

FINDING ANCHOR

A Trauma-Informed Mini Guide

An Introduction to Understanding Trauma
and Building Inner Safety



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Introduction: Welcome to Your Healing Journey

Dear Reader,

If you have found your way to these pages, something within you is stirring—a quiet knowing that there might be another way to exist in this world, one that does not require you to carry such heavy burdens alone. Perhaps you picked up this guide during a moment when the weight of your experiences felt overwhelming, or maybe someone who cares about you suggested you might find comfort and understanding here.

Whatever brought you to this moment, please know this: you belong here, exactly as you are right now.

This mini guide offers you three carefully selected chapters from the complete book *Finding Anchor: A Gentle Guide to Beginning Your Healing Journey*. These chapters provide a foundational introduction to trauma-informed healing, offering essential concepts and practical tools to help you begin this sacred work of returning home to yourself.

This is not just another book about trauma or healing techniques. This is an invitation into a different kind of relationship with yourself—one built on compassion rather than criticism, curiosity rather than judgment, and the deep understanding that your responses to life's challenges make perfect sense within the context of what you have experienced.

You Are Not Broken

Before we go any further, I want you to hear something that may feel foreign but is absolutely true: you are not broken. You never were broken. The responses that have carried you through difficult times—the hypervigilance, the protective walls, the ways you learned to survive—these are not flaws to fix. They are evidence of your remarkable capacity to adapt, endure, and keep going when life felt impossible.

Your nervous system has been working tirelessly to keep you safe, often in ways that made perfect sense given what you have experienced. The patterns that may now feel limiting or painful were once acts of incredible intelligence and creativity. Understanding this can fundamentally shift how you see yourself and your journey.



What This Guide Offers

In these pages, you will discover a gentle introduction to trauma-informed healing that honors both the wisdom of your experiences and your innate capacity for growth. This is not about rushing toward some idealized version of healing, nor is it a prescription for how your journey should unfold. Instead, think of this as sitting with a trusted guide around a campfire—someone who understands the territory you are navigating and believes deeply in your ability to find your way home to yourself.

Within this guide, you will explore:

A compassionate understanding of trauma that moves beyond clinical definitions to honor the lived experience of what it means when life presents us with more than our systems can process in the moment.

Practical tools for building inner safety that you can begin using today—small practices that support your nervous system without overwhelming it.

A new relationship with your body that honors its wisdom and communications rather than treating physical responses as problems to be solved.

Permission to heal at your own pace, with the understanding that some days will feel like progress and others like rest, and both are necessary parts of your journey.

A Safe Harbor in Uncertain Waters

Healing does not require you to relive your pain or expose wounds that are not ready for light. It does not demand that you forgive, forget, or “get over” anything according to someone else's timeline. Instead, it invites you to become curious about your own experience with the same tenderness you might offer to any being who has survived difficult seasons. Think of this guide as creating a safe harbor—a place where you can anchor yourself when the waters of healing feel choppy or uncertain. Here, there is no judgment about how long you need to rest, no pressure to set sail before you are ready, and no comparison to how others navigate their journeys. Your healing belongs entirely to you. It will unfold in its own time, in its own way, honoring both your strength and your tenderness.

Finding Your Anchor

Throughout this guide, we will return to the metaphor of finding anchor—that sense of internal steadiness that can help you remain grounded even when life's storms feel overwhelming. Your anchor is not something you need to search for outside yourself; it lives within you, waiting to be remembered and cultivated with gentle attention.

Finding anchor does not mean achieving a state where you never feel triggered or struggle with difficult emotions. Instead, it means developing a sense of internal refuge—a place within yourself that remains relatively steady even when your outer world or inner experience becomes turbulent.

You do not need to have all the answers right now. You do not need to feel ready or strong or certain. You simply need to be willing to take this one gentle step forward, trusting that your system knows how to heal when given the right conditions of safety and support.

Your courage to begin—even by reading these words—is already evidence of your resilience. Your willingness to explore is already a form of self-compassion. And your presence here, in this moment, is already enough.

If this gentle approach to healing resonates with you, know that you do not have to walk this path alone. At Anchor Point Counseling Center, we understand that healing is not about fixing people, but about helping them feel safe enough to rest, reconnect, and remember who they truly are.

Welcome to your journey home to yourself.

Chapter 1: What Is Trauma, Really?

The word “trauma” carries so much weight, doesn't it? Perhaps you have heard it used in clinical settings or read about it in articles, and wondered if it truly applies to your experience. Maybe you have thought, “But what happened to me wasn't *that* bad,” or “Other people have been through so much worse.” Or perhaps the word feels too big, too clinical, too... something to fully embrace as part of your story.

