Course Roadmap

Spiritual Trauma & EMDR Therapy:
7 Steps to Help Clients Heal

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by Mark Odland - MA, LMFT, MDIV

Contents

How to Use this Roadmap

Thank you for registering for this course! This Roadmap is designed to assist you in your learning process. Please take a few minutes to read it over ahead of time, print it out, and then use it as a reference and guide during the course. The "Course Outline" will help you track your progress through the training, plan your breaks, and help mark your spot if you happen to have any technical difficulties. The "Key Concepts for Treating Spiritual Trauma" will help summarize the main ideas and takeaways for each section. The "Study Guide" is a sampling of questions to help you master the material. "Resources and References" will be listed for your further curiosity and study, and examples will be included for you to copy and use as you see fit in your practice. These include the "Spiritual Trauma Checklist," the "Spiritually-Informed Genogram for EMDR Therapists," and the "Cloud of Witnesses Resource." Finally, it includes a "Troubleshooting" page for if there are technical difficulties.

Course Outline

The following outline provides you with a sequential breakdown of the main sections of the book.

Course Overview
      Questions and Expectations
      Presenter Biography

The Need
      Defining Spiritual Trauma
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      Spirituality Around the World

Introduction to the 7 Steps
      Defining Success
      Being Present
      Extra-Therapeutic Factors

7 Steps: <u>PRESENT</u>

<u>**P**aradox</u>
      How Paradox Keeps Clients Stuck
      How Paradox Sets Clients Free

<u>**R**elationship</u>
      Relationship with God
      Relationship with Therapist
      Relationship with Others

<u>E</u>mpathy

     Movement from Shame to Empathy

     Grace for the Inner Wounded Child

<u>S</u>ystems Theory

     The Importance of Family Systems Theory

     The Spiritually-Informed Genogram for EMDR Therapy

     Self-Differentiation

     Healthy Boundaries

     The "Never-ending Why"

     Freedom and Relationship

<u>E</u>pistemology

     Truth and Trust

     Sources of Spiritual Belief

     Therapist Bias

<u>N</u>eutrality

     The "Goldilocks" Rule of Validation

     The Space for Forgiveness

<u>T</u>heological Curiosity

     Childlike Curiosity with Adult Listening Skills

     Self of the Therapist

Key Concepts for Treating Spiritual Trauma

The Need

Treating spiritual trauma is necessary because the majority of the world's population is religious and/or spiritual. As such, spirituality will inevitably play an important role in the lives of many of our clients. Even for those who aren't explicitly religious, trauma will often raise questions of meaning and purpose.

Common Experiences of Spiritual Trauma

Spiritual trauma may include experiences of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, abandonment, condemnation, or some type of religious persecution. The trauma might be considered spiritual in nature because it either raises spiritual questions or concerns, or because it was experienced within a religious or spiritual context.

Introduction to the 7 Steps

Being "Present" is a foundational concept in treating spiritual trauma because it conveys the acceptance and unconditional positive regard often necessary to create an atmosphere conducive for healing. Compatible with a variety of theoretical frameworks, the choice to be "present" with a client is conveyed through body language, active listening, and an attitude of empathy and compassion.

The 7 Principles (PRESENT)

Paradox

The concept of "Paradox" is important for healing spiritual trauma because it can both keep clients stuck and set clients free. An inner conflict or "apparent" paradox can impair processing, and prevent the client from connecting to adaptive information. However, when a client is asked to hold two "apparently" contradictory truth statements from within their spiritual worldview together

during bilateral stimulation, it often will allow them the freedom to either see "a way out" of the paradox or allow them to find peace within it.

Relationship

The concept of "Relationship" is important for healing spiritual trauma because a client's perceived connection to God can be viewed as an attachment bond. While trauma can threaten or damage one's way of relating to God and others, as therapists we can help our clients to strengthen their support system, encouraging them to build a network of healthy relationships at a pace that feels safe for them. In addition, we can strive to strengthen the therapeutic relationship by using tools like the "Session Rating Scale," and utilizing appropriate self-disclosure to normalize doubt and fear.

