



# 5 Keys to Healing Childhood Sexual Abuse Trauma

 *Healing Wounds Together*  
Coz We can't do it Alone



# Welcome to Healing Wounds Together!

Our life experiences shape who we are and for some of us, these experiences form a huge part of our identity. Childhood sexual abuse is one of these traumatic experiences.

Having worked with many adults and having experienced it myself for decades, I know the 3 most difficult challenges that adults with CSA face:

- ◆ They are hurting and they are angry.
- ◆ They are unable to create real intimate and sexual connections.
- ◆ They don't trust themselves and they don't trust others.

At the end of it all, they just don't feel safe and that affects every area of their life.

**Childhood sexual abuse impacts all our areas of our lives, from our bodies and muscles to our mind, emotions**

## **Fortunately, healing doesn't have to be traumatic.**

From my own healing journey, I have realised that part of the healing occurs in from a direct therapy (e.g. counselling or hypnotherapy) but there are so many other areas that we can work on and these help accelerate the healing journey.

In this way, the trauma healing doesn't feel overwhelming" because you are doing "little" things in each areas of your life and the combined influence of each of these multiplies in its impact on you.

Here are the 5 key strategies that will help you set a foundation for your healing journey and accelerate the process.

# Before You begin...

When you are feeling anxious, sad or upset, what makes you feel better?

What do you enjoy the most? What is an activity that takes your mind off almost anything?

What do you do to feel calmer? to feel safer?

Why is this important?

**All these types of activities form part of your  
"Resources List".**

Dr. Babette Rothschild, Psychotherapist and specialist in somatic trauma therapy, talks about this in great detail. The healing journey can be long and can be difficult at times; and sometimes, we just want a break from all this stuff.

During those times, the resources list can really come in handy. Because it can help you take a break. It can help you feel calmer. It can help you restore your faith in yourself and in others.

So what does a resources list look like? It consists of the following categories:

- ◆ Activities that you can do by yourself
  - Lighting a candle and watching the flame
  - Go for a walk in the bush (or forest)
  - Have a cry
  - Dance

**A Resources List is your  
"Go-to" guide, in case  
the feelings become  
too intense or out of  
control.**

**It can help you FEEL  
SAFE.**

- Meditate
- Listen to music
- Spend time with your pets
- ◆ Activities that you can do with friends
  - Verbally share your pain and hurt with them
  - Get hugs
  - Ask for support in whatever way feels comfortable to you
  - Do a fun activity together?
- ◆ Activities that you can do with a romantic loved one
  - Go on a date
  - You can ask your loved one to hold you
  - Create intimate time together
  - Spend some quality time together

It could be any or all of these things. The idea is to create a list and keep things handy, just in case you need them. It's perfectly OK to want a break; to want some assurance; to want the love and support. Do remember to warn your friends and loved ones that you are about to do this so that they be more sensitive to your needs.

As a last resort, you also have access to your local medical centres. Know where they are and keep their contact numbers handy.

If you take these steps, you will really prepare yourself for anything and everything that may happen during your healing journey. This will also give some assurance to your brain; and it will allow you to go a little bit further because your brain knows that you have your bases covered.

Peace and Blessings to you

# Key#1 Accept that It Happened

This is one of the most important keys towards healing. If you say things like

“Why didn’t my parents protect me or did this to me?”

“Why did it happen to me?”

“Why am I so messed up?”

Then it is likely that you are resisting what has happened to you and this takes enormous amounts of energy.

**You can free up an insurmountable energy by accepting and surrendering to what has happened...**

We use up so much energy because we don’t want to feel the pain; we don’t want to feel the sadness and we certainly are afraid that if we allow ourselves to feel these feelings then things will get out of control.

As a result, we feel frustrated and we feel angry. We are angry at ourselves and we are angry at others for hurting us, for not protecting us and for affecting our lives so badly.

And it’s perfectly okay to feel anger for a while but these feelings certainly tend to overstay their welcome and tend to cripple our recovery.

**Accepting that it happened is the first key towards healing...**



When you accept, you may feel sad and that's perfectly normal. It is sad when adults sexually abuse little children. Allow yourself to feel sad or even cry if that's what you need to do. Refer to resources list if you need to feel better but otherwise, you can just stay with the sadness...