If you have found yourself in this space of wondering and questioning, you are not alone. The word trauma can feel both too heavy and somehow not quite right at the same time. It can bring up feelings of vulnerability, confusion, or even resistance. All of these responses are completely natural and welcome here.

Beyond the Clinical Definition

When we strip away the clinical language and academic theories, trauma is really quite simple: it is what happens inside us when life presents us with more than our nervous system can process in the moment. It is not necessarily about the size or type of event—it is about what occurred within you when your system became overwhelmed.

Think of your nervous system as an exquisitely sensitive instrument, designed to keep you safe and help you navigate the world. When something happens that feels too big, too fast, too much, or too overwhelming for your system to integrate, that experience can become stored in your body and nervous system in fragments. These fragments carry the emotional, physical, and sensory memories of those moments when you felt powerless, unsafe, or alone.

Trauma is not just about what happened to you—it is also about what did not happen. The comfort that was not offered when you needed it most. The safety that was not consistently available. The attunement that was missing during crucial moments of development. Sometimes the absence of what we needed can shape our nervous system just as profoundly as the presence of what harmed us.

This understanding aligns with current trauma research, which recognizes that traumatic stress responses occur when an individual's capacity to cope is overwhelmed, regardless of the objective severity of the event (van der Kolk, 2014).

The Garden of Your Inner Landscape

Imagine your inner world as a garden that has weathered many seasons. Some parts of this garden are lush and vibrant, places where you received enough light, water, and care to flourish. These are your areas of resilience, creativity, and strength—they represent the parts of you that remained connected to your essential aliveness.

Other areas of your garden might look different. Perhaps there are patches where the soil became compacted during harsh storms, making it difficult for new growth to emerge. Maybe there are corners where protective thorns grew thick around tender shoots, or areas where growth stopped altogether during particularly difficult seasons.

The storms that shaped your garden were not your fault. Your nervous system, like any living thing, adapted to survive whatever weather came its way. Those thorns that might feel painful now? They once protected something precious. The areas that feel barren or hardened? They were doing their best to endure when resources were scarce.

Trauma lives in these adapted places of your inner garden. It is not a permanent scar or a life sentence—it is more like weather-worn soil that, with gentle tending, can learn to receive nourishment again. The goal is not to erase the evidence of past storms, but to create conditions where all parts of your garden can begin to thrive once more.

How Your System Learned to Protect You

Your body holds memory in ways that your mind might not fully understand. Perhaps you have noticed that certain sounds make you feel instantly on edge, or that your chest tightens in seemingly safe situations. Maybe you find yourself feeling overwhelmed in crowded spaces, or you notice your thoughts racing even when everything appears calm.

These responses are not signs that something is wrong with you—they are evidence of a nervous system that learned to stay alert, to scan for danger, to protect you in the best ways it knew how. Your body became incredibly skilled at survival, even if some of those skills feel uncomfortable or confusing now.

When your system detects something that reminds it of past danger, it does not stop to consult your conscious mind. It does not ask, “Do you remember what happened the last time we encountered something like this?” Instead, it immediately begins preparing your body to respond.

The Four Survival Responses

Your system has four primary ways of responding when it senses potential danger:

Fight - Your body floods with energy to push back, resist, or protect yourself. You might feel anger, irritation, or a sudden urge to argue or defend yourself, even in relatively minor situations.

Flight - Your system prepares to escape or avoid. You might feel restless, anxious, or have an overwhelming urge to leave certain situations. Your thoughts might race as your body gets ready to move.

Freeze - Sometimes the wisest response is to become very still, to fade into the background, or to disconnect from what is happening. You might feel numb, spacey, or like you are watching your life from outside your body.

Fawn - Your system tries to prevent harm by appeasing, pleasing, or accommodating the perceived threat. You might find yourself automatically saying yes when you want to say no, trying to make others happy at your own expense, or becoming overly helpful or compliant to avoid conflict or rejection.

The fawn response often develops when fighting back feels impossible, escaping is not an option, and freezing might draw unwanted attention. It is your nervous system's way of trying to create safety through connection and compliance, even when that connection feels one-sided or costly to your own wellbeing.

None of these responses are choices you make consciously, and none of them are wrong. They are all intelligent responses that your nervous system learned to keep you safe. This understanding is supported by Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, which explains how our autonomic nervous system automatically selects survival strategies based on our perception of safety or threat (Porges, 2011).

Everyone's Experience Is Valid

One of the most important things to understand about trauma is that it is not a competition. There is no hierarchy of suffering, no threshold you must cross to deserve compassion or support. Your nervous system does not compare your experiences to anyone else's before deciding how to respond.