Empathy

The concept of "Empathy" is important for healing spiritual trauma because it creates the possibility for a client to forgive others, experience self-forgiveness, and realize that they're not alone in their suffering. Putting "Empathy" into action in therapy may include interweaves utilizing the "inner wounded child."

Systems Theory

The concept of "Systems Theory" is important for healing spiritual trauma because it acknowledges that spiritual trauma is not only the product of individual choices, but the result of systemic problems. It helps us understand how patterns of shame and control can be embedded within family generational patterns and within religious communities. Putting "Systems Theory" into action in therapy includes helping a client to see that in some cases their trauma results primarily from an unhealthy system, not an inherent flaw within their religious faith. It also creates a framework for asking clients a series of "why" questions to get to the real source of responsibility, and for encouraging them to set appropriate boundaries as they are able.

Epistemology

The concept of "Epistemology" is important for healing spiritual trauma because it helps us examine how we actually know what we know and helps us as therapists to be more tolerant of our clients. Putting "Epistemology" into action in therapy includes asking ourselves why we believe what we believe as therapists. It also fosters intellectual honesty by challenging us to acknowledge our own biases and presuppositions.

Neutrality

The concept of "Neutrality" is important for healing spiritual trauma because it stands in contrast to the judgment of others who have imposed their beliefs upon the client in the past, and creates a safer space for clients to explore their emotions and work through the complexities of their spirituality. Putting "Neutrality" into action in therapy includes not "over" validating or "under" validating, and not rushing clients to hope or forgiveness.

Theological Curiosity

The concept of "Theological Curiosity" is important for healing spiritual trauma because it helps a client to feel valued, and that their spiritual views are respected and important. Putting "Theological Curiosity" into action in therapy includes outside research, and the asking of "curious questions" about a client's spirituality in order to better understand their worldview.

Helpful Resources

Resources that may be helpful in treating spiritual trauma include the Spiritually-Informed Genogram, the Spiritual Trauma Checklist, the Cloud of Witnesses Resource, and the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale.

STUDY GUIDE

The following study guide questions have been made available as one option for helping you better retain the course material. The questions below are categorized by each course section, so that you can follow along as the training unfolds. Simply read each question, and circle the best answer (the answer key is located at the end of this document).

The Need

Treating spiritual trauma is necessary because…
a. the majority of the world's population is religious and/or spiritual
b. spirituality is very important to many of our clients
c. questions of meaning and purpose are universal, even for those who are not religious
d. all of the above

Around the world, many devout believers continue to experience persecution for their spiritual and/or religious beliefs.
a. True
b. False

Common experiences of spiritual trauma include...
a. abuse from a religious leader
b. a religious atmosphere of legalism and shame
c. being invited to participate in church activities
d. a. and b.

Growing up in a rigid, legalistic, and condemning religious system often leads to feelings of shame.
a. True
b. False

Introduction to the 7 Steps

Being "Present" is a foundational concept in treating spiritual trauma because it…

a. conveys acceptance and unconditional positive regard
b. helps the client see the error of their ways
c. challenges the client become more motivated
d. all of the above

Being "Present" with a client recovering from spiritual trauma is conveyed through…
a. body language
b. active listening, not just talking
c. an attitude of empathy and compassion
d. all of the above

Meta-analysis has shown that the strength of the therapeutic relationship is one of the biggest agents of change within therapy.
a. True
b. False

Paradox

One of the greatest paradoxes faced by devout believers is "the problem of evil."
a. True
b. False

The concept of "Paradox" is important for healing spiritual trauma because…
a. it helps distract the client from the truth
b. it helps free the client from legalistic and "all or nothing" thinking
c. it helps the client convert to another religion
d. all of the above

Putting "Paradox" into action in therapy includes…
a. asking the client to consider seeing more than one therapist at the same time
b. asking the client to hold two "apparently" contradictory truth statements from within their worldview together during bilateral stimulation
c. asking the client to accept their worldview is illogical
d. all of the above

EMDR therapists have an opportunity to help clients access adaptive information from within their own spiritual worldviews.
>   a. True
>   b. False

