

# A Ten-Week Post-Trauma Growth and Wisdom Group

## Clinician Guidelines and Group Handouts

### Introduction

This group protocol is meant to provide a supportive and transformative process for individuals who:

- Have struggled with trauma or painful life experiences and seek to rebuild their lives around core values.
- Have completed a DBT program or other therapy designed to regulate emotions, and want to achieve more than emotional stability. They seek a life shaped by values and daily choices aligned with values.
- Have struggled to align their lives with core spiritual values that—while felt—have been difficult to act upon.

While the protocol is for clinicians, the downloadable handouts and worksheets are designed to be read and used by clients. The protocol is thus a step-by-step process for running the groups and a guideline for clients to learn new practices to change their lives.

This is a ten-session group protocol, with groups lasting 1.5 hours.

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## Week 1 Clinician Guidelines

### A. Overview and Purpose

Give the group members an overview of the group's purpose. Distribute **Week 1 Handout 1: Purpose of the Post-Trauma Growth and Wisdom Group**.

*Script: Ever since your life was touched by trauma or emotional pain, you've been trying to cope with the pain, and as best you can, get away from it. But the pain persisted, and sometimes you may have felt that your life was mostly about dealing with it. You may have had flashbacks, nightmares, sudden surges of anger or fear, or just a deep sadness that something was wrong with the world, with your life, even with you, as a person.*

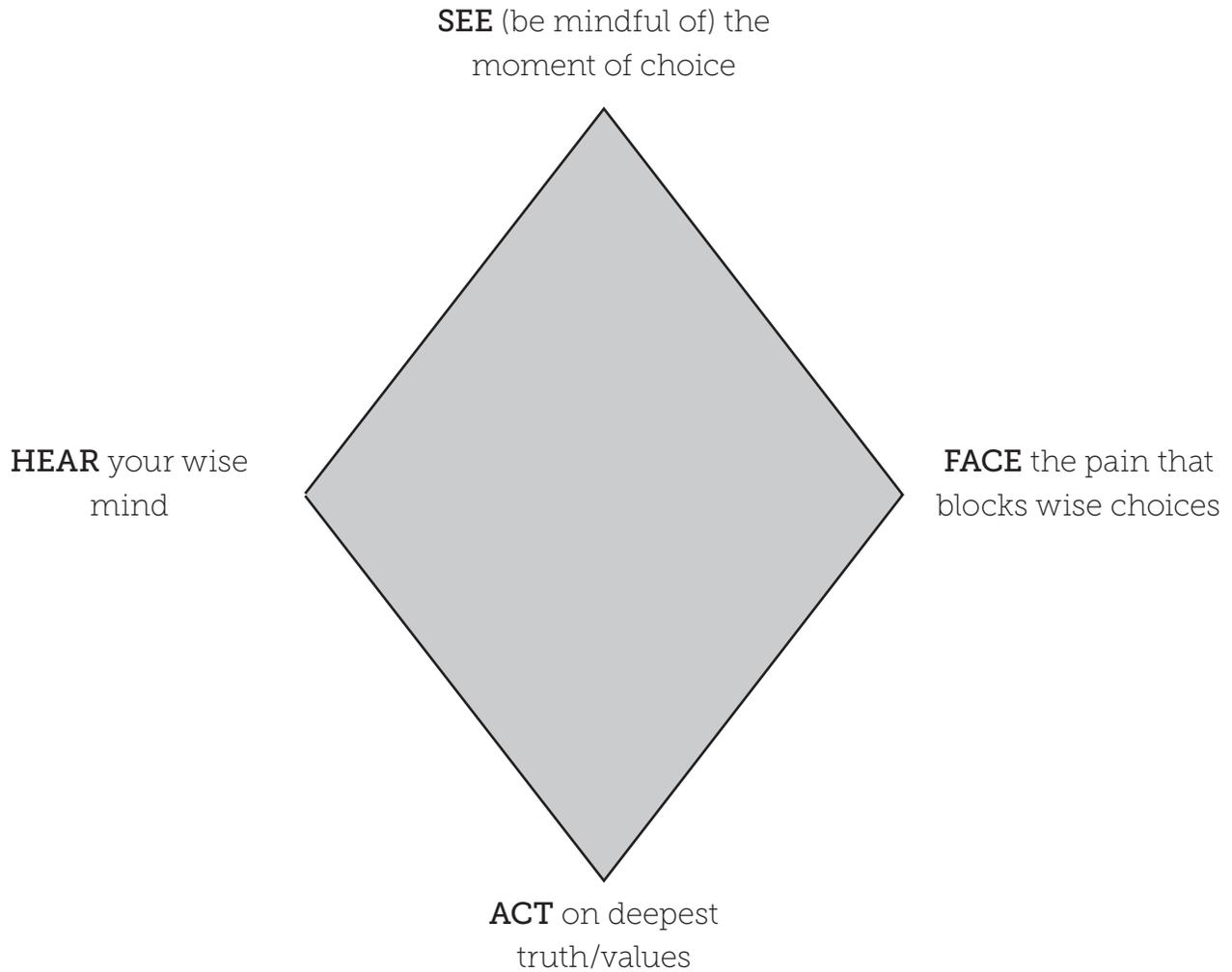
*You may be getting treatment, and some of the trauma pain and symptoms may have begun to subside. You may feel less overwhelmed by memories and emotions, and perhaps less susceptible to triggering situations. But even though feelings and symptoms may be less intense, there is one residual of pain and trauma that may persist. It's the feeling that your life is about trying to avoid pain; but not so much the things that deeply matter to you. You have, maybe for years, been trying to survive; most of the choices you've made were about trying to stay afloat.*

*Now, as you begin to recover from emotional pain and trauma, your life can be about something else. This group is about four ways you can grow:*

- 1. Learning to act on your values, your deepest truth and wisdom, at every moment of choice. Even if that choice is sometimes hard; even if that choice brings up some of your old trauma pain.*
- 2. Learning to see moments of choice you face every day that can take your life and your relationships closer or further away from what you most value, what you most care about.*
- 3. Learning to hear your own deepest truth and wisdom, as well as sources of wisdom that come from spirit or higher power.*

*Learning how to face and accept pain rather than letting it lead you away from what you value, away from your wisdom, away from the life you want to live.*

Draw the SEE/HEAR/FACE/ACT diamond diagram on a whiteboard.



*Script: This diamond shows the four core processes of our work. First, we have to see the moments of choice in our lives. This is the fork in the road where we could act on our core values or try to keep avoiding the pain.*

*The left side of the diamond focuses on the practices that allow you to hear wise mind, to listen to your deepest truth and values, or get lost in emotion mind.*

*The bottom of the diamond is about choosing to act on the things that most matter to you, while the right side helps you acknowledge and face the pain—both thoughts and emotions—that conspire to block you from doing what matters.*

## B. *Still Mind Meditation*

This meditation uses a talisman: an object of meditative focus. In communications before the group starts, clients can be encouraged to bring a talisman from home. This should be a small, easily carried object that symbolizes for the client peace, wisdom, the presence of God or spirit or higher power, love (of or for someone in particular, or universal love), nature, or spiritual awareness/truth of any kind. Clients can also draw this object or any geometric shape that can focus their attention (for example, a mandala).

Explain to the group the power of meditation (rationale):

- Quiets emotions.
- Allows a person to observe and obtain some distance from thoughts.
- Creates awareness of the moment of choice, and the ability to choose wisely.

Meditation lasts 2 to 5 minutes, focused on breath and talisman. Instruct clients that when thoughts arise, they should *notice* the thought, but immediately return attention to the breath. While focusing on breath, they should say to themselves “in” on the in-breath and “out” on the out-breath.

