

TRAUMA SURVIVORS & SELF-CARE:

11 Practices to Promote Wellbeing



From Lisa Ferentz, LCSW-C, DAPA



Invite clients to reconnect with the soothing benefits of nature by taking a 15-minute walk or just lying in the grass and noticing their surroundings.



Encourage clients to talk to themselves in front of the mirror, saying things that are positive and kind rather than critical or perfectionistic.



Discuss concrete ways to slowly create a better work/life balance. They can start by committing to leaving work on time at least twice a week, rather than working overtime everyday.



Invite clients to make healthy choices related to nutrition, exercise, adequate rest and sleep, and have them document their successes and then process them in session.



Encourage clients to identify one concrete way to improve their medical or mental wellbeing and put it into practice.



For one hour a day, ask clients to commit to powering down from digital technology and social media to reduce over-stimulation or emotional upset.

Have them use that time for quiet contemplation, reading positive affirmations, strengthening a spiritual connection, or pursuing a mindfulness or meditation practice.



Invite clients to brainstorm about reducing social isolation by connecting face to face with people they love and care about. Ask clients to revisit boundaries in relationships with people who are crisis-driven, overly demanding, or unsupportive.



Suggest that clients give themselves the gift of spending time with a baby or a pet. It's the most unconditional affection they can get!



Invite clients to put aside prescribed time to journal or draw. This will increase an inward focus, help them process thoughts and emotions, and strengthen their creative side.



Encourage clients to take time, everyday, to do something that brings them joy or makes them laugh.



If their workplace is unsupportive or toxic, invite them to write up a description of what their ideal workplace would look and feel like, and then walk them through a guided imagery that allows them to visualize it.

Lisa Ferentz, LCSW-C, DAPA, is a recognized expert in the strengths based, de-pathologized treatment of trauma and self-harm and has been in private practice since 1984. She presents workshops and keynote addresses nationally and internationally, and is a clinical consultant to practitioners and mental health agencies in the United States, Canada, England and Ireland. She has been an adjunct faculty member at several universities, and in 2007 founded "The Ferentz Institute," which provides continuing education and state of the art training in trauma treatment to mental health professionals.

In 2009 she was voted the "Social Worker of Year" by the Maryland Society for Clinical Social Work. Lisa is the author of "Treating Self-Destructive Behaviors in Traumatized Clients: A Clinician's Guide" (Routledge), now in its second edition, "Letting Go of Self-Destructive Behaviors: A Workbook of Hope and Healing" (Routledge), and "Finding Your Ruby Slippers: Transformative Life Lessons From the Therapists' Couch." (PESI)

Lisa hosted a weekly radio talk show, writes blogs and articles for websites on trauma, self-harm, and self-care, teaches on many webinars, and is a weekly contributor to Psychologytoday.com. You can follow Lisa's work at www.theferentzinstitute.com, Facebook, and LinkedIn.