

## Treating Yourself Well

### Week 4

#### Review:

1. Learning to listen to your own thoughts can be challenging at best. Take it slow. Remember, just because you think it, doesn't mean it is part of your identity. It is just part of your experience. Listen to what goes through your mind. Write it down. Explore thoughts and ideas that you have. If it is too overwhelming do it for short periods of time (minutes or even seconds), or sit with another person who can support you while you listen. This is a big step in the process of healing internal wounds and pain.
2. Survivors of complex trauma were taught early on that their needs do not matter. This was necessary to believe in order to survive their trauma. Learning to identify needs and work to meet those needs is so important for every single person in life. This must be done slowly and carefully, but every little bit counts!
3. Remember even the most difficult and challenging behavior you face is based on a need for a sense of safety. Follow these steps in reframing what you believe about these behaviors:

#### Self-protective Behaviors

- a. "Acting out" is almost always about creating internal SAFETY
- b. Adjust your definition of the behavior
  - i. I am not resistant but self-preserving and afraid
  - ii. I am not rebellious but self-protecting and afraid
  - iii. I am not disrespectful but unsure who to trust

#### Working with protector parts that *appear* resistant

- iv. There is a REASON – respect it
- v. Go slow
- vi. Work where you are able to start

## BE KIND TO YOU

Expressive approaches – sometimes what you think and feel can't be expressed in words. Be willing to allow your internal "thoughts" to be expressed in different ways.

- Play
- Art
- Writing stories, poetry, fiction
- Music (uses both sides of the brain)

Processing memories – this can be difficult, but you can do it! If you find your memories or flashbacks too overwhelming, learn good grounding and containment techniques for helping yourself. Then, find someone who can process these memories with you. Remember:

- Not all details are needed for healing
- Listen for trauma (beliefs or feelings you experienced) in the memory
- Work to accept the memory as their own
- Ask God to help you resolve conflicts produced by the memory (what if questions, beliefs about self or others, etc.)

### Offer Trades to Protector Parts

- Most people are not willing to give up something they believe is keeping them safe
  - Addictions
  - Emotions like fear or anger
  - Poor relationship choices
  - Self-harm
  - Anything that is perceived by a part as self-protection
- Protector parts are often willing to trade their unhealthy self-protective behaviors with healthy self-protective behaviors when you have built enough rapport with them. Working on internal communication, listening for your needs, and meeting those needs goes a LONG WAY in building rapport.

### Statements to avoid with yourself

- Any time of comparison to other people or their journeys or stories
- Implying you or your parts are not working hard enough
- "I can't!" – this leads to dissociation
  - "This is hard, but I will try."
  - "I can't do this alone, but I can with God."
  - "I am not sure I can do this, but I know it is important."