For some devout Christians, healing comes not through believing they are a good person, but through an experience of God's grace.
>   a. True
>   b. False

Relationship

1. The concept of "Relationship" is important for healing spiritual trauma because…
>   a. a client's perceived connection to God can be viewed as an attachment bond
>   b. spiritual trauma may involve the loss of relationship to God or others
>   c. a strong therapeutic relationship is often necessary for healing
>   d. all of the above

2. Putting "Relationship" into action in therapy includes…
>   a. attending to the therapeutic relationship by using a tool like the "Session Rating Scale"
>   b. using appropriate self-disclosure to normalize doubt and fear
>   c. encouraging the client to build a support network of healthy relationships that feels safe for them.
>   d. all of the above

3. Appropriate therapist self-disclosure often helps build trust with spiritually traumatized clients.
>   a. True
>   b. False

Empathy

4. Doing ego state work with a client's "inner wounded child" may help them heal from shame.
>   a. True
>   b. False

5. The concept of "Empathy" is important for healing spiritual trauma because…
    a. it creates the possibility for a client to forgive others
    b. it creates the possibility for a client to experience self-forgiveness
    c. it helps the client feel that they are not alone in their suffering
    d. all of the above

6. Putting "Empathy" into action in therapy may include…
    a. asking the client to picture themselves as a little child
    b. asking the client to forgive others as soon as possible
    c. reminding them that if they don't forgive they will never be able to heal
    d. all of the above

Systems Theory

7. Generally, setting healthy boundaries is easy for victims of spiritual trauma.
    a. True
    b. False

8. The concept of "Systems Theory" is important for healing spiritual trauma because…
    a. it acknowledges that spiritual trauma is not only the product of individual choices, but the result of systemic problems
    b. it acknowledges that spiritual trauma can be embedded within within family generational patterns
    c. it recognizes that patterns of shame and control can be embedded within religious communities
    d. all of the above

9. Putting "Systems Theory" into action in therapy includes…
    a. helping a client to see that in some cases their trauma results from primarily from an unhealthy system, not an inherent flaw within their religious faith
    b. asking a client a series of "why" questions to get to the real source of responsibility
    c. encouraging a client to set appropriate boundaries as they are able
    d. all of the above

10. Systems theory is useful because it can help a client understand why they are to blame for their trauma.
       a. True
       b. False

11. Generally, setting healthy boundaries is easy for victims of spiritual trauma.
       a. True
       b. False

12. Resources that may be helpful in treating spiritual trauma include:
       a. Spiritually-Informed Genogram
       b. Spiritual Trauma Checklist
       c. Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale
       d. all of the above

Epistemology

13. The concept of "Epistemology" is important for healing spiritual trauma because…
       a. it helps us examine how we actually know what we know
       b. it helps raise money for nonprofit organizations
       c. it reinforces that we have all the answers
       d. all of the above

14. Putting "Epistemology" into action in therapy includes…
       a. asking ourselves why we believe what we believe as therapists
       b. striving for intellectual honesty by acknowledging our biases and presuppositions
       c. helping clients see that there is no such thing as truth
       d. a. and b.

15. A therapist's spiritual biases will inevitably impact therapy, and they are therefore good to be aware of.
       a. True
       b. False

Neutrality

16. To demonstrate the principle of neutrality, it is important that therapists never express an opinion.
>   a. True
>   b. False

17. The concept of "Neutrality" is important for healing spiritual trauma because…
>   a. it stands in contrast to others who have imposed their beliefs upon the client in the past
>   b. it creates a safer space for clients to explore their emotions and work through the complexities of their spirituality
>   c. it challenges clients to second-guess what their therapist is thinking
>   d. a. and b.

