

Understanding Trauma in the Justice System

Brian L. Meyer, Ph.D.
Consultant and Trainer

Assistant Professor
VCU Department of Psychiatry
Richmond, VA

April 30, 2025

Resources

Assessments for Trauma

ACE questionnaire

<http://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Finding Your ACE Score.pdf>

Life Events Checklist 5

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/documents/LEC-5_Standard_Self-report.pdf

International Trauma Questionnaire

<https://www.traumameasuresglobal.com/itq>

Resources for PTSD

- *Handbook of PTSD, 2nd ed.* (2014), Matthew Friedman, Terence Keane, and Patricia Resick
- *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (2014), Bessel van der Kolk
- *Trauma and Recovery* (1993), Judith Herman
- *The PTSD Workbook: Simple, Effective Techniques for Overcoming Traumatic Stress Symptoms, 2nd ed.* (2013), Mary Beth Williams and Soili Poijula

Resources for PTSD

- National Center for PTSD: www.ptsd.va.gov
- International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies: www.istss.org
- International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation: www.isst-d.org
- PTSD 101 courses:
www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/ptsd101/course-modules.asp
http://mghcme.org/courses/course_detail/from_the_war_zone_to_the_home_front_supporting_the_mental_health_of_veteran

Complex Trauma Resources

Trauma and Recovery (1993), Judith Herman

Treating Complex Traumatic Stress Disorders (2009), Christine Courtois and Julian Ford, eds.

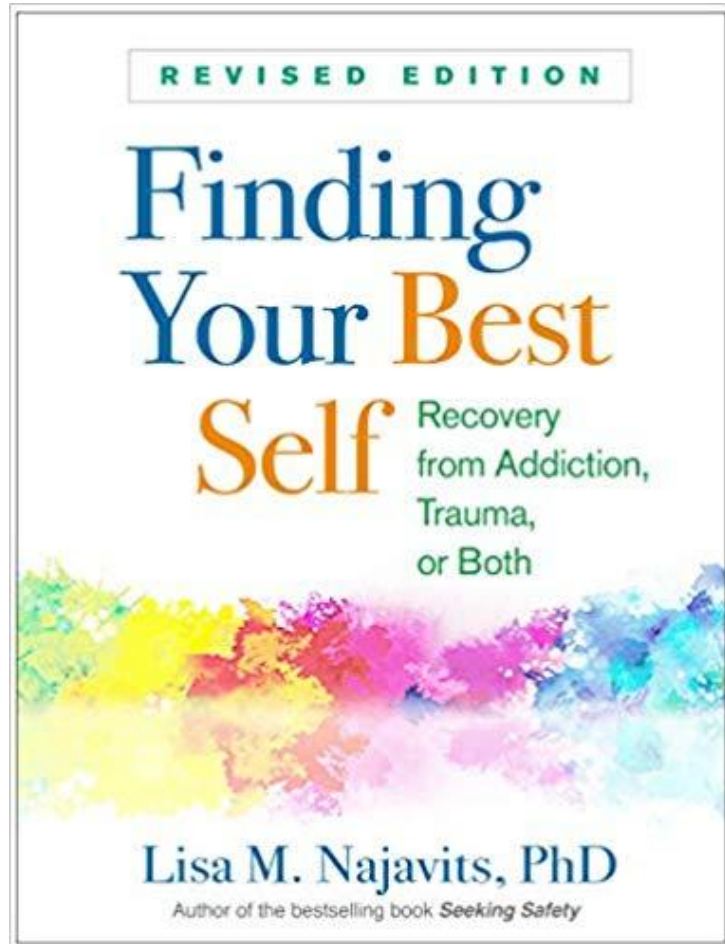
Treating Complex Traumatic Stress Disorders in Children and Adolescents: Scientific Foundations and Therapeutic Models (2013), Christine Courtois and Julian Ford, eds.

Treatment of Complex Trauma: A Sequenced, Relationship-Based Approach (2012), Christine Courtois, Julian Ford, and John Briere

PTSD and Substance Abuse

- *Trauma and Substance Abuse (2nd ed.)* by Page Ouimette and Jennifer Read
- PTSD 101 course about treating PTSD and SUDs:
www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/ptsd101/course-modules/SUD.asp
- Practice recommendations for treating co-occurring PTSD and SUDs: [www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/handouts-pdf/SUD PTSD Practice Recommend.pdf](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/handouts-pdf/SUD_PTSD_Practice_Recommend.pdf)

Seeking Safety



Seeking Safety (2002), Lisa Najavits

Finding Your Best Self (2019), Lisa Najavits

<http://www.treatment-innovations.org/seeking-safety.html>

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

- *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan
- *DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd edition* by Marsha Linehan
- *DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, 2nd edition* by Marsha Linehan
- <http://www.behavioraltech.com>
- <http://www.linehaninstitute.org>