*Script: To begin, fix your eyes on the talisman or hold it in your hand. After a moment, begin to include awareness of your breath by noticing the movement of your diaphragm and your belly. Slowly breathe in and allow your belly to gently expand like a balloon. And then slowly exhale, allowing your belly to gently and effortlessly deflate. Now just note your breath by saying “in” to yourself on the in-breath and “out” on the out-breath. If you prefer, you can note your breath by counting each out-breath until you get to four breaths, and then start over.*

*Inevitably, as you focus on the breath, thoughts will arise. These may be memories, worries or plans about the future, ruminations about the past or why things happen, or judgments about yourself and others. As soon as you notice a thought, return your attention to your breath. When you lose track of your breathing and your mind gets caught in a chain of thoughts, don't judge yourself or feel that you've failed. This will happen again and again. It's what our minds do. Just bring your attention back to your diaphragm, the in and out of your breath.*

Once the meditation is done, debrief. Ask group members about their experiences with the meditation. You may wish to use some of the following script to guide the group's understanding of Still Mind Meditation.

*Script: As you meditate, your thoughts are likely to slow down and seem less urgent. They won't stop, but they'll get further apart. There will be spaces in between that feel peaceful and quiet, a soothing emptiness. Also, as your mind quiets, emotions may soften and quiet as well.*

*Our negative thinking drives so many of our painful emotions. As you observe and let go of worry or judgment thoughts and return to the breath, you may also watch certain painful feelings diminish. Emotions don't last long (an average of seven minutes) unless they are reinforced by our disturbing thoughts, so Still Mind Meditation, practiced daily, can have a calming effect on your emotional life. You can literally learn to watch emotions—as you observe your thoughts—rise and crest and recede. The sequence is like this:*

- *Watch your breath.*
- *Notice and let go of each thought.*
- *Watch your breath.*
- *Notice your mind gradually get a little more still, and as a result,*
- *Your emotions, no longer driven by long chains of negative thoughts, feel softer and less overwhelming.*

Distribute **Week 1 Handout 2: Still Mind Meditation**. Instruct clients to practice this meditation twice daily at home. Ask them to tie Still Mind Meditation to things that happen every day so that these events can act as cues or reminders to do the meditation (e.g., morning coffee, checking email, the time right after dinner or before bed, etc.).

### C. Values

Distribute **Week 1 Handout 3: Values**, and discuss briefly with the group what values are and what they mean.

*Script: Without values, each crossroad we reach in life has no signpost or markings, and our decision about which way to turn is based mostly on seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. But life is about more than pleasure and pain; it's about doing what matters, and being the person—at each moment of choice—who we want to be.*

*When our life feels like something is missing, when it feels wrong or without meaning, it's time to relocate our values and use them to make different choices.*

*Everyone who has struggled with trauma has suffered great pain. And it's natural—in the face of pain—to make our lives about controlling, numbing, or somehow getting rid of pain. But when we are focused on getting rid of pain, our values—the things we care most about—can get lost.*

*As the pain of trauma begins to soften, it's time to reconnect to the things that matter to you. Identifying your core values will help you, in each moment of choice, to see and take the wise path and steer away from old trauma-coping strategies that made your life feel lost and wrong.*

Distribute **Week 1 Handout 4: Values Clarification Worksheet**, and have the group members circle their top ten values.

*Script: The two kinds of values we'll look at now are SELF-GROWTH values and SERVICE (MEANING-BASED) values. In the next exercise you'll identify key values in many life domains, and then create intentions (committed actions) that can make them a part of your daily life.*

Distribute **Week 1 Handouts 5 and 6**

**Self-Growth Values:** Clients identify their personal growth values on handout 5. Direct them to identify one committed action for each value. Lead the group in a brief discussion (about 10 minutes).

**Service (Meaning-Based) Values:** Clients identify their service values on handout 6. Direct them to identify one committed action for each value. Lead the group in a brief discussion (about 10 minutes).

## D. Exploring Self-Growth Values

These two in-session exercises will help clients refine and identify their most important self-growth values. Reserve about 10 minutes for each exercise—both the experience and discussion. Have clients circle the key values on their worksheet to remember their most important self-growth values.

### Trip to a Deserted Island

*Script: Go back to your self-growth values and review them all. Now imagine that you can have all of them—without limits! Imagine that you're taking them with you on a trip to a deserted island, where you'll be staying for some time. You load your boat with your self-growth values and head out to sea. Before reading on, take out a piece of paper and create a ship's manifest—a list of the self-growth values that you packed on board.*

*As you head toward the island, you notice that your boat is at risk of taking on water from the weight of everything you brought along. You'll need to toss one of your values overboard. Have a good look at your inventory. Which value would you toss away? Once you've decided, go ahead and cross it off your list.*

*Turns out that wasn't quite enough. You're still in danger of sinking. You'll have to pick another value to cast overboard. Which one will you choose? Go ahead and select it, then cross it off your manifest. Your boat is lighter, but you're still taking on some water. It turns out you'll need to select another value to toss away. Go ahead and do that.*

*Continue with this exercise until you're down to one of your self-growth values. This will be the only value you can take with you if you're to make it to the island alive. Which one did you choose? And why did you choose it? Look to your heart and gut and see if there's something in that value that you feel strongly about. This is one of your passions.*

### If You Could Grant Only One Wish

*Script: Imagine someone very special to you. Bring this person to mind as vividly as you can. Once you do, imagine that you could grant this person a wish and it would come true. This wish is something that ought to have some durability to it. Be mindful that if you wish for something emotional or a state of mind, those tend to be ephemeral and probably won't last long. Think carefully. You only have one wish. Make it something that will last. What would it be? Take a moment and sink into what you wish for this special person. The only rule is that you can't wish for money or things—or more wishes!*

*Now pause and reflect on what you came up with. Was your wish something that you would also wish for yourself and for other human beings? Is it something that you feel strongly about or that pulls at your heartstrings? It could also be something that you seem to lack or perhaps want more of in your life.*

## E. *Exploring Service Values*

This in-session exercise will help clients identify their most salient service values—who they most want to serve, and how they might serve others. Reserve 10 minutes for the process. Have clients circle the key service values on their worksheet that grew out of this exercise.

### A Tug at Your Heart

*Script: Your pain can teach you something about what you care about. Think back over the years. Where have you suffered? Did the actions of other people contribute to that suffering? What was it that they did? Was the suffering connected to your own mistakes or ignorance?*

*Now see if you can imagine what you would need to restore your sense of wholeness, dignity, and justice.*

*Now expand your horizons to the world around you. Imagine seeing others go through pain and suffering similar to your own. You might imagine seeing this via the media, television, or movies, in your daily life, or in relationships with others who are important to you.*

*When you see others experiencing your suffering, how does that affect you? Does it tug at your heart? Do you feel a pull, a compulsion to act or defend, to reach out to alleviate that suffering, to right the wrongs, or to create peace? This is important, so take some time with it.*

*Your pain will often point to your passions, and to where you feel most compelled to reach out to others in service.*