If your system became overwhelmed, if you learned to adapt in ways that protected you but now feel limiting, if you carry the residue of times when you felt powerless or unsafe—then you belong in conversations about healing, regardless of how your story compares to others.

Complex trauma, in particular, often develops not from single dramatic events, but from ongoing patterns of overwhelm, neglect, or emotional unavailability. It can be harder to identify because it weaves itself into the fabric of who you became, making it difficult to separate what feels “normal” from what might actually be the lingering effects of a nervous system that learned to survive rather than thrive.

Gentle Exploration: Beginning to Notice

As you begin to explore your own relationship with trauma, remember that there is no pressure to dive deep or uncover everything at once. This is simply an invitation to notice with kindness.

Take a moment to imagine your inner landscape as a garden. Without judgment, simply notice: What parts feel vibrant and alive? What areas might feel more guarded or protected? What would it mean to tend to your garden with the same patience you might offer to any living thing that has weathered difficult seasons?

Consider this question with curiosity rather than judgment: In what ways might your nervous system have learned to protect you? Perhaps you developed a keen ability to read other people's emotions, or maybe you learned to make yourself very small in certain situations. Maybe you became incredibly self-reliant, or perhaps you learned to stay busy to avoid difficult feelings.

Whatever adaptations you notice, can you offer them gratitude for the ways they served you, even if they feel less helpful now?

Moving Forward with Compassion

Understanding trauma is not about pathologizing your experience or finding something to fix. It is about developing a compassionate relationship with the parts of yourself that learned to survive and beginning to create conditions where those same parts can learn to feel safe enough to thrive.

Your story matters. Your responses make sense. And your willingness to explore these tender territories with curiosity and compassion is already an act of profound courage and self-love.

As we continue this journey together, remember that healing is not about erasing your history or becoming someone entirely different. It is about integrating all parts of your experience with tenderness, creating space for both your wounds and your wisdom to coexist.

Anchor Phrase:

“My responses make perfect sense. My system has been working tirelessly to protect what matters most. I can explore my story with the same tenderness I would offer to any living thing that has survived difficult seasons.”

If you are recognizing yourself in these words and feeling ready to explore your own trauma responses with professional support, this is exactly the kind of compassionate, trauma-informed approach we offer at Anchor Point Counseling Center. You do not have to make sense of this alone.

Chapter 6: Building Safety from the Inside Out

If the word “safety” feels foreign on your tongue, if the very concept seems like something other people experience but not you, please know that you are not alone. When trauma has been woven into the fabric of your life—especially if it happened in relationships that were supposed to provide protection—the idea of feeling truly safe can seem almost mythical.

Perhaps you have learned to navigate the world with a constant undercurrent of vigilance, never fully relaxing because experience taught you that letting your guard down was dangerous. Maybe you have become so skilled at reading danger signals that you have forgotten what genuine calm feels like in your body. Or perhaps you have built such strong walls around yourself that even you sometimes feel locked out of your own inner world.

If any of this resonates, this chapter is an invitation to begin exploring a different kind of safety—not the external safety that depends on other people or circumstances beyond your control, but an inner refuge that you can begin to cultivate within yourself, regardless of what is happening around you.

What Inner Safety Really Means

Inner safety is not about pretending that the world is always safe or that you should let your guard down in genuinely dangerous situations. Your ability to sense and respond to real threats is a precious survival skill that deserves to be honored. Inner safety is something different—it is about creating a sense of steadiness and refuge within yourself that exists alongside your natural protective instincts.

Think of inner safety as a quiet place within you that remains relatively calm even when your outer world feels chaotic. It is like having a peaceful room in your house where you can retreat when the rest of the house gets noisy or overwhelming. This inner room does not eliminate the noise, but it provides you with a place to rest and gather yourself before deciding how to respond to what is happening outside.

Inner safety includes several interwoven elements:

Nervous System Regulation - This is your body's ability to return to a state of calm after being activated by stress or perceived threats. It is like having an internal thermostat that can readjust itself after being disrupted.

Self-Trust - This involves learning to trust your own perceptions, feelings, and instincts. It means knowing that you can rely on yourself to notice what you need and to advocate for your own wellbeing.

Emotional Boundaries - These are your internal guidelines for what you will and will not accept in your relationships and environment. They are like having a wise inner voice that can say, “This feels okay to me” or “This does not feel right, and I need to protect myself somehow.”

Present Moment Awareness - This is the ability to recognize when you are here, now, in this moment, rather than caught in memories of the past or worries about the future.

These concepts align with current research in trauma therapy, which emphasizes the importance of developing internal resources and self-regulation skills as foundational to healing (Dana, 2018; Levine, 2010).

