the trauma therapist project

the road map
10 crucial steps to guide you along your trauma education
Welcome!

Thanks so much for signing up for my email list!

Here’s your PDF as promised:

*The Road Map:*

*10 Crucial Steps for*

*The New Trauma Therapist*

Over the course of the last year I’ve interviewed over 140 master therapists, thought-leaders and game-changers in the trauma field, both on *The Trauma Therapist Podcast* and through my membership community, *Trauma Therapist | 2.0*.

One point that has come up over and over again during those episodes and which speaks directly to new therapists just beginning their trauma-informed education is this:

*Our education—the books we read, the trainings we attend, the courses we take, etc,—are key to us becoming trauma therapists, but it is only a part of the picture.*

The graphic below, *The Whole Trauma Therapist*, embodies this concept. It is a concept which pays tribute to the role our experiences plays within our education to becoming a trauma therapist, as well as the significant place our personal-growth occupies within that context.

This PDF is a compilation of just a small selection of the many gold nuggets which have been shared on *The Trauma Therapist | Podcast*. Take these bits of wisdom and consider them as vital guideposts as you embark on your journey to becoming a trauma therapist.

I hope you enjoy it!
The Whole Trauma Therapist

education

personal growth

experience

reading
school
courses
supervision

acknowledgement of fears
communities/support
presence
mindfulness

trainings
mentors
reading
communities
support
conferences

compassion
attunement
therapy
humor
humaneness
authenticity
self-nourishment

life
volunteering

internship
practice
employment

The Trauma Therapist Project, 2016
1. **Realize that education is important and experience is important, but they are only part of the picture of being a trauma therapist.**
   - Think about your trauma-informed education in terms of 3 overlapping and interfacing components: 1) *education*, 2) *experience*, and 3) *personal-growth* (see graphic above). We all know education is essential, yet few of us realize that it’s only a part of the story. The experiences you gather and your ability to integrate them are also important to your trauma-informed education. However, it’s your personal-growth, and your ability to draw upon and incorporate that into your role as a trauma therapist which is the lifeblood of the treatment you provide. (*This is probably the most important idea within this entire PDF. If you take this alone and run with it you’ll be doing yourself a great favor.*)

2. **Understand that your personal-growth is crucial, and then do as nearly every guest on the podcast has advised, and actually do something about it!**
   - Why is our personal growth as trauma therapists so important? Because it provides the foundation from which we deliver our trauma-informed treatment. See above graphic for list of personal growth examples. I’ll talk about a few here:
   - **Fears:** The degree to which we realize and acknowledge our own fears around our own traumas and/or our fears about this work, will allow us to get our own issues in check before we begin practicing in the field, As Annita B. Jones, PsyD recommends. Be aware of whose issues you’re working with--yours or your clients. If it’s yours, then you’re in the wrong room! Annita B. Jones, PsyD.
   - **Authenticity:** Relating to or denoting an emotionally appropriate, significant, purposive, and responsible mode of human life. The practice of being genuine. This is another essential component within our trauma therapist toolkit. Authenticity has to be honed, cultivated and practiced moment to moment within our therapy encounters.
• This element, alone, provides the solid core to the rapport we create and build with our clients, in turn, helping to create the effective space for treatment to unfold. Without it we have little chance of creating the safety so necessary for this work.

3. Show up, be present, and shut up! Peter Levine, PhD.
  • It doesn’t get more direct and seemingly simple than these words from the master. The ability to be present (another aspect of our personal growth) with and for another human being is elemental to good therapy, and some have even said, is the cornerstone to the work.
  • The shut up part to this advice is one of those little phrases that carry so much weight and wisdom to us therapists. It encourages us to sit back and listen, to allow our client’s stories to unfold before us, as our minds spin with thoughts of the interventions we can’t wait to use, and it asks us to be a witness to this human being before us and to realize the enormous power and potential within each of these actions.