## *Week 1 Handout 1*

# The Purpose of the Post-Trauma Growth and Wisdom Group

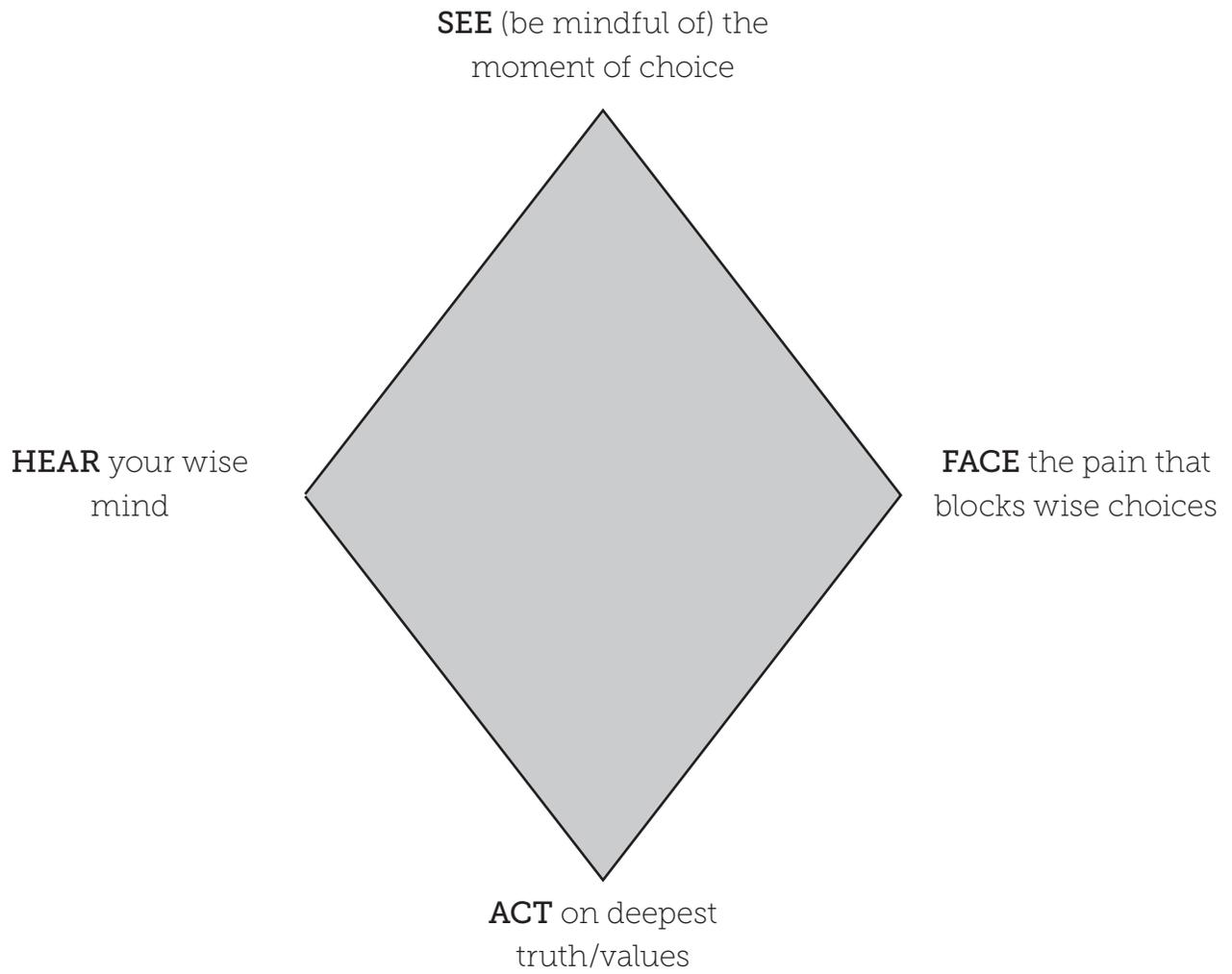
Ever since your life was touched by trauma or emotional pain, you've been trying to cope with the pain and, as best you can, get away from it. But the pain persisted, and sometimes you may have felt that your life was mostly about dealing with it. You may have had flashbacks, nightmares, sudden surges of anger or fear, or just a deep sadness that something was wrong with the world, with your life, even with you as a person.

You may be getting treatment, and some of the trauma pain and symptoms may have begun to subside. You may feel less overwhelmed by memories and emotions, and perhaps less susceptible to triggering situations. But even through some feelings and symptoms may be less intense, there is one residual of pain and trauma that may persist. It's the feeling that your life is about trying to avoid pain; but not so much about other things that even more deeply matter to you. You have, maybe for years, been trying to survive; most of the choices you've made were about trying to stay afloat.

Now, as you begin to recover from trauma, your life can be about something else. This group is about four ways you can grow after emotional pain and trauma:

1. Learning to **ACT** on your values, your deepest truth and wisdom, at every moment of choice. Even if that choice is sometimes hard; even if that choice brings up some of your old trauma pain.
2. Learning to **SEE** moments of choice you face every day that can take your life and your relationships closer or further away from what you most value, what you most care about.
3. Learning to **HEAR** your own deepest truth and wisdom, as well as sources of wisdom that come from spirit or higher power.
4. Learning how to **FACE** and accept pain rather than letting it lead you away from what you value, away from your wisdom, away from the life you want to live.

Here is our work:



## *Week 1 Handout 2*

### Still Mind Meditation

To begin, fix your eyes on your talisman or hold it in your hand. After a moment, begin to include awareness of your breath by noticing the movement of your diaphragm and your belly. Slowly breathe in and allow your belly to gently expand like a balloon. And then slowly exhale, allowing your belly to gently and effortlessly deflate. Now just note your breath by saying “in” to yourself on the in-breath and “out” on the out-breath. Thich Nhat Hanh, a famous Buddhist monk and peace activist, recommends this method. If you prefer, you can note your breath by counting each out-breath until you get to four breaths, and then start over. By noting the breath and observing the movement of your diaphragm, you are focusing attention on your center, your life force.

Inevitably, as you focus on the breath, thoughts will arise. These may be memories, worries or plans about the future, ruminations about the past or why things happen, or judgments about yourself and others. As soon as you notice a thought, return your attention to your breath. When you lose track of your breathing and your mind gets caught in a chain of thoughts, don't judge yourself or feel that you've failed. This will happen again and again. It's what our minds do. Just bring your attention back to your diaphragm, the in and out of your breath.

As you meditate, your thoughts are likely to slow down and seem less urgent. They won't stop, but they'll get further apart. There will be spaces in between that feel peaceful and quiet, a soothing emptiness. Also, as your mind quiets, emotions may soften and quiet as well.

Our negative thinking drives so many of our painful emotions. As you observe and let go of worry or judgment thoughts and return to the breath, you may also watch certain painful feelings diminish. Emotions don't last long (an average of seven minutes) unless they are reinforced by our disturbing thoughts, so Still Mind Meditation, practiced daily, can have a calming effect on your emotional life. You can literally learn to watch emotions—as you observe your thoughts—rise and crest and recede. The sequence is like this:

- Watch your breath.
- Notice and let go of each thought.
- Watch your breath.
- Notice your mind gradually get a little more still, and as a result,
- Your emotions, no longer driven by long chains of negative thoughts, feel softer and less overwhelming.

## *Week 1 Handout 3*

### Values

Our values are what shape our lives and determine the directions we will take in our lives. Our purpose, our way of navigating, is set by the core principles that guide us. Each decision we make, from how to speak to a misbehaving child to the choice of job or career, is influenced by our values.

Without values, each crossroad we reach in life has no signpost or markings, and our decision about which way to turn is based mostly on seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. But life is about more than pleasure and pain; it's about *doing* what matters, and being the person—at each moment of choice—who we want to be.

When our life feels like something is missing, when it feels wrong or without meaning, it's time to relocate our values and use them to make different choices.

Everyone who has struggled with trauma has suffered great pain. And it's natural—in the face of pain—to make our lives about controlling, numbing, or somehow getting rid of pain. But when we are focused on getting rid of pain, our values—the things we care most about—can get lost.

As the pain of trauma begins to soften, it's time to reconnect to the things that matter to you. Identifying your core values will help you, in each moment of choices, to see and take the wise path and steer away from old trauma-coping strategies that made your life feel lost and wrong.