The Layered Journey of Building Safety

Creating inner safety is like tending a garden—it happens slowly, season by season, with patient attention and gentle care. You cannot force a plant to grow faster by pulling on its leaves, and you cannot rush your nervous system into feeling safe by demanding that it let go of its protective vigilance all at once.

Your system learned to be hypervigilant or shut down for very good reasons. It may take time for it to believe that you now have resources, support, and skills that were not available when those protective patterns first developed. This is not a failure on your part—it is evidence of a nervous system that takes its job of protecting you very seriously.

Some days, inner safety might feel like a distant concept, something you can understand intellectually but cannot quite feel in your body. Other days, you might catch glimpses of it—brief moments when your shoulders relax, when you take a full breath without thinking about it, or when you feel genuinely present in your own skin. Both experiences are completely normal and valuable parts of this journey.

Simple Practices for Cultivating Inner Steadiness

The following practices are invitations, not assignments. They are gentle ways to begin befriending your nervous system and creating small moments of internal calm. Start with whichever one feels most accessible, and remember that even tiny shifts can be meaningful.

Practice 1: The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

This practice helps bring you into the present moment by engaging your senses, which can interrupt spiraling thoughts or overwhelming emotions. When you notice yourself feeling activated or disconnected, you can slowly and gently:

- Notice 5 things you can see around you
- Notice 4 things you can physically feel (your feet on the floor, the temperature of the air, the texture of your clothing)
- Notice 3 things you can hear
- Notice 2 things you can smell
- Notice 1 thing you can taste

Move through this practice slowly, with curiosity rather than urgency. The goal is not to fix how you are feeling, but to create a gentle bridge back to the present moment where your resources are available to you.

Practice 2: Compassionate Self-Talk

The way you speak to yourself in difficult moments has a profound impact on your nervous system's ability to regulate. If you have learned to be harsh or critical with yourself when you are struggling, this practice invites you to experiment with a different approach.

When you notice yourself in distress, try placing a hand on your heart or another comforting place on your body, and speaking to yourself the way you might speak to a dear friend who was having a hard time. You might say:

“This is really hard right now, and it makes sense that I am struggling.”

“I am doing the best I can with what I have right now.”

“I can be gentle with myself while I figure out what I need.”

“My feelings make sense, even if they feel overwhelming.”

The words matter less than the tone—can you offer yourself the same kindness you would naturally extend to someone you care about? This approach is supported by research on self-compassion, which shows that treating ourselves with kindness activates the parasympathetic nervous system and promotes emotional regulation (Neff, 2011).

Practice 3: Creating an Inner Safe Place

Your imagination can be a powerful resource for creating a felt sense of safety, even when your external environment feels chaotic or uncertain. This practice involves using your mind's ability to create a sense of refuge.

Close your eyes if that feels comfortable or soften your gaze toward the ground. Imagine a place—real or imagined—where you feel completely safe and at peace. This might be a place from your childhood, somewhere in nature, or a completely imaginary sanctuary. Notice what makes this place feel safe: the lighting, the sounds, the temperature, what you can see and feel there.

You can return to this inner safe place anytime you need a moment of refuge. With practice, you might find that just thinking about this place can help activate your sense of inner calm.



When Safety Feels Impossible

There may be times when none of these practices feel accessible, when the very idea of safety feels triggering or when your system is too activated or shut down to engage with these gentle approaches. This does not mean you are doing anything wrong or that these practices do not work—it means your nervous system is in a state where it needs different kinds of support.

During these times, the most healing thing you can do might be to simply acknowledge what is happening without trying to fix it: “I am really activated right now and nothing feels safe. This is hard, and I do not need to change it right now.” Sometimes the path to safety begins with accepting where you are rather than trying to be somewhere else.

Building inner safety does not mean you have to do everything alone—it often develops most naturally in the context of supportive relationships, whether with trusted friends, family members, or professional support.

Honoring Your Pace

Building inner safety is not about reaching a destination where you feel completely safe all the time. It is about developing a relationship with yourself that includes compassion for your struggles, respect for your protective instincts, and gentle encouragement for the parts of you that are ready to try trusting again.

Your timeline for developing inner safety does not need to match anyone else's expectations, including your own. Some days you might feel connected to your sense of inner refuge; other days that refuge might feel unreachable. Both experiences are normal and valuable parts of your healing journey.

What matters most is the intention to treat yourself with kindness as you navigate this process. Each time you choose gentleness over self-criticism, each moment you pause to notice what you need rather than pushing through regardless of cost, each instance when you honor your own pace rather than forcing yourself to move faster—these are all acts of building inner safety.

Your nervous system is always listening to how you treat yourself, always gathering evidence about whether you can be trusted to provide care and protection. The kindness you show yourself in this process becomes the foundation upon which deeper healing can grow.