4. Understand that we are no different from our clients. Peter Bernstein, PhD.
  • I love this nugget of wisdom. For Peter this was wisdom that was hard won and came only after years of wading through his own pride. Peter is one of those individuals who is at once powerful, intense and yet profoundly warm and compassionate. This kind of complex and textured quality seems common among the individuals I have on the podcast! Peter shared some very intimate details about his upbringing and didn’t shy away from letting all of the not-so-perfect bits show. In fact, it was just this type of candor that Peter brought to the self-exploration he has done over the years, and which has so richly imbued the amazing work he does with his clients.
  • If we can embody this teaching (which is easier said than done) as we venture on our trauma-informed journey and begin to do trauma therapy, our clients will thank us dearly.
5. Know that the basic work of health professionals in general and psychotherapists in particular is to become full human beings and to inspire full human-beingness in other people who feel starved about their lives. Manuela Mischke-Reeds, MA, MFT quoting Chogyam Trungpa, Full Human Beingness.

- This is it! Again, some words which point to the importance of cultivating our selves, of honing who we are, and of practicing the art of utilizing and expressing that within therapy, rather than a simple focus on the learning of interventions (again, as we all know, which are so integral and important to our work).
- Manuela is phenomenal. If you haven’t listened to her interview, do yourself a favor and give a listen here.

6. Be open to the fact that the script for being a man is not conducive to therapeutic change. Dan Griffin.

- Dan Griffin has worked in the mental health and addictions field for over two decades and is recognized internationally as an expert on males and trauma.
- Dan opened my eyes to the profound difference in the way men and women both respond to and are impacted by trauma. More specifically, in how men differ in the way they respond to treatment, and the concept of being treated.
- Having this knowledge and awareness under your belt as you begin your trauma education equips you with yet another subtlety of learning what the effects of trauma are.

7. The body will be saying things a million times louder than our client’s words. Tonya L. Bassett, LCSW, CADC, CTT.

- This is incredible. This sentence provides so much insight into what we as new trauma therapists should focus on—the body; it encourages us to hone our ability to listen not just to the words our clients may speak, but to be able to observe in a moment-to-moment manner, the movements our clients make. Pure gold.
- Can we sit in silence as our clients speak? As they are silent? And do we have the education and composure to track their movements,
• and to know what to interact and when to do nothing?

8. **We must be the hope in the room.** Thema Bryant Davis, PhD.

• Thema Bryant Davis does everything. She’s an artist, a dancer, a minister and a psychologist. I think I’m even leaving a few things out! Thema’s been a guest on the podcast and I’ve even recorded one of the master class videos with her for *Trauma Therapist | 2.0*. She’s *that* inspiring.

• These words of Thema’s may appear to be a very simple and perhaps quaint piece of advice, yet our ability to hold this space for our clients, and our ability to embody hope for individuals who have come from places where such doesn’t exist, is nothing short of profound. Being hope in the room for and with someone who has been traumatized requires authenticity, presence, strength and honesty.

9. **Make sure you really want to walk the path with our veterans.** *And if you feel deeply committed and called, then accept this work not as a technique that you’re going to apply, but realize that you will be on a profound spiritual and moral journey with your clients.*

• **Edward Tick, Ph.D.** is an internationally recognized transformational healer, psychotherapist, writer and educator. Co-Founder and Executive Director of Soldier’s Heart, Ed works internationally on the psycho-spiritual and cross-cultural healing of military and war trauma and on holistic and psycho-spiritual healing.

• Again, amazing! As therapists or trauma workers beginning our trauma-informed education, our job is not simply to amass and read a library’s worth of books. Rather it is to reflect on our own inward journey and to realize that the work which is waiting for us calls us to walk this path, to be on this journey with our clients. Can we do this? Are you willing and able to do this?
This requires us having done our own inner work—therapy, spiritual reflection, and any of the other options. Only after having done this work—and to be clear, this is an ongoing process—will we be able to meet our clients for this journey that Ed is speaking about.

10. Realize that the moment a trauma takes place, a new life emerges. That new life is defined by the meaning given to it.

- **Odelia Gretel Kraybill, PhD.** Odelya is a trauma survivor who became a therapist, trainer, facilitator and consultant with over a decade of experience working with survivors and aid workers in locations of conflict and trauma. She has worked for the UN, governmental institutions, and NGOs in the US, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

- This thought is so powerful for those who work with traumatized individuals. It demands that we look at trauma not as something that must be hunted down and annihilated, but rather something which must be illuminated and infused with a meaning; the meaning given to it not by us, therapists, by rather by the person who has experienced that trauma.

- This requires a paradigm shift in our own thoughts as well as those of our client’s. And this requires patience, compassion and humor.

- There is a lot of work to do!