The two kinds of values we'll look at now are SELF-GROWTH values and SERVICE (MEANING-BASED) values. In the next exercise you'll identify key values in many life domains, and then create intentions (committed actions) that can make them a part of your daily life.

## Week 1 Handout 4

### Values Clarification Worksheet

Review the list below and circle your top 10 values (no need to rank them, just choose 10):

Accountability	Discipline	Honor	Rigor
Accuracy	Discretion	Humility	Security
Achievement	Diversity	Independence	Self-Actualization
Adventure	Dynamism	Ingenuity	Self-Control
Altruism	Economy	Inner Harmony	Self-Reliance
Ambition	Effectiveness	Inquisitiveness	Selflessness
Assertiveness	Efficiency	Insightfulness	Sensitivity
Authenticity	Elegance	Intellectual Status	Serenity
Balance	Empathy	Intelligence	Service
Belonging	Enjoyment	Intuition	Shrewdness
Boldness	Enthusiasm	Joy	Simplicity
Calmness	Equality	Justice	Soundness
Carefulness	Excellence	Leadership	Speed
Challenge	Excitement	Legacy	Spontaneity
Cheerfulness	Expertise	Love	Stability
Clear-Mindedness	Exploration	Loyalty	Strength
Commitment	Expressiveness	Making a Difference	Structure
Community	Fairness	Mastery	Success
Compassion	Faith	Merit	Support
Competitiveness	Family	Obedience	Teamwork
Consistency	Fitness	Openness	Temperance
Contentment	Fluency	Order	Thankfulness
Continuous Improvement	Focus	Originality	Thoroughness
Contribution	Freedom	Patriotism	Thoughtfulness
Control	Friends	Piety	Timeliness
Cooperation	Fun	Positivity	Tolerance
Correctness	Generosity	Practicality	Tradition
Courtesy	Grace	Preparedness	Trustworthiness
Creativity	Growth	Professionalism	Truth-Seeking
Curiosity	Happiness	Prudence	Understanding
Decisiveness	Hard Work	Quality	Uniqueness
Dependability	Health	Reliability	Unity
Determination	Helping	Resourcefulness	Usefulness
Devoutness	Holiness	Restraint	Vision
Diligence	Honesty	Results-Oriented	Vitality

## Week 1 Handout 5

### Values Assessment: Self-Growth Values

1. Note which domains are important with a checkmark. Ignore unimportant domains.
2. For each checked domain, select one core value. Consult the values list if you need ideas. This value should reflect who you want to be and how most want to act in that domain.
3. In the Intention column, select one or more specific ways you might enact your value (what you would do and with whom at a particular time and place). Over time, you may add additional intentions as you complete goals or recognize new situations where you can enact your value.

DOMAINS (Write key value next to each domain you checked as important.)	INTENTIONS/COMMITTED ACTION (one specific thing you can do to turn your value into action)
<b>Personal Self-Care and Health</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Spirituality</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Creativity</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Leisure and Play</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Work and Career</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Personal Growth and Education</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Self-Kindness and Compassion</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	

## Week 1 Handout 6

### Values Assessment: Service or Meaning-Based Values

1. Note which domains are important with a checkmark. Ignore unimportant domains.
2. For each checked domain, select one core value. Consult the values list if you need ideas. This value should reflect who you want to be and how most want to act in that domain.
3. In the Intention column, select one or more specific ways you might enact your value (what you would do and with whom at a particular time and place). Over time, you may add additional intentions as you complete goals or recognize new situations where you can enact your value.

DOMAINS (Write key value next to each domain you checked as important.)	INTENTIONS/COMMITTED ACTION (one specific thing you can do to turn your value into action)
<b>Family</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Friendships and Social Relationships</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Community and Volunteerism</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Environment and Nature</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>People in Pain/Struggling</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	
<b>Creative Expression</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Important _____	

DOMAINS (Write key value next to each domain you checked as important.)	INTENTIONS/COMMITTED ACTION (one specific thing you can do to turn your value into action)
<p><b>Animals</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Important _____</p>	
<p><b>Politics and Public Policy</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Important _____</p>	
<p><b>Education and Teaching</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Important _____</p>	

## Week 2 Clinician Guidelines

### A. *Still Mind Meditation*

Lead the group in Still Mind Meditation with Self-Compassion Meditation. Discuss how clients experienced their meditation during the week. Troubleshoot.

### B. *Mindfulness of Moment of Choice*

Distribute **Week 2 Handout 1: Moment of Choice (How to Recognize That Something Important Is Happening)**

Discuss with the group the concept of mindfulness of moment of choice. Briefly define moment of choice: “The moment—particularly during stressful situations—when you are aware that you can choose either to act on values or to act on the pain itself (emotion-driven behavior).”

*Script: Every day we make choices. The problem is that our choices are often made (1) without awareness that choice is there, and (2) without using our wisdom (values that come from who we want to be and our life purpose). A practice, or discipline, is necessary to develop wise choices. It starts with the intention to recognize when choice is present. Here are the signs that a moment of choice is present:*

- *When there’s a strong emotion, it almost always means that a choice is present—to act on values or to act on pain-driven and emotion-driven urges.*
- *When you are in pain, it usually means that a choice is present—to act on values or on pain-driven urges.*
- *When you experience strong desires or impulses, it usually means that a choice is present—to act on values or on impulses.*

*These are the three states that we must train ourselves to observe: emotion, pain, and desires/impulses. We must learn to watch each. Start each day with a commitment to observe one of these states throughout the day. Rotate through all of them at least twice. At the end of each day, review what you observed, what choices showed up, and what choices were made. Write your observations and choices in a journal devoted to this purpose. This review is crucial because a lot can be learned even hours after the event has passed.*

Distribute **Week 2 Handout 2: Moment of Choice Journal**

Encourage clients to start each day with the commitment to observe (be mindful of) one of the above moments of choice throughout the day.

Have them review observed experiences at the end of each day and note choices made in a journal.

### C. *Values.*

Review and discuss success acting on values: spend 10 minutes or less highlighting how clients have put intentions into action in the previous week.

Exercise: List on a sheet of paper the most important value identified by each person. Duplicate and hand out the list so that every group member has a copy.

D. *Work at Home*

- Still Mind Meditation.
- Moment of Choice Journal.

## *Week 2 Handout 1*

# Moment of Choice (How to Recognize That Something Important Is Happening)

Every day we make choices. The problem is that our choices are often made (1) without our awareness that a choice is there, and (2) without using our wisdom and values that come from who we want to be and our life's purpose. In order to begin making healthier, wiser choices using the skills learned in the Deep Knowledge Meditation, it is necessary to practice on a regular basis.

The process starts with the intention to recognize when a choice is present to be made. Here are some signs that a moment of choice is present:

- When there's a strong emotion, it almost always means that a choice is present—to act on values or to act on pain-driven and emotion-driven urges.
- When you are in pain, it usually means that a choice is present—to act on values or on pain-driven urges.
- When you experience strong desires or impulses, it usually means that a choice is present—to act on values or on impulses.

To summarize, these are the three states that we must train ourselves to observe: emotion, pain, and desires/impulses. We must learn to be aware of each of them.

Start each day with a commitment to observe one of these states throughout the day. Rotate through all of them at least twice. At the end of each day, review what you observed, what choices showed up, and what choices were made. Record your observations in your journal. This review is crucial because a lot can be learned even hours after the event has passed.

*Week 2 Handout 2*  
**Moment of Choice Journal**

**Monday**

1. What did I observe (emotion, pain, or strong desires/impulses) and what were the details?

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2. What choices showed up?

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3. What choice did I make?

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**Tuesday**

1. What did I observe (emotion, pain, or strong desires/impulses) and what were the details?

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2. What choices showed up?

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3. What choice did I make?

