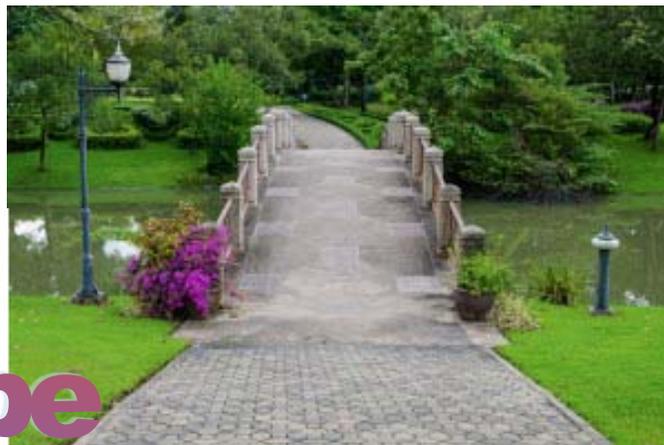


# Trauma & Dissociation Bridge of Hope



## Note About BoH:

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ISSN 2373-471X (Print)  
ISSN 2373-3977 (Online)

## Change

Change can be quite uncomfortable. With a new year there can be change in our lives whether by choice or just because of the nature of life. Many times there are decisions about what I need to do and what changes we need to make in our lives.

One of the things I've learned about change is that it takes time to be able to make changes and it's a good time to be gentle with Myself. Most changes I make can take time to move into a place where I feel comfortable and find a new rhythm in that change. If one area of change is something that takes practice, it may take some time for the change to take hold.

For example, if I want to change the way I think about a certain aspect of my life so I'm not so critical of myself, it's going to take a lot of practice and awareness of my thoughts. Perhaps I'm even trying to figure out what the thoughts are and what ones need to change. Perhaps I'm trying to learn a new hobby because of interest or for distraction. My first experience with this may not be very good. In fact, likely it will take practice and repetition to become proficient at it. This is true for coping skills of all kinds. It is going to take practicing that new skill regularly, practicing it even when I'm not needing it.

Depending upon the type of change we are faced with, we have two choices about it. We can accept it, or we can reject it. Perhaps the job that I've had for a long time is changing. Maybe my position is being eliminated and my new position I really don't care for. If I don't like the change, I most likely won't like to do it or want to do it. Do I stick with it and learn this new position or do I quit? Do I stick with it and learn this new position or do I quit? If I decide to learn it, am I going to choose to have a good attitude about it or am I going to be angry and have a bad attitude about it? All of these decisions and changes require steps and based on those steps my life could get better or could complicate it. In fact my decision on whether to have a good or bad attitude about the change can create a lot of complications or smooth the way for me.

Change. It could be wanted and self-imposed. It could be something I want to make different in my life. Whether I want to change something or it's a change being thrown upon my life, it can require effort, and be very uncomfortable.

## Relationships & Levels of Intimacy

I hope that as you face and take on the changes that 2020 brings, that your decisions and steps taken with the changes bring about positive changes ultimately. Try to make 2020 the best year of your life to date. I know I plan to do so. I know that not all of the decisions and changes you will face are desired. My challenge to you (and myself) is as you face the changes this year, that you do so with a positive mindset. My hope is that you will embrace the changes the best you can, and that you will make good decisions in making whatever changes you need and want to make.

Have a great New Year! As you are in this new year, remember you are not alone, and all of us at Hope Recovery are here to support you in your journey of healing.

Take gentle care of you.  
Kristen

*Loss impacts  
individuals  
differently.*

## Loss

It's common to think of grief and loss as being related to the loss of loved ones. There are many types of losses however. As survivors, every one of us has lost something precious. That can include the loss of innocence, safety, trust, relationships or other things. What one survivor has lost may be different from another, but abuse and sexual trauma results in loss. Some survivors may have lost other things of value later in life because of the impact the trauma had on their lives.

One survivor wasn't able to finish college due to her depression, while another had to stop working because of the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder symptoms that were too hard to manage while at work. Yet another survivor lost his partner due to the complications of their relationship created by the complications from his trauma. While each of these are different kinds of losses, they are still loss and can result in a grief response.

Loss impacts individuals differently. One survivor may push forward to try to deal with the loss by taking on a new job, while another may feel it would be hopeless to take on a new job. This is just one example of a couple of ways a loss of a job might be responded to. There are other scenarios that could result from job loss as well as other types of loss.

Because each survivor has different strengths, weaknesses, support, resources and other differences, it's important not to compare yourself or your situations to another individual's experience. What your experience and situation is can be totally different from the one you compare yourself to. It's difficult to nurture yourself when you're criticizing yourself based on someone else's situation and experience. In times of dealing with grief and loss, we need to try to embrace opportunities to experience our feelings while giving ourselves the gentleness and care we need.

Dealing with grief and loss is hard enough to manage without adding unfair comparisons to the mix. Try to give yourself grace, knowing that grieving can

have a variety of emotions, may seem less intense at times, and more intense at others.