This will free up a lot of blocked energy inside of you and you will feel so much better for it.



## Key#2 Practice Slow breathing...

Many of us who have experienced childhood sexual abuse can feel erratic at times. Huge upheavals in our emotional state and then a flat line; extreme fear and anxiety and then numbness; anger and frustration and then depression.

It is important to create a practice that allows you to regain your ground, your sense of control and your sense of self.

Meditation, mindfulness and slow breathing are all a form to manage this process.

There are several ways to meditate and to be honest, I found a lot of them very hard to do. For a long time, I couldn't calm my mind and found it really hard to meditate. But then something changed.

**What I learned was that meditation didn't need to be this giant goal that I had to achieve. Meditation simply became a "short break" from day-to-day. It was a time where I didn't have to worry; didn't have to schedule - I could simply be.**

So I listened to music and allowed myself to be completely taken by it. I walked by the beach and allowed the waves to connect with me (forgetting about my day). Even physical exercise such as Yoga or Pilates became a way to meditate. It was a time to simply be; reflect and be with myself.

**Unless you feel safe,  
your mind will not  
allow you to delve into  
healing...**



From this point onward, I stopped fighting with my mind. I stopped trying to calm my mind. I simply engaged in activities that would allow me a sensory experience. What I realised that my mind automatically calmed down without me doing anything.

Then I found Transcendental Meditation (TM), which was also based on the same principle and it worked like a charm.

When I meditate regularly, I am generally less stressed, things bother me less and I am able to live life at a more peaceful level. This to me was the biggest gift.

I have found meditation to be one of foundations of my life. And on this foundation, everything that I do works better and has a more profound effect on me.

I urge you to try.

**Slow Breathing is the key to calming down in the face of anxiety, anger, frustration and other intense feelings.**



# Key#3 Nourish Your Body

For adults who have experienced childhood sexual trauma (or any other trauma), the body and mind become hyper alert. Small signs of trouble would cause the body to trigger all the defence mechanisms and in fact, some of them remain “ON” all the times.

There is a huge cost to this and you may experience some or all of these symptoms.

- ◆ Tense muscles, tight and stiff shoulders; chronic or recurring back pain
- ◆ Lack of Energy
- ◆ Impaired physiological functions – lower immune system, digestive issues etc.

Luckily, there are very simple things you can do to help your body and feel more energy.

## Get your Organ function in Order

Constant production of adrenalin and cortisol (stress hormone) create great strain on the body. Most of the energy is used by these hormones and not much is left for other normal body functions. This is the reason why you feel tired and feel like there is not much left in the body.

While GPs can help, I have found that Naturopaths are the best people to work on this. In particular, Chinese Medicine. Chinese Medicine has allowed me to not rely on adrenalin and cortisol and repair my normal physiological function. As a result, I have huge amounts of energy and my organs are becoming more balanced.

## Eat Nutritious Food

Liver is the epicentre of all toxins removal functions. When you are eating food that is full of toxins and chemicals, then you are most likely burdening your system even more. Eating right food doesn't have to be hard. All it means is do as many of the following that you can:



- ◆ Eat whole food and avoid packaged and processed foods
- ◆ Minimise sugar and alcohol use
- ◆ Avoid soft fizzy drinks
- ◆ Drinks loads of filtered water (that doesn't have chlorine or fluoride)
- ◆ Get as much sunshine as you can get (preferably in the morning)

To make it easy for you to implement, do these only on weekdays and give yourself a break (a small one) over one of the days during the weekends. This way, it won't seem like a chore 😊

## Pilates/Yoga/Fitness

Pilates helps create a muscle balance in the body. You learn about muscle recruitment, learn about how to strengthen your body and get rid of chronic pain.

I used to suffer from chronic back pain, so much so, that I wasn't able to sit down for more than an hour at a time and wasn't able to breathe at times

because the pain was excruciating. Pilates helped me strengthen my core muscles so that I stopped using my back muscles where they weren't needed. I have now been pain free for about 5-6 years now.