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**Wednesday**

1. What did I observe (emotion, pain, or strong desires/impulses) and what were the details?

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2. What choices showed up?

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3. What choice did I make?

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**Thursday**

1. What did I observe (emotion, pain, or strong desires/impulses) and what were the details?

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2. What choices showed up?

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3. What choice did I make?

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**Friday**

1. What did I observe (emotion, pain, or strong desires/impulses) and what were the details?

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2. What choices showed up?

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3. What choice did I make?

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**Saturday**

1. What did I observe (emotion, pain, or strong desires/impulses) and what were the details?

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2. What choices showed up?

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3. What choice did I make?

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**Sunday**

1. What did I observe (emotion, pain, or strong desires/impulses) and what were the details?

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2. What choices showed up?

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3. What choice did I make?

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## Week 3 Clinician Guidelines

### A. *Still Mind Meditation*

Lead the group in Still Mind Meditation. Discuss how clients experienced their meditation during the week.

### B. *Introduce Deep Knowledge Meditation*

*Script: Now that you've had two weeks to practice focusing your attention on your breathing—observing your thoughts, emotions, and the choices you make—you've hopefully made some positive observations. Some people will notice that their emotions become more calm, relaxed, and peaceful. Some have hopefully become more aware of the moment that they make choices, whether it's the television show they choose to watch or the people with whom they choose to associate. But now it's time to go a step further in your spiritual development.*

*Deep Knowledge Meditation will help you answer the questions you have about your life and clarify your choices before you make them. For some people who grew up with traditional spiritual practices, this might sound like "praying for an answer" or "asking God what to do." If you are lucky enough to get answers to your prayers when you ask questions, then keep doing it, but if that's not part of your tradition, or if you prefer to rely on your own inner wisdom or on the divine spirit inside all of us, then try using the Deep Knowledge Meditation. Deep Knowledge Meditation will help you make wiser, more informed decisions. This practice balances your rational thoughts with your emotional impulses, while also helping you connect to your natural spiritual intuition.*

Following the meditation, lead the group in this in-session exercise.

*Script: To begin, write a question to which you wish you had an answer. A simple "yes or no" question is often easiest. Do not pick something that would radically affect your life, such as "Should I quit my job and move?" Rather, pick something simpler, such as "Should I join a gym?" (In a few days, with more practice, you can tackle the bigger questions about your life.)*

*Now, continue breathing as you did in the Still Mind Meditation and focus on your talisman. Imagine yourself connecting to your sense of "larger knowing." Perhaps you imagine a brilliant white light connecting with you at the center of your solar plexus. Whatever works best for you is okay, as long as it helps you feel a sense of connection to a higher source of wisdom or purpose. Then, after you've experienced a sense of calm, ask yourself the question that you wrote down and open yourself up to whatever you are shown or given. Maybe you'll see an image depicting what you should do, or maybe you'll hear words in your mind or just have a sense of knowing. Do your best to receive the information without judging it. Listen without judgment.*

*Part of the process of performing Deep Knowledge Meditation is to balance your thoughts, feelings, and inner wisdom. If you become overwhelmed by painful emotions or judgmental thoughts during the process of asking your question and receiving an answer, just do your best to focus on your breathing, your talisman, or your connection to your source of larger knowing. Do your best to wait for an answer that seems healthy and connected to your values. Let the judgments float past like clouds in the sky without getting attached to them.*

*Continue focusing on your breath and talisman as you connect with your intention to know what you should do. Wise mind is about choices, behavior, and doing. Visualize the situation or person that forms the source of your question. Notice what you see or hear in response to your question. Experience the desire to know wise action. Continue waiting at the heart of the intention to know until the wise action is seen or understood. Again, the answer may be in the form of words, a picture, or just a knowing. The action might be saying something specific or expressed non-verbally. Wait until you know the wise response that is accompanied by a sense of health, higher knowledge, and clarity.*

Direct the group to practice again with one or more questions.

Debrief the experience of the group and encourage them to practice daily.

Distribute **Week 3 Handout: Deep Knowledge Meditation (Making Wise Choices)**.

### *C. Review the Moment of Choice Journal*

Discuss values-based behavior versus pain-driven or emotion-driven behaviors. Are these difficult choices for clients? Now discuss matching specific values to specific situations (for example, kindness or compassion in situations where a client is angry). What values have clients chosen to act on when they were in pain? When they were highly emotional? When they were beset by impulses or desires? Explore for 5 to 10 minutes.

**Whiteboard Exercise:** On one side of the board list situations where clients faced a moment of choice. On the other side of the board, note what particular value they sought to act on (whether they ultimately acted on the value or not).

### *D. Work at Home*

- Daily intention: Encourage clients to start each day with the intention to see the moment of choice whenever there is pain, high emotion, or a strong impulse/desire.
- Practice Deep Knowledge Meditation each day, particularly focusing on wise choices in painful or emotionally upsetting situations.

## *Week 3 Handout*

### Deep Knowledge Meditation (Making Wise Choices)

Now that you've had two weeks to practice focusing your attention on your breathing—observing your thoughts, emotions, and the choices you make—you've hopefully made some positive observations. Some people will notice that their emotions become more calm, relaxed, and peaceful. Some have hopefully become more aware of the moment that they make choices, whether it's the television show they choose to watch or the people with whom they choose to associate. But now it's time to go a step further in your spiritual development.

Deep Knowledge Meditation will help you answer the questions you have about your life and clarify your choices before you make them. For some people who grew up with traditional spiritual practices, this might sound like “praying for an answer” or “asking God what to do.” If you are lucky enough to get answers to your prayers when you ask questions, then keep doing it, but if that's not part of your tradition, or if you prefer to rely on your own inner wisdom or on the divine spirit inside all of us, then try using the Deep Knowledge Meditation. Deep Knowledge Meditation will help you make wiser, more informed decisions. This practice balances your rational thoughts with your emotional impulses, while also helping you connect to your natural spiritual intuition.

To begin, write a question to which you wish you had an answer. A simple “yes or no” question is often easiest. Do not pick something that would radically affect your life, such as “Should I quit my job and move?” Rather, pick something simpler, such as “Should I join a gym?” (In a few days, with more practice, you can tackle the bigger questions about your life.)

Now, continue breathing as you did in the Still Mind Meditation and focus on your talisman. Imagine yourself connecting to your sense of “larger knowing.” Perhaps you imagine a brilliant white light connecting with you at the center of your solar plexus. Whatever works best for you is okay, as long as it helps you feel a sense of connection to a higher source of wisdom or purpose. Then, after you've experienced a sense of calm, ask yourself the question that you wrote down and open yourself up to whatever you are shown or given. Maybe you'll see an image depicting what you should do, or maybe you'll hear words in your mind or just have a sense of knowing. Do your best to receive the information without judging it. Listen without judgment.

Part of the process of performing Deep Knowledge Meditation is to balance your thoughts, feelings, and inner wisdom. If you become overwhelmed by painful emotions or judgmental thoughts during the process of asking your question and receiving an answer, just do your best to focus on your breathing, your talisman, or your connection to your source of larger knowing. Do your best to wait for an answer that seems healthy and connected to your values. Let the judgments float past like clouds in the sky without getting attached to them.

Continue focusing on your breath and talisman as you connect with your intention to know what you should do. Wise mind is about choices, behavior, and doing. Visualize the situation or person that forms the source of your question. Notice what you see or hear in response to your question. Experience the desire to know wise action. Continue waiting at the heart of the intention to know until the wise action is seen or understood. Again, the answer may be in the form of words, a picture, or just a knowing. The action might be saying something specific or expressed nonverbally. Wait until you know the wise response that is accompanied by a sense of health, higher knowledge, and clarity.