Anchor Phrase:

“I am learning to create safety within myself, one gentle moment at a time. My nervous system can trust that I am committed to treating myself with compassion and respect. I honor my own pace and celebrate each small step toward inner peace.”

The practices in this chapter are just the beginning of what is possible when you begin to cultivate inner safety. If you are feeling called to explore this work more deeply with professional support, know that creating conditions for genuine safety and healing is at the heart of everything we do at Anchor Point Counseling Center.

Chapter 9: The Body Is a Guide, Not the Enemy

If the idea of “being in your body” feels foreign, frightening, or even impossible, you are not alone. For many trauma survivors, the body has become a place that feels unsafe—a source of unpredictable sensations, overwhelming emotions, or painful memories. Perhaps you have learned to live primarily in your mind, staying busy with thoughts and tasks to avoid the messiness of physical sensation. Maybe your body feels like a stranger, or worse, like an enemy that betrays you with panic attacks, chronic pain, or emotional floods when you least expect them.

If you have spent years disconnected from your physical self, or if you have come to view your body's responses as problems to be solved rather than communications to be understood, this chapter offers a gentle invitation to consider a different relationship. What if your body is not working against you, but for you? What if those sensations and responses that feel so overwhelming or confusing are actually attempts at communication from a wise system that never stopped trying to keep you safe?

This is not about forcing yourself to feel comfortable in your body overnight, or pretending that physical sensations are not sometimes genuinely difficult to tolerate. It is about beginning to explore the possibility that your body—with all its struggles and strange responses—might actually be your ally in healing, not the obstacle you need to overcome.

When the Body Becomes Unsafe Territory

Trauma often disrupts the natural trust and partnership that is meant to exist between your mind and body. When overwhelming experiences happen, especially those that involve physical violation, medical trauma, or chronic stress, your relationship with your physical self can become complicated in ways that feel both protective and painful.

You might have learned to disconnect from your body because staying present to physical sensation felt dangerous. Perhaps being embodied meant feeling pain, fear, or helplessness that was too much to bear. Maybe you discovered that “leaving your body”—dissociating, numbing out, or living primarily in your thoughts—was the only way to survive experiences that felt impossible to endure while remaining present.

Some trauma survivors find that their bodies seem to have minds of their own, responding to perceived threats with fight, flight, freeze, or fawn responses that feel disproportionate to the current situation. Others experience chronic pain, fatigue, or illness that seems to have no clear medical explanation. Still others feel nothing at all—a numbness that, while protecting them from pain, also disconnects them from pleasure, intuition, and the grounding presence that comes from being at home in your own skin.

If any of this resonates with your experience, please know that your body's responses—whether they involve hypervigilance, numbness, pain, or unpredictable emotional reactions—make perfect sense. Your nervous system and physical body learned to adapt to circumstances that required extraordinary measures for survival. The very responses that now feel problematic were once intelligent solutions to impossible situations.

This understanding aligns with research in somatic trauma therapy, which recognizes that the body holds implicit memory of traumatic experiences and that healing often requires addressing these somatic responses (Levine, 2010; van der Kolk, 2014).

Your Body as a Loyal Guardian

Imagine for a moment that your body is like a devoted guardian who has been watching over you since birth. This guardian has one primary job: to keep you alive and functioning, no matter what. It does not have access to the same information your thinking mind does—it cannot read social cues, understand complex relationships, or make rational assessments about current safety versus past danger. Instead, it operates from a much more primitive but equally important wisdom: the wisdom of survival.

When this guardian senses potential threat—whether from external circumstances or internal memories and associations—it immediately mobilizes your body's resources to protect you. It might flood you with adrenaline to help you run or fight, or it might shut down non-essential systems to help you endure what cannot be escaped. It might create tension in your muscles to help you brace against impact, or it might disconnect you from sensation altogether to protect you from feeling more than you can handle.

Your body's guardian does not always get it right from your current perspective. It might sound alarms when you are actually safe, or it might prepare for battles that do not need fighting. But its intentions are always protective, always in service of your survival and wellbeing, based on the information it has gathered from your life experiences.

Understanding your body as a loyal guardian rather than a malfunctioning machine can fundamentally shift how you relate to even the most uncomfortable physical sensations and responses. Instead of fighting against your body's reactions, you can begin to appreciate them as communications from a system that has been working tirelessly to keep you alive and functioning, even under the most challenging circumstances.

The Body's Language of Sensation

Your body communicates through sensation the way your mind communicates through thoughts. Just as your thoughts carry information about your fears, hopes, memories, and perceptions, your bodily sensations carry information about your nervous system's state, your emotional landscape, and your needs for safety and care.