The pain of grief does lessen for many individuals, but when and how varies greatly. Try not to put yourself in a box or have false expectations about how you will process your grief. There are several stages of grief that can and usually are gone through. There isn't any specific order to the various stages that are likely to be gone through, but the bottom line is to try to be kind you in your time of grief and loss.

## Love

To love

To be loved

It's very scary

To reach out

I want to love

I want to be loved

How do I do this?

How does it happen?

If they get close

I push back

I want them close

But what if they hurt me?

Id' rather pull away

Than be hurt again

It makes me sad

But it feels safe

It think about it

About not running

What would it be like?

Could it be safe?

Maybe one day

I'll be brave

Maybe one day

I'll have a friend

Maybe one day

I'll be loved

*Try not to put  
yourself in a box  
or have false  
expectations  
about how you  
will process your  
grief.*

Submitted by:  
Anonymous

## Self-Kindness

It's not the easiest thing to be kind to ourselves after abuse and sexual trauma. Whether it is after critical thoughts that we've told ourselves, or it is after making a decision that was impulsive that wasn't really our desired choice had it not been an impulsive response. Whatever there is that we are struggling with where we are upset or disappointed in ourselves about, we can be gentle with ourselves.

One example of self-kindness is changing the worst of our messages to ourselves. Instead of "I am so stupid," we can change it to "I feel so stupid but that isn't a fact, it's a feeling." Another example is changing a hopeless message to a hopeful one. "It feels like it's too much, but I can take one step at a time toward feeling better." These reframes may not feel true but they still are true and perhaps with repetition we start to change them more naturally and they will take hold. Filling our minds with truth instead of the lies really helps with self-kindness.

One thing we know about self-kindness is that it is healing. Each time we tell ourselves a message that is positive and healing, it is starting to heal the damage from the trauma. We are unlikely to find this easy or comfortable, particularly at first. As with so many new things though, if we practice it regularly (even on good days), it will get easier and become more natural for us.

Give it a try. Who else would we say to hurtful and critical things to? Why tell us that? Choose self-kindness. It's a win-win scenario.

*Each time we tell ourselves a message that is positive and healing, it is starting to heal the damage from the trauma.*

## Seeing

Seeing myself  
 Feeling lost  
 Struggles with health  
 Oh what cost  
 Striving for wealth  
 Should it all be tossed?

Managing some things  
 Though it's hard  
 Trying to sing  
 Holding a card  
 There is a sting  
 So I'm on guard.

Moving on  
 Moving past  
 It is down  
 Daytime at last  
 No longer a pony  
 The dies been cast

## My Story

The day that I held my child in my arms my world changed. My boyfriend changed. He went from being loving to being this amazing and supportive to being frightening. One minute he was this loving man who treated me with kindness and the next minute he acted like he hated me. He yelled at me telling me I could do nothing right and that I was worthless.

I still needed to lose the weight I gained with my pregnancy but it wasn't fast enough for him. He was disgusted with my body. He started telling me our son wasn't his and that I had cheated on him. He called me names I will never repeat.

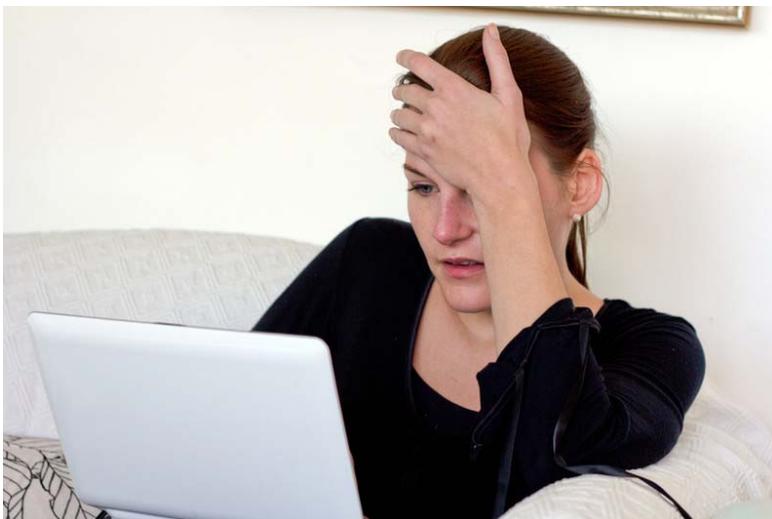
In one day I lost the love of my life and was living with a stranger. I didn't know this man I was with. He had never once raised his voice to me. He had treated me like I was special. That was until my son was born.

The day he put his hands on me was the day I knew it was only going to get worse. That was one of the scariest days of my life. Not only had I totally lost my best friend, but I knew I had to get out. Something inside of me knew I had to get out. Something inside of me knew I wasn't safe, and my son didn't deserve to live like this. I made one of the most difficult decisions of my life.

I don't regret it today. I talked to someone who told me that they wish they had left sooner. They told me their husband had broken her arm twice and threatened to kill her. She said I was lucky I left before anything like that or worse happened to me.

While I lost so much the day I left, I did leave with my life and my son. Today I'm a single mom. I have an amazing son who loves to play, loves his dog, and seems to not have a care in the world. I'm seeking help to deal with the fears of being in another relationship. I'm trying to educate myself about how to know. I've spent a lot of time wondering why I didn't know he was like that. I may never know, but I will be wiser in the future. My son deserves that—maybe I do too.