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

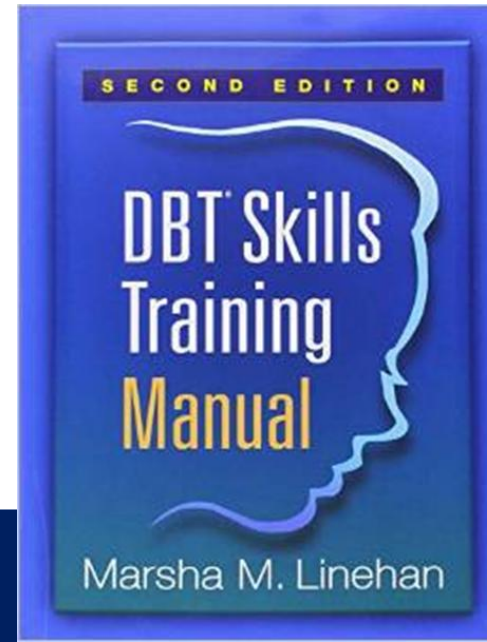
Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder (1993), Marsha Linehan

DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Ed. (2014), Marsha Linehan

DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, 2nd Ed. (2014), Marsha Linehan

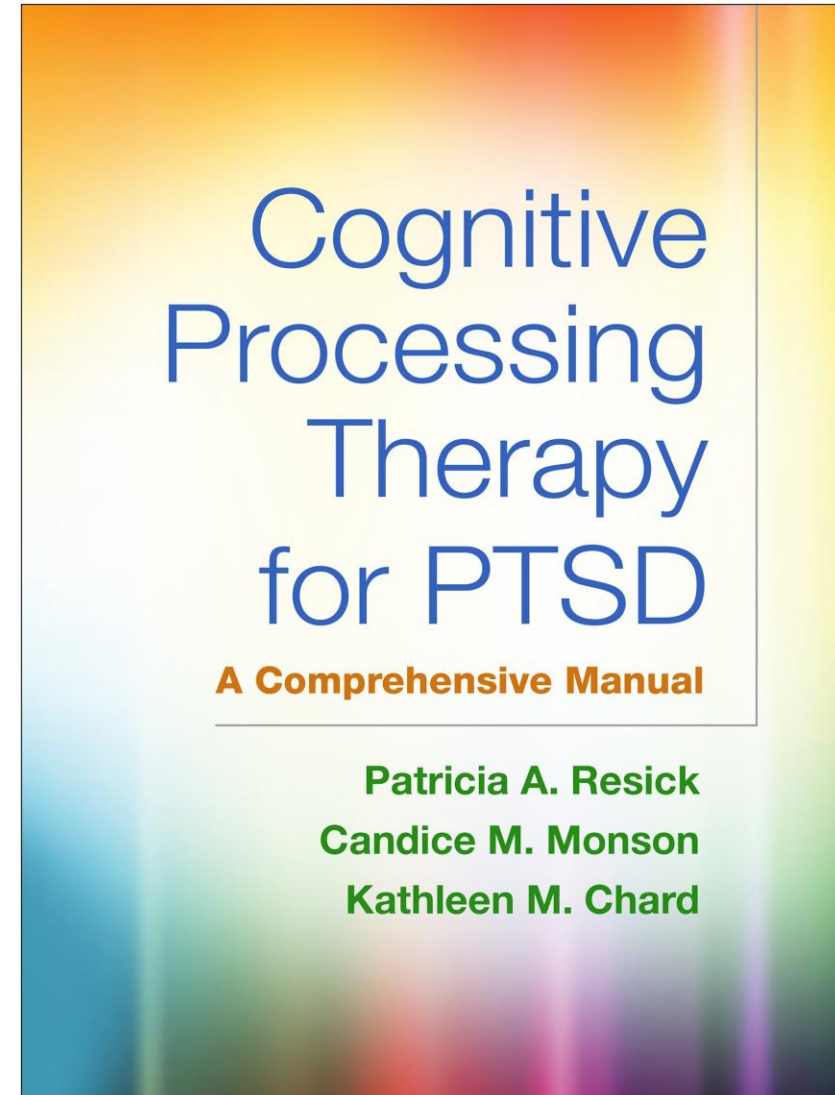
<http://www.behavioraltech.com>

<http://www.linehaninstitute.org/>



Cognitive Processing Therapy

Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD: A Comprehensive Manual by Patricia Resick, Candice Monson, and Kathleen Chard