**Pilates will allow you to strengthen your muscles, get rid of any chronic pain and create space in your body.**



# Key #4 Retrain your Brain

Our brain is an amazing instrument. It keeps learning and relearning and allows us to change, adapt to new situations in life.

Sometimes though, when we experience traumatic events as children, the brain doesn't have the capacity to process these experiences so it splits the experience into many disconnected parts and sends these to different areas of the brain. Flashbacks, numbness in body, and shutting down as an adult are some of the symptoms of that incomplete processing by the brain.

The healing cannot truly begin until we reprocess and reintegrate these experiences and this is the following therapies can really do wonders.

While I have seen many counsellors and mentors, who have helped me make sense of my behaviour and the impact of trauma on me. For me the transformation occurred when I tried some of the more subconscious level therapies.

- ◆ **Hypnotherapy** is an alternative healing method that is used to create subconscious change in people in the form of new responses, thoughts, attitudes, behaviours or feelings. For me, it has been transformational and the only way my conscious brain could get out of the way for the healing to occur.
- ◆ **Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)** allows reprocessing of the memories in a way that's hard to describe. You don't have to talk about the memories or the abuse because the process is generally internal. When you do this form of therapy, you may notice things — sensations, emotions, or images that may arise as the brain processes the memory.

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- ◆ **Journaling and Automatic Writing** both help tremendously in organising your thoughts, processing memories and experiences and regaining clarity. Automatic Writing is a special form of journaling where you allow your subconscious mind to do the talking. This allows for repressed memories to be processed and you can finally start to let them go.

I don't have enough words to emphasise how important it is to work with the brain to gain the freedom from the impact of abuse.

For me, working with the mind put everything where it belonged – the past in the past and gave me back my present.



# Key #5 Heal the Sexual Scars

When you get a cut or a blister, what do you normally do? Maybe put a Band-Aid or see a doctor or find some other means of healing the wound.

Sexual abuse leaves us with sexual scars that also need the same amount of tender love and care that we give to our physical wounds. Sometimes though we are so burdened by our lack of sexuality that we forget that it can be healed.

Which one of these symptoms resonate with your experience?

- ◆ Feeling ashamed of your sexuality
- ◆ Lack of full sexual expression
- ◆ Feeling unsafe with intimacy
- ◆ Not able to trust your partners
- ◆ Not able to respect your own boundaries and not being able to say No
- ◆ Numbness or detachment from emotions.

Working on these will allow you to not only heal these sexual scars but also embrace your whole self so you can experience the life in your own fullness.

Here are some of the key things you can do to heal these scars:

## Intimacy and Sexuality Workshops

I had to go to basics and start all over again. What did I really want? Who was I and what kind of woman was I?

By attending these workshops, I was not only able to learn about my own sexuality but also learned and gained support from other women and men alike and was able to experience myself in ways that I hadn't known before.

## Bodywork

This term is used more generically and is any therapeutic or personal development technique that involves working with body. The way I experienced it was based on breath work and energy medicine.

In the body work, the practitioner will make light contact with various points on the body, resulting in one or all of the following;

- ◆ Feel the natural flow of energy in the body
- ◆ Release previously held tension in the body
- ◆ Awaken your connection with the body.

For me, body work was crucial in reclaiming my sexuality and accepting my beautiful woman self.

And once I did, the world changed – literally!!



# In the End...

We are all unique and we all have our own way of healing and reclaiming ourselves. By sharing my experiences and my healing journey, I hope that I inspire you to embark upon one.

I hope that you believe that

## **IT'S POSSIBLE TO HEAL**

And once you do, the universe will shower you with all the resources that you need and exactly when you need them.

Good luck!

### **Disclaimer:**

I acknowledge that some of the content in this eBook can be challenging, if you have gone through any form of trauma or abuse. I strongly recommend that you seek professional support, should you find yourself distressed and unable to manage what has been brought up for you. If you are feeling suicidal or wishing to harm yourself or others in any way, please contact your nearest medical emergency services.

Please also note that I am not a therapist. I draw upon my experiences and years of research to help you take charge of your own healing. If you are looking for a therapist, please contact your local medical centre.