The language of the body includes:

Tension and Tightness - Often your body's way of bracing against perceived threat or holding emotions that feel too big to fully feel. The clenched jaw might be holding anger that did not feel safe to express; the tight shoulders might be carrying the weight of responsibilities that feel overwhelming.

Restlessness and Agitation - Your nervous system's way of mobilizing energy for action when it senses the need to fight or flee. This activation is not always about immediate physical danger—it might be responding to emotional overwhelm, interpersonal conflict, or even positive stress that feels too intense.

Numbness and Disconnection - Your system's protective strategy when staying present feels too dangerous or overwhelming. This is not a failure of your body—it is a sophisticated survival response that helped you endure what might otherwise have been unbearable.

Expansion and Ease - Your body's way of communicating safety, pleasure, and wellbeing. The soft belly, the relaxed shoulders, the deeper breath—these are your body's way of saying “It is safe to rest here.”

Learning to listen to these communications does not mean accepting all physical sensations as permanent or unchangeable. It means developing curiosity about what your body might be trying to tell you, rather than immediately trying to stop or fix whatever you are feeling.

Gentle Ways to Begin Reconnecting

If you have been disconnected from your body for a long time, reconnection needs to happen slowly and with tremendous gentleness. Your system learned to disconnect for very good reasons, and it will only feel safe to reconnect when it trusts that you can handle whatever emerges.

Practice 1: The Hand on Heart

This simple practice can help you begin to establish a sense of safety and connection with your body without feeling overwhelming. Place one hand gently on your heart and one hand on your belly. You do not need to breathe in any particular way or feel anything specific—simply rest your hands there and notice whatever you notice.

Some people feel warmth, others feel their heartbeat, and still others feel nothing at all initially. All of these responses are perfectly normal. The practice is simply about creating a moment of gentle contact between your conscious awareness and your physical body, like offering a friendly hello to a part of yourself you have not connected with in a while.

Practice 2: Noticing Without Changing

This practice involves developing the skill of observing your body's state without immediately trying to fix or change anything. Several times throughout your day, you might pause and gently ask yourself: “What is my body experiencing right now?”

Notice your breathing without trying to breathe differently. Notice the temperature of your skin, the position of your shoulders, the feeling of your feet on the ground. Notice areas of tension or relaxation, comfort or discomfort, energy or fatigue.

The key is to practice pure observation—noticing what is present without judgment and without the immediate impulse to change it. This helps your nervous system learn that awareness does not always lead to demands or criticism, which can help make embodied presence feel safer over time.

When Reconnection Feels Scary

It is completely normal for reconnecting with your body to bring up uncomfortable sensations, emotions, or memories. If your body learned to disconnect as a protection against overwhelm, returning to embodied awareness might initially feel threatening to your nervous system.

You might experience increased anxiety, unexpected emotions, physical discomfort, or even memories that you have not accessed in a long time. These responses do not mean you are doing anything wrong—they mean your body is beginning to trust you enough to share information that it has been holding in protection.

If reconnection feels too intense, you can always slow down, back off, or take breaks from body-focused practices. Healing is not about pushing through discomfort—it is about finding the edge of what feels manageable and working gently within that zone.

The most helpful thing you can do is to approach your body with the same patience and respect you would offer to any being that has experienced trauma. You would not rush a frightened animal to trust you immediately, and your body deserves the same gentle, persistent kindness.

Moving Forward in Partnership

Developing a trusting relationship with your body is not about achieving a state where you never feel discomfort or where your body never responds in ways that feel challenging. It is about creating a collaborative partnership where you can work with your body's responses rather than against them.

This partnership allows you to recognize your body's communications as valuable information rather than problems to be solved. It helps you respond to physical sensations and needs with curiosity and care rather than frustration or fear. And it enables you to access the grounding, wisdom, and resilience that become available when your mind and body can work together in harmony.

Your body has been your companion through every experience of your life, adapting and adjusting to help you survive whatever you have encountered. It deserves your respect, patience, and gentle care as it learns to trust that you can handle whatever it needs to share with you.

Anchor Phrase:

“My body is not my enemy—it is a wise guardian that has protected me through every challenge. I am learning to listen to its communications with curiosity and compassion. Together, we are discovering what it means to feel safe and at home in my own skin.”

Learning to trust and partner with your body is profound work that often unfolds most safely in relationship with others who understand this territory. If you are feeling called to explore this deeper body-based healing with professional support, this kind of somatic awareness and nervous system work is central to the approach we take at Anchor Point Counseling Center.

Continue Your Journey: Next Steps in Healing

If you have made it this far through this mini guide, you have already taken significant steps on your healing journey. You have explored what trauma really means, discovered practices for building inner safety, and begun to consider a new relationship with your body. These are not small accomplishments—they represent real courage and commitment to your own wellbeing.