## Week 4 Clinician Guidelines

### A. *Still Mind Meditation and Compassion Meditation*

Lead the group in Still Mind Meditation with Self-Compassion Meditation (see below). Discuss how clients experienced their meditation during the week.

To create a Self-Compassion Meditation, add these instructions at the end of the Still Mind Meditation:

*Script: Now place your hand over your heart, feeling the warmth and gentle pressure of your hand...Notice your posture as if you were seeing yourself from the outside...And now bring your awareness inside your body, noting the world of sensation occurring there in this very moment—the pulsation and vibration of your body...You live in this body; let yourself be aware of your life.*

*As you hold that awareness, mentally repeat the following phrases, letting them be a deep wish for yourself:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be safe.*

*May I be healthy.*

*May I be happy and free from suffering.*

*Finally, taking a few breaths and, just resting quietly in your body, savor the goodwill and compassion that flows naturally from your own heart.*

### B. *Identifying Life Purpose*

Distribute **Week 4 Handout 1: Life Purpose Meditation**. Lead the group in the meditation, then review experiences of group members.

*Script: Take a breath—into your heart, your center. Notice the movement of your breath in your heart center. Bring your attention to that place. Every breath deepens your connection—to the center of your body, the source of life. This is the place where you know what is most important, where you remember all the lessons you have learned.*

*Make a space now at your heart, the center—the source. You can imagine it as a clearing in a lush forest. A meadow of grass and moss, in sun and shadow. This is the place to wait, to watch and listen. Find a spot where you can rest and be still. It might be a hollow in the ground, or a stump or rock to lean against.*

*Settle in now to the place you've chosen, and listen to whatever you hear. Watch whatever catches your eye—a branch moving in the wind, the grass moving. In time, if you listen and watch long enough, something will show up in the clearing. It may come through the trees, or out of the sky, or it may just appear. Don't force it or try to make something happen. Just wait as long as it takes.*

*Whatever visits you is safe and means only the best for you. Whenever it comes, it will bring a message. Something you've been waiting to know about your purpose, what you came here to do in this life. You may recognize whatever comes as a symbol, or it may just carry the message to you as a sudden knowing. An awareness.*

*You have only to wait. In the clearing. There's no need to voice it. Just allow yourself to wait and see what arises. Let time pass and be patient. But stay alert because the visit could come at any time.*

Next, do the Tombstone exercise. Distribute **Week 4 Handout 2: Making Your Tombstone Exercise.**

*Script: The Tombstone Exercise is an extremely important activity to help you imagine what others will remember about you after you've died. Granted, this exercise might be very painful for some people to complete. However, this task is critical to help you see your current life more clearly and put your current life into perspective. For example, are you living according to your values, or will the people who know you remember you for something different after you've gone? Similarly, are there actions you have taken for which you need to make amends, so that you're not remembered solely for your mistakes? Or are there actions that you still need to take for which you want others to remember you?*

*Most of us are remembered for only one or maybe two generations at most after we've died, and then all memories of us simply fade away. The Buddhists say, "All things are impermanent," meaning that all things die, fade away, and are forgotten. You and I are no different. This exercise is not meant to be morbid, nor is it meant to insinuate that your life is pointless or purposeless. Rather, it is to remind you that we have a limited amount of time to do the activities we value and to spend time with the people we love.*

*As you prepare to complete the epitaph on your tombstone, think about two things: (1) If it was written today what would it say about you?, and (2) What would you prefer it said instead? Complete both the "Today Tombstone" and the "Tomorrow Tombstone." Be honest, but not overly critical or judgmental. Sit quietly and use the Still Mind Meditation technique to calm your thoughts and emotions. Then use the technique from Deep Knowledge Meditation to seek clarity in your question about how you are going to be remembered.*

Share and review the epitaphs on both the "Today Tombstone" and "Tomorrow Tombstone." Highlight the values that are expressed and the need for potential changes in a person's life if there is a difference between what he or she would be remembered for today versus what he or she would like to be remembered for in the future.

Distribute **Week 4 Handout 3: Your Life Mission Statement Worksheet.**

*Script: Companies often create mission statements to quickly and easily remind their employees, investors, and customers of their purpose in the marketplace. Creating a mission statement for your life is a great way to summarize your life's purpose and to quickly remind yourself about the type of life you want to create when it is time for you to make a decision. Based on your experiences doing the Life Purpose Meditation and the Tombstone Exercise, did you identify any core values or central ideals? If yes, ask yourself how these inform your life's purpose. If no, ask yourself if you learned anything else that might inform you about your life's purpose. Write down your answers.*

Optional Script Addition (only use if 45 or more minutes remain in the session): *Using the technique from the Deep Knowledge Meditation, make an honest inventory of your talents, abilities, interests, pleasures, types of friendships you have, and moments of engagement, purpose, and happiness that you experience. Now ask yourself: What do all of these things have in common? What do these experiences and interests point to in terms of what you are here on this planet to be and do? Or, to think of it another way, if you were writing a book or a movie with a character like you, what would that character's life purpose be?*

*Now, put it all together and sum it all up in a Life Mission Statement. Do your best to write one for yourself for this lifetime. Keep it simple, direct, and brief, maybe three or four sentences at most. Also, keep it aligned with your values. For example, "I am a person who deeply values personal freedom, artistic creativity, spending time outdoors in nature, spending time with my friends and family, and understanding the mysteries of the human experience. I strive to discover spiritual experiences in life and fully believe that we are all divine. I believe my purpose in life is to record these wonderful experiences and to help others discover their own spiritual connections."*

*If you're having trouble summarizing your overall life's purpose, instead focus on fulfilling a single value that you hold dear. Pick a value that you can commit to working on for the near future. For example, if you're having trouble but recognize that you want to be the best friend possible to those around you, maybe your Mission Statement would say something like, "I am a person who values friendships and family members, and who tries very hard to be a good friend to the people I care about. For the near future I will focus on helping others when I can, being a good listener, and spending my free time with others. I will also do my best to improve myself so that I can become a better friend, such as by reading books on communication skills and asking my friends what I can do better to help them."*

*Hopefully it's clear why writing a Life Mission Statement is so important. Simply put, your statement has the potential to affect every choice that you make in your life, from the food you eat to how you choose to spend your free time. For example, if you value your friends and family and want to live a long life with them, then you'll hopefully also choose to eat healthily, exercise, and take care of yourself mentally and physically. As another example, if your statement includes skills that you don't currently have (like becoming a veterinarian technician), then the other choices you make in your life will need to include making time for education, saving money for other expenses, and making healthy choices about your lifestyle.*

Review each member's Mission Statement. Help them to clarify what they want their purpose in life to be.

### *C. Deep Knowledge Meditation Discussion*

Review and highlight the use of Deep Knowledge Meditation to recognize wise choice throughout the day (about 5 minutes). Explore what clients learned and observed through the use of the meditation and the attention to wise choice.

### *D. Moment of Choice and Daily Intention Discussion.*

Review the Moment of Choice Journal and the use of the Daily Intention for about 10 minutes). Explore what clients learned and observed from both the journal and the process of making daily intentions.

## E. *Work at Home*

- Still Mind Meditation (daily).
- Morning commitment to Mindfulness of Moment of Choice.
- Moment of Choice Journal (daily).
- Deep Knowledge Meditation when facing choices/decisions (as needed).

## *Week 4 Handout 1*

### Life Purpose Meditation

Take a breath—into your heart, your center. Notice the movement of your breath in your heart center. Bring your attention to that place. Every breath deepens your connection—to the center of your body, the source of life. This is the place where you know what is most important, where you remember all the lessons you have learned.

Make a space now at your heart, the center—the source. You can imagine it as a clearing in a lush forest. A meadow of grass and moss, in sun and shadow. This is the place to wait, to watch and listen. Find a spot where you can rest and be still. It might be a hollow in the ground, or a stump or rock to lean against.