18. Putting "Neutrality" into action in therapy includes…
>   a. not "over" validating or "under" validating
>   b. not rushing clients to forgive
>   c. not rushing clients towards hope
>   d. all of the above

19. Over-validating a client early in therapy could backfire if the client later forgives and reclaims parts of their spiritual narrative.
>   a. True
>   b. False

Theological Curiosity

20. To demonstrate the principle of theological neutrality, it is important for therapists to vigorously question every spiritual belief of every client.
>   a. True
>   b. False

21. Asking appropriate "curious questions" about a client's spirituality can help guard against intolerance.
>   a. True
>   b. False

22. The concept of "Theological Curiosity" is important for healing spiritual trauma because…
>   a. it reinforces the truth that there is no such thing as religious truth

b. it reminds us that spiritual questions are impossible to answer
c. it helps a client to feel that their spiritual views are respected and important
d. all of the above

23. Putting "Theological Curiosity" into action in therapy includes…
   a. asking "curious questions" about a client's spirituality in order to better understand their worldview
   b. researching between sessions to better understand a client's spiritual worldview
   c. asking a client's permission to go to church with them
   d. a. and b.

* Scroll to the end of the document to see the answer key

Resources and References

The following resources and references were mentioned either directly or indirectly, and have been listed below for further study.

Books

EMDR Solutions - Pathways to Healing by Robin Shapiro

EMDR: The Breakthrough "Eye Movement" Therapy… by Francine Shapiro

EMDR Toolbox: Theory and Treatment of Complex PTSD and Dissociation by Jim Knipe

Evangelism Without Additives by Jim Henderson

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing by Francine Shapiro

God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God? By John C. Lennox

Holy Bible (*multiple editions and translations available*)

Looking Through the Eyes of Trauma and Dissociation by Sandra Paulsen

Science and Religion in Quest for Truth by John Polkinghorne

The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief by Francis Collins

Night by Elie Wiesel

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism by Timothy Keller

When God Talks Back by Tanya Luhrmann

Websites

Gallup.com

Talkingcure.com

TheBowenCenter.org

Interventions According to 8 Phases of EMDR

Explanation

Below you will find a list and short description of key resources and interventions, broken down according to the 8 phases of EMDR therapy. The goal of this section is to help you get a better sense of timing, and better conceptualize how you might integrate these concepts sequentially over the different phases of treatment.

All 8 Phases

___ PRESENT - Strive to be truly present with clients, conveying unconditional positive regard through words, tone, and body language. This stance tends to provide the patience, acceptance, empathy, and care that spiritually-traumatized clients so often need to heal.

Client History

___ Spiritually-Informed Genogram for EMDR Therapy - May be used to complement standard history-taking questions, placing unique emphasis on a client's relationships and spiritual history within their family. One's relationship to God might be conceptualized as an attachment bond.

___ Daily Spiritual Experience Scale - May be part of intake paperwork or introduced during the history-taking process.

___ Spiritual Trauma Checklist (STC) - May be given to the client to be completed with paper and pen, or by therapist interview.

___ Outcome Rating Scale (ORS) - and Session Rating Scale (ORS) - These forms may be introduced, and possibly adopted as a standard way of assessing both client progress and the strength of the therapeutic relationship from session to session. (www.talkingcure.com)

___ Neutrality - Used throughout therapy, if paired with genuine care and empathy, neutrality challenges us to neither "over" or "under" validate our client's spiritual experiences and trauma, but to instead strive for the "just right" approach that allows clients to both reject and reclaim elements of their spirituality over time.

___ Theological Curiosity - Used throughout therapy, but utilized more explicitly during the history-taking process, curiosity allows us to show genuine interest in our client's spirituality, helping them to feel accepted and understood rather than judged.

Preparation

___ Cloud of Witnesses Resource - may be introduced as a way to assess and strengthen a client's support network. This network should be assessed on an ongoing basis, as a client's capacity to form and maintain healthy relationships may change over the course of therapy at a pace that's right for them.

___ Systems Theory - Psychoeducation on how a client's sense of shame and responsibility may actually be the result of generational patterns and their family system. Although a client may not be able to take this to heart during this phase, it lays the groundwork for adaptive information to link in at a later date, either spontaneously, or through cognitive interweaves.

___ Epistemology - As we begin to better understand our client's worldview and spiritual beliefs, asking ourselves why we actually believe what we believe can help us be more aware of our biases and how they might impact therapy. This preparation phase can be seen not only as a time of preparing a client, but also as a time of preparing ourselves as therapists to be more educated and aware of not only our client's belief system, but our own.