But perhaps, as you have read these pages, you have found yourself wanting more. Maybe you are recognizing patterns and responses that feel familiar, or you are beginning to see connections between your past experiences and current struggles. Perhaps you are feeling both hopeful about the possibility of healing and uncertain about how to continue this journey on your own.

If any of this resonates, please know that what you are feeling is completely natural. This mini guide was designed to be a gentle introduction to trauma-informed healing—a way to dip your toe into these waters and see if this approach feels right for you. But it is only the beginning of what is possible.

The Full Journey Awaits

This mini guide contains four chapters from a comprehensive book called *Finding Anchor: A Gentle Guide to Beginning Your Healing Journey*. The complete book includes ten chapters that take you deeper into understanding trauma, nervous system healing, and building a life that feels genuinely safe and authentic.

In the full book, you will discover:

- **Why healing feels so hard** and how to navigate the non-linear nature of recovery
- **Understanding your coping strategies** and learning to see them as intelligent adaptations rather than character flaws
- **Your Window of Tolerance** and how to recognize when you are operating outside your optimal zone
- **Working with guilt, shame, and your inner critic** to develop genuine self-compassion
- **The spiral nature of healing** and why apparent setbacks are often signs of deeper integration

Each chapter includes gentle reflection prompts, practical tools, and anchor phrases designed to support your nervous system as you navigate the complex territory of healing from trauma.



When You Are Ready for More Support

Reading about trauma and healing can be incredibly validating and helpful, but there often comes a point where you realize you do not want to walk this path alone. If you are feeling called to explore these concepts more deeply with professional support, know that seeking help is not a sign of weakness—it is an act of profound self-care and courage.

At Anchor Point Counseling Center, we understand that healing is not about fixing people, but about helping them feel safe enough to rest, reconnect, and remember who they truly are. Our approach combines clinical expertise with compassionate presence, drawing from EMDR, clinical hypnotherapy, Internal Family Systems-informed care, CBT, and somatic practices.

We specialize in working with adults who have experienced complex trauma, anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and the lingering effects of difficult life experiences. Whether you are just beginning to understand how trauma has affected your life or you have been on this healing journey for a while, we are here to meet you exactly where you are.

What Makes Our Approach Different

Trauma-Informed Care: Every interaction is designed with an understanding of how trauma affects the nervous system, relationships, and sense of self. This approach is grounded in research demonstrating that trauma-informed care improves outcomes and reduces re-traumatization (SAMHSA, 2014).

Integrative Healing: We address the emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of healing, recognizing that true recovery involves the whole person.

Nervous System Focus: We pay careful attention to helping your nervous system feel safe enough to engage in the healing process, utilizing evidence-based approaches to nervous system regulation.

Your Pace, Your Journey: We believe healing happens in its own time and rhythm, and we are committed to honoring your unique process.

Beyond Symptom Relief: While we want you to feel better, our deeper goal is helping you develop a genuine sense of safety, connection, and peace within yourself.

Ways, We Can Support You

Individual Therapy: One-on-one sessions where you can explore your trauma responses, develop coping skills, and work toward feeling more anchored in your own life. Our therapeutic modalities are evidence-based and specifically chosen for their effectiveness in trauma treatment.

Group Healing Programs: Safe spaces to connect with others who understand this journey, reducing isolation and building community while practicing new skills in a supportive environment.

EMDR Therapy: Specialized trauma processing that helps your nervous system integrate difficult experiences. EMDR is recognized by the American Psychological Association as an effective treatment for PTSD and trauma-related conditions.

Clinical Hypnotherapy: Gentle approaches to accessing your inner wisdom and creating positive change at a subconscious level, helping to address patterns that may be difficult to reach through traditional talk therapy alone.

Taking the Next Step

If this guide has resonated with you and you are feeling curious about what deeper healing might look like, we invite you to reach out. Sometimes the hardest part is making that first contact, so we have tried to make it as gentle as possible.

You might start with a brief consultation where we can talk about what you are experiencing and whether our approach feels like a good fit. There is no pressure to commit to anything—this is simply an opportunity to have a conversation about your healing journey and what support might be helpful.

Here is what you can expect when you reach out:

- A warm, non-judgmental conversation about what you are experiencing
- Information about how our approach might support your specific needs
- Clear answers to any questions you have about therapy or our services
- Respect for your timeline and decision-making process
- No pressure to move faster than feels right for you

Ready to Continue Your Journey?

Healing begins when you feel anchored. Let us take the next step—together.

Contact Anchor Point Counseling Center:

- Website:
www.AnchorPointCounselingCenter.com
- Connect with us through our website
- Telehealth Available: Yes, for Arizona residents

If this guide has touched something in you, I invite you to learn more about the deeper healing work we do together. You do not have to do this alone. When you are ready, I am here.