*While I lost so much the day I left, I did leave with my life and my son.*





**A Quiet Moment**

Submitted by:  
Erin

## Finding Me

I've struggled to figure out who I am. It's very confusing. For a long time my life has been revolved around my trauma. Everything I thought and did revolved around being a victim. The PTSD diagnosis was who I was. I never considered my life outside of that. Everything in my life was seen through those lenses.

I was talking to my counselor and she challenged me to see myself in other ways. She asked about other things in my life. All I could think of was being a student. I've been working on my degree in teaching for a while now. I've almost quite a couple times because my PTSD makes it hard to think. I'm a Chemistry major and am minoring in Biology. I want to teach at the local college. I've struggled to keep up my studies when my flashbacks have been bad. I talked to the disability office at my university, but even with extra time I struggle to keep up at times. My counselor encouraged me to focus on seeing myself as a student, not just a victim of rape. She encouraged me to start seeing myself as capable of becoming the professor I used to dream of becoming.

I guess I stopped living after the assault. I know I stopped dreaming. I just didn't think I could do anything any more. I felt and still feel like damaged goods. It seems like everything reminds me of what I went through. Certain places I have to go by, certain smells, and even sometimes thinking I see him when someone passes by. It's hard to separate me from what happened to me. It's hard to see or even dream of a life I once dreamed of. It's hard to see my worth. It seems my worth has been tied to my capabilities—I'm worthwhile because of what I can do.

Right now I don't feel very capable. I can't even figure out how to get through the memories right now. They can blast me so quickly from nowhere. In the midst of everything, with my counselors encouragement, I'm searching for who I am now. I'm just trying to find me and who I am. I haven't found me yet, but I am looking. Now, if I could figure out where all to look, maybe it would be a bit easier.

*I was talking to  
my counselor and  
she challenged  
me to see myself  
in other ways.*





## **Our 2020 Programming**

### **General Trauma Support**

- Abuse & Sexual Trauma Support Group
- Abuse Prevention in Relationships Workshop (2 hours—offered as demanded)
- Bridge of Hope (Quarterly Trauma and Dissociation newsletter)
- Coping with PTSD Workshop (2 hours—offered 1x per quarter)
- Facebook PTSD & Trauma Support (Private group)
- Grief & Loss Support Group (4 weeks closed group)
- Relapse Prevention & Trauma Support Group (6 weeks closed group)
- Self-Care Workshop (1.5 hours—offered quarterly)

### **Eating Disorders & Trauma**

- Abuse, Bulimia & Sexual Trauma Support Group
- Binge Eating & Trauma (BET) Support Group
- Binge Eating & Trauma—Christian focused (BET-C) Support Group
- Facebook T.E.D. (Trauma, Eating, Disorders) Support (Private group)
- Nourishing Hearts (Bimonthly Eating Disorder & Trauma newsletter)

### **Faith & Trauma Support**

- Faith & Trauma Support Group
- Facebook Faith & Trauma support (Private Group)
- Healing Grace (Coming soon)

### **Ways to get give back**

- Tell others about our support program
- Share your writing or artwork by submitting them to be used in our newsletter
- Help us spread the word to your local area by emailing us names and mailing addresses of local mental health professionals and family physicians that we can send information to

To register for support, visit our Program page at [www.hope4-recovery.org/program.html](http://www.hope4-recovery.org/program.html)

**You Don't Have to Recover Alone!**

#### STATEMENT OF FAITH

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

#### MISSION

The mission of Hope Recovery is to provide Christian-based support 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.

#### Hope Recovery Inc.

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Clinton, IN 47842

E-mail: [recovery@hope4-recovery.org](mailto:recovery@hope4-recovery.org)  
Phone: (765) 505-8908

Office Hours:  
Monday, Wednesday & Friday—3p—7p  
Eastern

Other hours by appointment.

If you're feeling **suicidal**, please contact 800-SUICIDE or if outside the US, go to [www.befrienders.org](http://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 800-799-SAFE. For international contacts, go to [www.hotpeachpages.net/a/index.html](http://www.hotpeachpages.net/a/index.html)

We're on the Web

[www.hope4-recovery.org](http://www.hope4-recovery.org)

Find our newsletters at <http://www.hope4-recovery.org/publications.html>

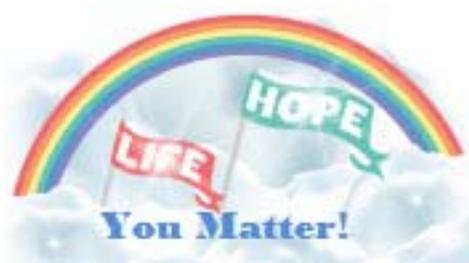
#### Fees:

Free to Survivors.

\$4 donations recommended from supporters and professionals to cover the costs of the website and printed copies.

Donations may be sent to our PO Box, or online via our website.

**You Are  
Not Alone!**



When all seems like a struggle, there is hope.