Assessment

___ Paradox - Are there any spiritual paradoxes at play that may impact processing? If so, it may be helpful to begin pondering what cognitive interweaves might be used to address this.

Desensitization

___ Paradox - Are there any spiritual paradoxes at play that either slow or halt reprocessing? Is the paradox presenting itself as either a "Teeter Totter" or "Something's Gotta' Give" opportunity? If so, a version of the "two-handed" interweave may help a client to either "escape" the paradox, or find peace within it.

___ Empathy - Use appropriate "inner-child" interweaves to create the possibility of empathy for one's "inner wounded child" and possibly others.

___ Systems Theory - Psychoeducation around systems theory, which was provided earlier in therapy, may now link in as adaptive information during reprocessing, either spontaneously, or through cognitive interweaves.

___ Never-ending "Why?" - Used with discretion, a series of "Why" questions can help strip away the foundation supporting a client's negative cognition, and allow the client to break free as new possibilities are reprocessed.

Installation

___ PRESENT - Maintain commitment to being truly present with the client throughout the Installation Phase.

Body Scan

___ PRESENT - Maintain commitment to being truly present with the client throughout the body Scan.

Closure

___ Session Rating Scale (SRS) - May be given as part of the closure process after any necessary calming resources like "Calm/Safe Place" or "Container" have already been used effectively.

___ Appropriate Therapist Self-Disclosure - If time allows, before using "Calm/Safe Place" or other calming resources, appropriate therapist self-disclosure

may be strategically used to help strengthen the therapeutic relationship, and minimize the client's sense of vulnerability.

Reevaluation

___ Outcome Rating Scale (ORS) - May be used in conjunction with the Reevaluation Phase, shedding greater light on how a client perceives their quality of life changing over the course of EMDR Therapy.

___ Appropriate Therapist Self-Disclosure - If time allows, before beginning desensitization, appropriate therapist self-disclosure may be strategically used to help strengthen the therapeutic relationship, and minimize the client's sense of vulnerability.

SPIRITUAL TRAUMA CHECKLIST

Name: _____   Date: _____

Listed below are a number of experiences that people sometimes have. For each event, check the box if it happened to you personally.

Trauma Related to Spiritual Leaders

_____ I was physically abused by a religious or spiritual leader.
_____ I was sexually abused by a religious or spiritual leader.
_____ I was controlled or manipulated by a religious or spiritual leader.
_____ I was abandoned, shunned, or excommunicated by a religious or spiritual leader.
_____ I was shamed, judged, ridiculed, or condemned by a religious or spiritual leader.

Trauma Related to Caregivers
_____ I was physically abused by an overtly religious or spiritual caregiver.
_____ I was sexually abused by an overtly religious or spiritual caregiver.
_____ I was controlled or manipulated by an overtly religious or spiritual caregiver.
_____ I was abandoned, shunned, or excommunicated by an overtly religious or spiritual caregiver.
_____ I was shamed, judged, ridiculed, or condemned by an overtly religious or spiritual caregiver.

Trauma Reflected in views of God
_____ I have experienced feeling abandoned by God.
_____ I have experienced feeling condemned to hell by God.
_____ I have experienced feeling hated or despised by God.
_____ I have experienced feeling punished by God.

Trauma Reflected in sense of Meaning and Purpose
_____ I have experienced feeling that I have no purpose in life.
_____ I have experienced feeling that life is meaningless.
_____ I have experienced losing faith in God or a higher power.
_____ I have experienced emotional distress over changes in my belief system.

Trauma Related to Religious or Spiritual Persecution
_____ I was arrested or imprisoned because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was physically assaulted, abused or tortured because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was sexually assaulted, abused, or tortured because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was emotionally assaulted, abused, or tortured because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was forced to hurt others because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was forced to live in fear because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was harassed or threatened because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was forced to leave my job, place of worship, school, or home because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was shamed, judged, ridiculed, or condemned because of my spiritual beliefs.
_____ I was forced to renounce my faith or violate my conscience because of my spiritual beliefs.