Settle in now to the place you've chosen, and listen to whatever you hear. Watch whatever catches your eye—a branch moving in the wind, the grass moving. In time, if you listen and watch long enough, something will show up in the clearing. It may come through the trees, or out of the sky, or it may just appear. Don't force it or try to make something happen. Just wait as long as it takes.

Whatever visits you is safe and means only the best for you. Whenever it comes, it will bring a message. Something you've been waiting to know about your purpose, what you came here to do in this life. You may recognize whatever comes as a symbol, or it may just carry the message to you as a sudden knowing. An awareness.

You have only to wait. In the clearing. There's no need to voice it. Just allow yourself to wait and see what arises. Let time pass and be patient. But stay alert because the visit could come at any time.

## *Week 4 Handout 2*

### **Tombstone Exercise (How Do You Want to Be Remembered?)**

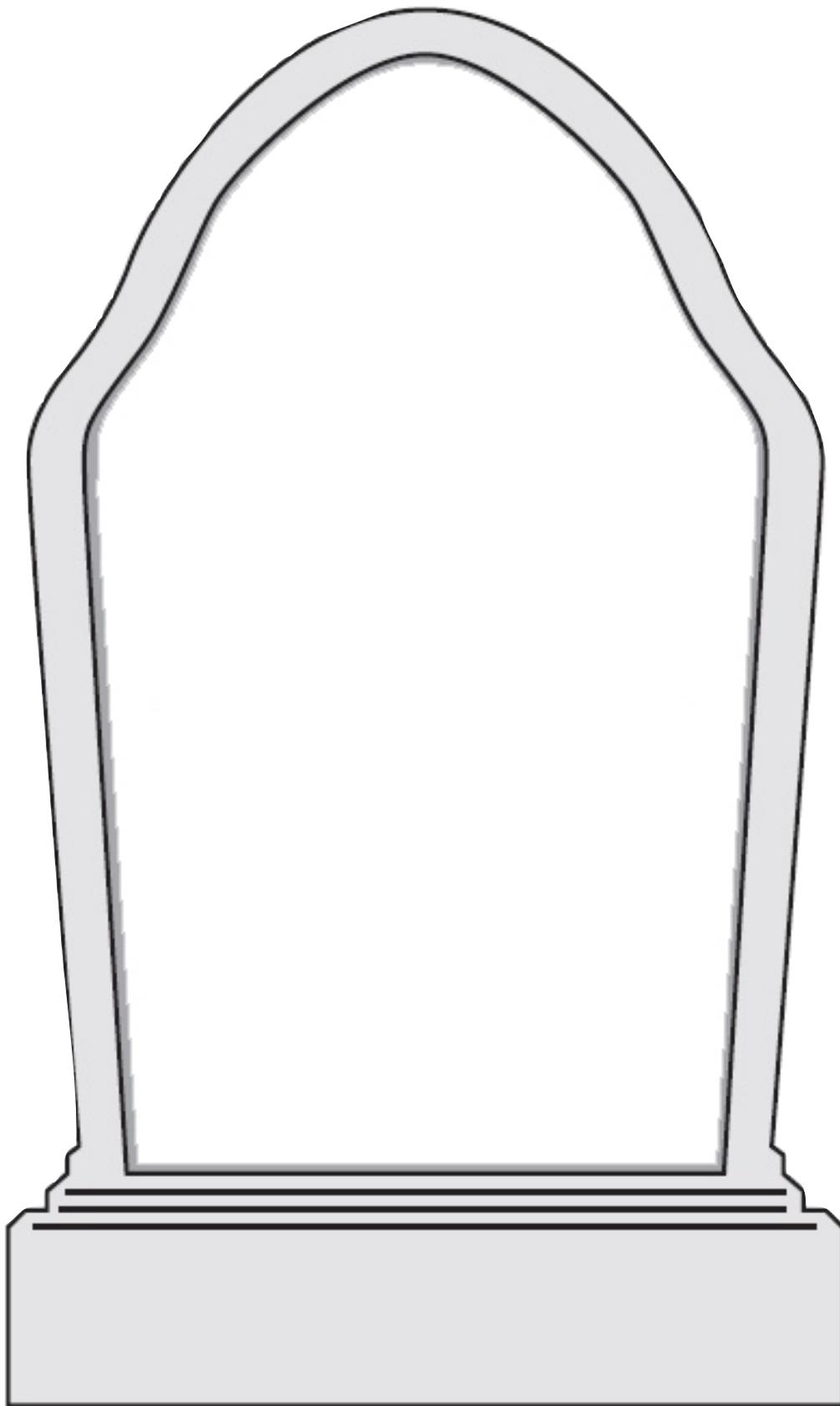
The Tombstone exercise is an extremely important activity to help you imagine what others will remember about you after you've died. Granted, this exercise might be very painful for some people to complete. However, this task is critical to help you see your current life more clearly and put your current life into perspective. For example, are you living according to your values, or will the people who know you remember you for something different after you've gone? Similarly, are there actions you have taken for which you need to make amends, so that you're not remembered solely for your mistakes? Or are there actions that you still need to take, for which you want others to remember you?

Another purpose of this exercise is to help put your life into perspective. Unless you are someone extremely famous, like a successful entertainer or a renowned politician, chances are that you will eventually be forgotten after you've died. Most of us are remembered for only one or maybe two generations at most after we've died, and then all memories of us simply fade away. If your parents are deceased you probably know where they are buried, and maybe you even know where your grandparents are buried, but what about your great-grandparents? Do you know where they are buried? And what about the generation of ancestors before them? Do you know much about your ancestors other than their names and where they lived? Most of us don't, and that isn't to say you don't care, but rather to reinforce the fact that we aren't as special as we think we are in most cases. So as you live your life, worrying about all the little things and arguing with others, ask yourself if anyone is going to care in fifty or a hundred years. Similarly, as you find the happy moments in your life and spend time with the people you care about, take time to treasure those moments, knowing how precious and short-lived they may be. The Buddhists say, "All things are impermanent," meaning that all things die, fade away, and are forgotten. You and I are no different. This exercise is not meant to be morbid, nor is it meant to insinuate that your life is pointless or purposeless. Rather, it is to remind you that we have a limited amount of time to do the activities we value and to spend time with the people we love.

As you prepare to complete the epitaph on your tombstone, think about two things: (1) If it was written today what would it say about you?, and (2) What would you prefer it said instead? Complete both the "Today Tombstone" and the "Tomorrow Tombstone." Be honest, but not overly critical or judgmental. Sit quietly and use the Still Mind Meditation technique to calm your thoughts and emotions. Then use the technique from Deep Knowledge Meditation to seek clarity in your question about how you are going to be remembered.