For Immediate Support

If you are currently in crisis or need immediate support, please do not hesitate to reach out:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 988
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741
- **Emergency Services:** 911

Remember: You matter. Your healing matters. And you deserve support that honors both your struggles and your incredible strength.

A Final Blessing

As you close this guide and continue on your journey, please carry with you this truth: you are not broken, and you never were. You are a resilient being who has survived everything life has presented so far, and you have within you everything needed to continue healing and growing.

Your journey may not look like anyone else's, and that is exactly as it should be. Trust your pace, honor your needs, and remember that every small step toward healing is an act of profound courage.

The path of trauma recovery is not about returning to who you were before—it is about discovering who you are becoming. And that person, the one you are growing into with each gentle step forward, is worthy of all the love, safety, and peace this world has to offer.

Anchor Phrase:

“I am not alone in this journey. I am learning to hold myself steady with love, and this love is my deepest anchor. I trust my journey, I honor my pace, and I believe in my inherent capacity to heal.”

About Brian Evans and Anchor Point Counseling Center

Brian Evans, LPC, CHt, is a Licensed Professional Counselor, EMDR-certified therapist, and Certified Hypnotherapist who believes deeply that healing is possible for everyone, regardless of where they are in their journey. With specialized training in trauma-informed care, Brian brings a gentle, integrative approach to therapy that honors both the wisdom of the nervous system and the resilience of the human spirit.

Brian's therapeutic practice draws from evidence-based modalities including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), clinical hypnotherapy, and somatic awareness techniques. This integrative approach allows him to meet each client exactly where they are, offering tools and support that feel right for their unique healing process.

Specializing in complex trauma, PTSD, anxiety disorders, and the lingering effects of difficult life experiences, Brian is passionate about creating therapeutic spaces where adults can explore their experiences without judgment and develop the internal resources needed for lasting healing. He understands that trauma affects not just the mind, but the entire nervous system, and his work emphasizes helping clients rebuild safety and trust within themselves.

The Philosophy Behind Anchor Point Counseling Center

Anchor Point Counseling Center was founded on the belief that healing is not about fixing people, but about helping them feel safe enough to rest, reconnect, and remember who they truly are. Our approach recognizes that trauma affects the emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of a person's life, and true healing addresses all of these aspects with equal care.

We understand that seeking therapy, especially for trauma-related concerns, can feel vulnerable and scary. That is why we have created a practice environment that prioritizes safety, trust, and collaboration. Every interaction is designed with trauma-informed principles in mind, recognizing that healing happens best in relationships that feel genuinely safe and attuned.

Our Approach to Healing

Individual Therapy: Brian offers both virtual and in-person sessions, providing trauma-informed therapy that helps clients develop nervous system regulation, self-compassion, and authentic connection with themselves and others.

Group Healing Programs: We facilitate specialized group experiences designed to help participants feel less alone in their healing journey while building community and practicing new skills in a supportive environment.

Integrative Methods: Our work draws from multiple therapeutic modalities, always tailored to what feels most supportive for each individual client. We believe there is no one-size-fits-all approach to healing.

Nervous System Focus: Understanding that trauma lives in the body, we pay careful attention to helping clients develop a safer relationship with their nervous system responses and physical experience.

What Makes Us Different

At Anchor Point Counseling Center, we recognize that you are the expert on your own experience. Our role is not to tell you what your healing should look like, but to provide a safe, supportive relationship where your natural healing capacity can unfold.

We believe that:

- Your trauma responses make sense and deserve compassion, not judgment
- Healing happens at its own pace and cannot be rushed
- The therapeutic relationship itself is a crucial part of the healing process
- Everyone has an innate capacity for resilience and growth
- True healing involves the whole person, not just symptom reduction

Brian wrote *Finding Anchor* because he believes that understanding trauma and healing should not be reserved for therapy rooms alone. His hope is that these resources offer the same compassion, insight, and gentle guidance that he brings to his clinical work—meeting you wherever you are with respect for your journey and faith in your capacity to heal.

Connect with Us

If the approach described in this guide resonates with you and you feel called to explore therapy as part of your healing journey, Brian would be honored to support you.

Contact Information:

- Website:
www.AnchorPointCounselingCenter.com
- Email:
Brian.Evans@anchorpointcounselingcenter.com
- Telehealth Available: Yes, for Arizona residents

Remember: You do not have to heal alone, and you deserve support that honors both your struggles and your strength. When you are ready to take the next step in your healing journey, we are here to walk alongside you with compassion, expertise, and unwavering belief in your capacity to heal.

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