

Ten things for trauma therapist to do and remember when in session with a client.

1. **Breathe and relax:** Simple? Yes. However its effects can not be overstated. It helps increase our level of awareness and thus our ability to more ably adjust and shift with regards to interventions if need be.
2. **Remember the *client* in front of us is a person...**with feelings, emotions, needs, wants, desires, and who, if not now, then at one time, has laughed and still needs love and connection.
3. **Listen more than you talk.**
4. **Help the client explore their strengths, what excites them, and those moments in their lives during which they felt empowered.**
 - a. **Then help them solidify that feeling of empowerment** by asking them to reside in that feeling and then linking it to a thought, emotion or action.
5. **Check your own issues at the door and be conscious of whose problems you're working on in the session, yours or the client's:** this refers back to #1.
6. Great things to say or ask:
 - a. **What do you notice happening in your body?**
 - b. **Notice (without verbalizing) what happens next?** (said e.g., in asking the client to respond to a question, or after the client has made a statement, or after asking the client to reflect on a feeling etc).
7. **Take off your clinical hat and be *you*:** I know this is a tough one, but I was once advised that it was okay to remove my clinical hat as it often helps to bridge the chasm between us and our clients. Try it. It's freeing and it helps us engage more effectively.
8. **Notice where the client is along the often blurred healing continuum of *stabilization, processing, and integration* and as a result, what the client needs.**
9. **Leave your own agenda at the door:** This takes practice, sometimes feels as if we're without our tool-kit, but ultimately enables us to engage more genuinely as we are less wedded to our ideas of what we *should* be doing. It is important for us to remember that our session are not solely a platform for us as therapists to highlight our newest interventions.
10. **When you're stuck, review numbers 1-9.**