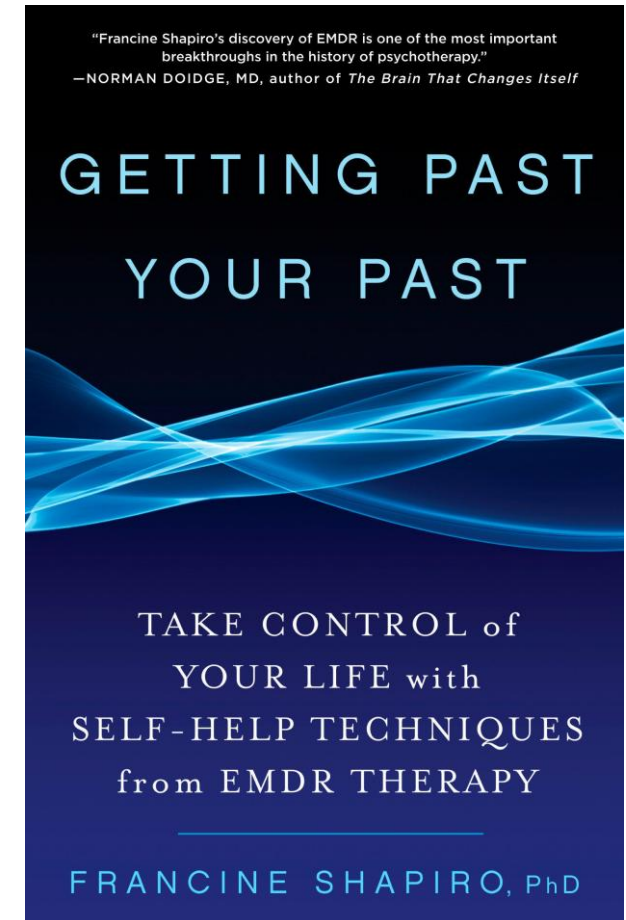


Prolonged Exposure

- *Prolonged Exposure Therapy for PTSD: Emotional Processing of Traumatic Experiences Therapist Guide* (2007), Edna Foa, Elizabeth Hembree, and Barbara Rothbaum
- *Reclaiming Your Life from a Traumatic Experience: A Prolonged Exposure Treatment Program Workbook* (2007), Barbara Rothbaum, Edna Foa, and Elizabeth Hembree

EMDR

- *Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR): Basic Principles, Protocols, and Procedures, 2nd Ed.* (2001), Francine Shapiro
- *Getting Past Your Past: Take Control of Your Life with Self-Help Techniques from EMDR Therapy* (2013), Francine Shapiro
- www.emdr.com
- www.emdria.org
- www.emdrhap.org



DRAFT for review and comment

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF TRAUMA-INFORMED JUDICIAL PRACTICE

WHAT EVERY JUDGE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT TRAUMA

As a judge with a treatment or problem-solving court, you probably know that many people who appear before you have experienced violence or other traumatic events. In fact, the experience of trauma among people with substance abuse and mental health disorders, especially those involved with the justice system, is so high as to be considered an almost universal experience.



What you may not know is that these trauma experiences affect the person's physical health, mental health, and ability to respond successfully to treatment and other interventions. The stress of the courtroom environment may also affect the ability of trauma survivors to communicate effectively with you and court personnel. Many judges have come to recognize that acknowledging and understanding the impact of trauma on court participants may lead to more successful interactions and outcomes.

Recognizing the impact of past trauma on treatment court participants does not mean that you must be both judge and treatment provider. Rather, trauma awareness is an opportunity to make small adjustments that improve judicial outcomes while minimizing avoidable challenges and conflict during and after hearings. This issue brief provides information, specific strategies, and resources that many treatment court judges have found beneficial.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL TO HEALTH • PREVENTION WORKS • TREATMENT IS EFFECTIVE • PEOPLE RECOVER

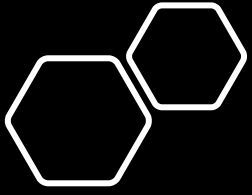


Trauma-Informed Courts

Essential Components of Trauma-Informed Judicial Practice, SAMHSA. Retrieved from http://www.nasmhpd.org/sites/default/files/Judges_Essential_5%201%202013finaldraft.pdf

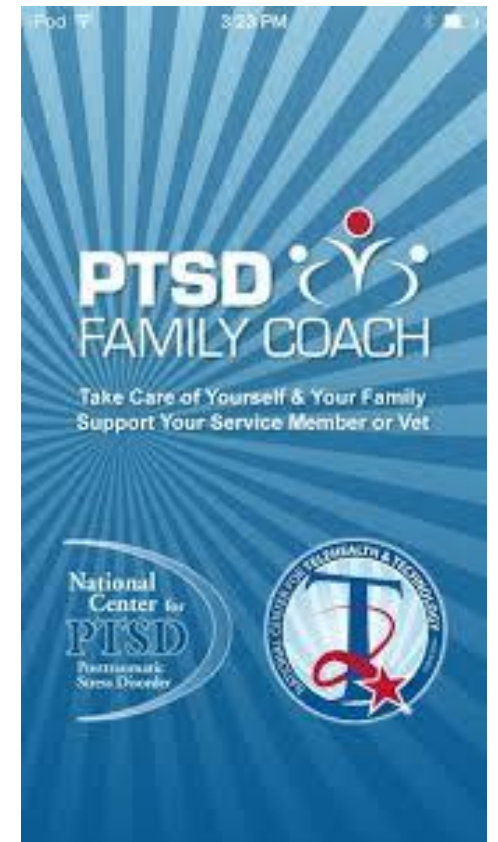
Also valuable: *TIP 57: Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services*, SAMHSA, available at www.store.samhsa.gov.

SAMHSA www.samhsa.gov



Self-Help Mobile Applications

- PTSD Coach
- PTSD Family Coach



Contact:

Brian L. Meyer, Ph.D.

brianlmeyerphd@gmail.com