A T I O N J E E
 F U M E L G G U C O U N S E L I N G R N

Terms of Recovery

Accountability

Artwork

Clay

Colors

Coping

Counseling

Drawing

Faith

Flashbacks

Forum

Future

Group

Hope

Journal

Memories

Pen

PTSD

Recovery

Rehabilitation

School

Studies

Support

Volunteer

Coping with Traumatic Stress Reactions

When trauma survivors take direct action to cope with their stress reactions, they put themselves in a position of power. Active coping with the trauma makes you begin to feel less helpless.

- Active coping means accepting the impact of trauma on your life and taking direct action to improve things.

Active coping occurs even when there is no crisis. Active coping is a way of responding to everyday life. It is a habit that must be made stronger.

Know that recovery is a process

Following exposure to a trauma most people experience stress reactions. Understand that recovering from the trauma is a process and takes time. Knowing this will help you feel more in control.

- Having an ongoing response to the trauma is normal.
- Recovery is an ongoing, daily process. It happens little by little. It is not a matter of being cured all of a sudden.
- Healing doesn't mean forgetting traumatic events. It doesn't mean you will have no pain or bad feelings when thinking about them.
- Healing may mean fewer symptoms and symptoms that bother you less.

Healing means more confidence that you will be able to cope with your memories and symptoms. You will be better able to manage your feelings.

Positive coping actions

Certain actions can help to reduce your distressing symptoms and make things better. Plus, these actions can result in changes that last into the future. Here are some positive coping methods:

Learn about trauma and PTSD

It is useful for trauma survivors to learn more about common reactions to trauma and about PTSD. Find out what is normal. Find out what the signs are that you may need assistance from others. When you learn that the symptoms of PTSD are common, you realize that you are not alone, weak, or crazy. It helps to know your problems are shared by hundreds of thousands of others. When you seek treatment and begin to understand your response to trauma, you will be better able to cope with the symptoms of PTSD.

Talk to others for support

When survivors talk about their problems with others, something helpful often re-

sults. It is important not to isolate yourself. Instead make efforts to be with others. Of course, you must choose your support people with care. You must also ask them clearly for what you need. With support from others, you may feel less alone and more understood. You may also get concrete help with a problem you have.

Practice relaxation methods

Try some different ways to relax, including:

- Muscle relaxation exercises
- Breathing exercises
- Meditation
- Swimming, stretching, yoga
- Prayer
- Listening to quiet music

Spending time in nature

While relaxation techniques can be helpful, in a few people they can sometimes increase distress at first. This can happen when you focus attention on disturbing physical sensations and you reduce contact with the outside world. Most often, continuing with relaxation in small amounts that you can handle will help reduce negative reactions. You may want to try mixing relaxation in with music, walking, or other activities.

Distract yourself with positive activities

- Pleasant recreational or and orient yourself to the here and now.
- Engage in a pleasant, calming activity. For example, listen to some soothing music.
- Talk to someone if possible.

Talk to your doctor about your nightmares. Certain medicines can be helpful.

Difficulty falling or staying asleep

- Keep to a regular bedtime schedule.
- Avoid heavy exercise for the few hours just before going to bed.
- Avoid using your sleeping area for anything other than sleeping or sex.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine. These harm your ability to sleep.

Do not lie in bed thinking or worrying. Get up and enjoy something soothing or pleasant. Read a calming book, drink a glass of warm milk or herbal tea, or do a quiet hob-

by.

Irritability, anger, and rage

- Take a time out to cool off or think things over. Walk away from the situation.
- Get in the habit of exercise daily. Exercise reduces body tension and relieves stress.
- Remember that staying angry doesn't work. It actually increases your stress and can cause health problems.
- Talk to your counselor or doctor about your anger. Take classes in how to manage anger.

If you blow up at family members or friends, find time as soon as you can to talk to them about it. Let them know how you feel and what you are doing to cope with your reactions.

Difficulty concentrating or staying focused

- Slow down. Give yourself time to focus on what it is you need to learn or do.
- Write things down. Making "to do" lists may be helpful.
- Break tasks down into small do-able chunks.
- Plan a realistic number of events or tasks for each day.

You may be depressed. Many people who are depressed have trouble concentrating. Again, this is something you can discuss with your counselor, doctor, or someone close to you.

Trouble feeling or expressing positive emotions

- Remember that this is a common reaction to trauma. You are not doing this on purpose. You should not feel guilty for something you do not want to happen and cannot control.
- Make sure to keep taking part in activities that you enjoy or used to enjoy. Even if you don't think you will enjoy something, once you get into it, you may well start having feelings of pleasure.

Take steps to let your loved ones know that you care. You can express your caring in little ways: write a card, leave a small gift, or phone someone and say hello.



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STATEMENT OF FAITH

Psalm 147:3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

MISSION

The mission of Hope Recovery is to provide support and compassion in the lives of adult survivors of abuse and sexual trauma.

VISION

To offer support and compassion as survivors make their way on the journey of recovery and healing.

Bridge of Hope is published quarterly in
Clinton, Indiana.

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ISSN 2373-471X (Print)

ISSN 2373-3977 (Online)