Trauma Related to Spiritual or Religious Cults.
_____ I was part of a religious or spiritual cult.
_____ I was physically, sexually, or emotionally hurt by a religious or spiritual cult.

SPIRITUAL TRAUMA CHECKLIST (Interpretation)
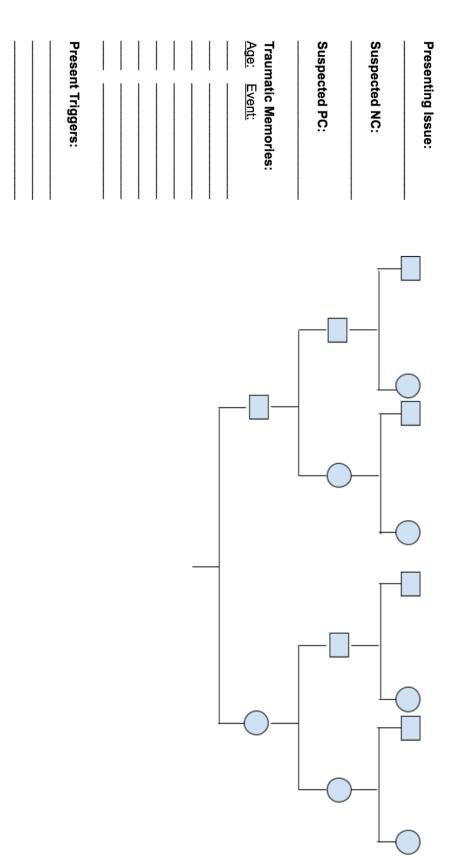
Name of Client: _____ Date: _____

Number of Items Checked _____ / 30

(If any items have been checked, this indicates that spiritual trauma has occurred, and may warrant further conversation at the appropriate time)

Notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Spiritually-Informed Genogram for EMDR Therapy

Presenting Issue:
_____

Suspected NC:
_____

Suspected PC:
_____

Traumatic Memories:
Age: Event:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Present Triggers:
_____
_____
_____

Future Template:
_____
_____

Cloud of Witnesses Resource

Instructions for Therapist:

       If your client self-identifies with the Christian faith, or is genuinely open to a variety of spiritual resources, please work through this resource with them during the EMDR Preparation Phase, and possibly revisit at a later time if the need for additional resources presents itself. After reading, help the client identify their resources and use standard EMDR RDI (Resource Development and Installation) as time permits. More than one session may be needed to successfully install resource/s.

Introduction:

       The term "cloud of witnesses" is taken from a passage in the New Testament book of Hebrews *(Hebrews 12:1-3)*. It speaks of life's journey as a race, and compares the forces within us to a snare that can slow us down and tangle us up along the way. However, with faith and perseverance, we can find the strength to push on and not give up. This faith and perseverance can be strengthened when we focus on the truth and realize that we're not alone. As the passage from Hebrews describes, it can be encouraging to remember that we are surrounded by such "a great cloud of witnesses." This "cloud" of support might include our current support system, as well as loved ones who have died. It also might include recognition of all those who have gone before us and faced similar struggles. Our "cloud of support" can be tangible support from individuals in our present. It can also be spiritual support connected to those we can't see our touch, but can still imagine and feel in our minds and hearts *(examples include God, angels, loved ones who have died, etc.)*

Instructions for Client:

       This worksheet is an exercise designed to help you identify the "cloud of witnesses" in your life. Please write down the names of as many potential resources as you can.

Current Support System (family, friends, etc.)   Spiritual Heroes (Jesus, pastor, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Imaginary Heroes (superhero, tv character, etc.)   Those who've faced similar struggles to you

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Instructions for Therapist:

       If after completing the brainstorming above suitable resources are available, use RDI as appropriate. If no suitable resources appear to exist, help the client to try and identify resources, or develop an achievable plan for strengthening their support system and developing new resources moving forward.

Answer Key

1. D
2. A
3. D
4. A
5. D
6. A
7. B
8. D
9. D
10. B
11. A
12. D
13. A
14. D
15. A
16. B
17. D
18. D
19. A
20. B
21. A
22. C
23. D