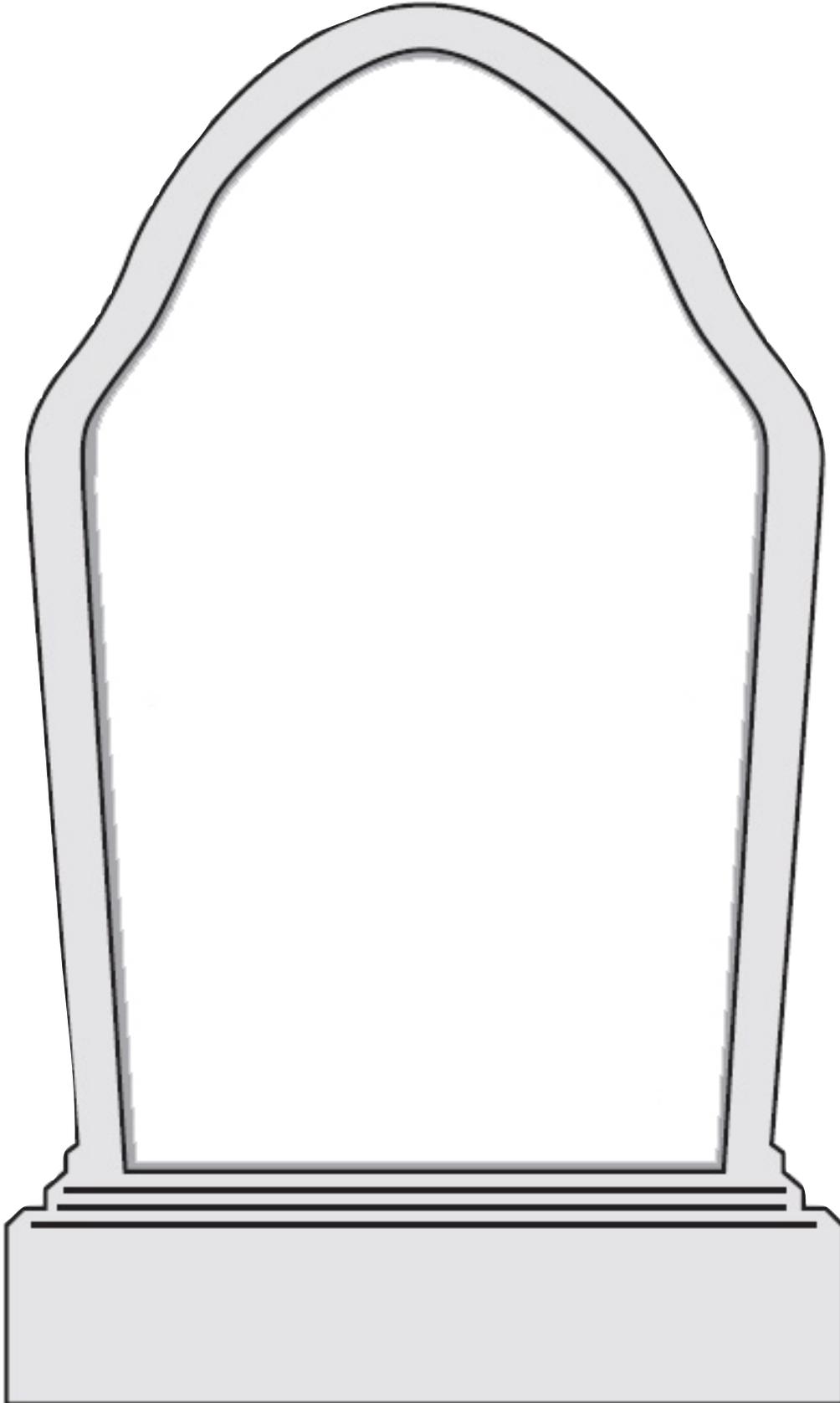
## Today's Tombstone

(What would people remember about you if you died today?)



## Tomorrow's Tombstone

(What would you prefer that people remember about you after you're gone?)



*Week 4 Handout 3*

**Your Life Mission Statement Worksheet (Identifying Your Life's Purpose)**

1. What are the core values or central ideals that play an important role in your life?

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2. What are your talents and special abilities?

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3. What are your interests and pleasures?

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4. What types of relationships do you have?

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5. What are the moments in your life that make you feel the most engaged, purposeful, and happy?

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6. Is there anything else about you that influences your life's purpose?

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7. Do these characteristics share something in common that points to anything unique or special about you?

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8. Now combine all of these elements as best you can and write a Mission Statement for your life's purpose. Keep it brief and to the point (three or four sentences at most). Make it about you, not others. And let it be exciting and motivating. You'll know you hit the mark if you feel inspired after you read it.

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9. How might your Mission Statement affect your future decisions and change the way you live your life?

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## Week 5 Clinician Guidelines

### A. *Still Mind and Self-Compassion Meditation*

Lead the group in Still Mind Meditation with Self-Compassion Meditation. Discuss how clients experienced their meditation during the week.

### B. *Moment of Choice Exposures (Visualizations)*

In this imaginal exposure, ask clients to visualize a recent situation where they had (1) a strong emotion, (2) significant pain, or (3) a strong desire/impulse. Strengthen the image by having clients notice all the visual elements, the sounds, and the kinesthetic sensations that go with it. Have them stay fully immersed in the scene until they have some degree of contact with the emotion/pain/desire that lies at its heart.

As they relive the scene, encourage clients to notice the moment of choice—where they could either act on values or act on their emotions/pain/desires. Whether or not they acted on values during the actual event, ask clients to identify what values or mission-based behavior they could have chosen at that moment.

Use a whiteboard exercise to write down key client values.

### C. *Deep Knowledge Meditation (Drawing Wisdom from Spirit)*

Lead the group in this version of the Deep Knowledge Meditation. This time, deep knowledge questions are directed to something beyond the self—the client's own personal wisdom. Questions can be directed to Source/Creator, Higher Power, the Divine, All That Is, etc. As an alternative, clients can direct questions to spirit guides, loved ones who are in spirit, guardian angels, or other sources of wisdom outside the self. The talisman can now be used to represent—or symbolize—a particular source of spiritual wisdom and guidance. This segment should take about 30 minutes.

### D. *Work at Home*

- Still Mind and Self-Compassion Meditation (daily).
- Moment of Choice Journal to record important choices/decisions during the week (daily).
- Practicing Deep Knowledge Meditation regarding distressing or painful situations (as needed).

## Week 6 Clinician Guidelines

### A. *Still Mind and Self-Compassion Meditation*

Lead the group in the Still Mind Meditation with Self-Compassion. Discuss, debriefing how clients experienced the meditation during the week.

### B. *Moment of Choice*

Discuss and debrief clients' experience of noticing moments of choice throughout the week.

### C. *Barriers to Values and Mission*

Script: *Now it's time to explore what gets in the way of enacting your values. There are two main barriers that show up when you start to act on values-based intentions:*

- *negative thoughts*
- *painful emotions*

*Typical thought barriers include predictions such as, "I won't be able to do this . . . I'll fail . . . something bad will happen," etc. Emotions that become barriers are fear, shame, sadness or despair, anger, discouragement, guilt, etc. These thought and emotion barriers can block your best intentions.*

*Right now, let's look at some of the barriers you've encountered as you put your values into action. (Write "thoughts" on white board.) What thoughts have shown up that made it hard to act on values? (List all the thoughts reported by group members.)*

*Now let's see what kinds of emotions have been barriers to your intentions.*

Write "emotions" on the white board and list emotional barriers suggested by group members.

### D. *Acceptance Meditation*

Clients start with Still Mind Meditation, then expand the meditation to observe and accept painful emotions, sensations, and thoughts that clients have identified as barriers to values/mission.

Explore the concept of willingness—choosing to feel and experience all there is to experience, no matter how painful, in the service of acting on values/mission.

Distribute **Week 6 Handout 1: Acceptance Meditation**

### E. *Barriers Worksheet and Log*

This is an opportunity for each group member to examine specific barrier thoughts and feelings that get in the way of values-based intentions. (The choice is always: trying to get rid of these painful thoughts and feelings, or acting on values.)

Distribute **Week 6 Handout 2: Barriers Worksheet and Log**. Have clients fill in worksheet, identifying key barriers for each value.

Teach the group members the path to overcoming barriers:

- Willingness.
- Remembering life purpose/mission.
- Developing a clear intention—both generic at the start of each day and particular values-based intentions.

### F. *Work at Home*

- Morning commitment to Mindfulness of Moment of Choice.
- Moment of Choice Journal to record important choices/decisions during the week (daily).
- Barriers Worksheet and Log (1 or 2 times during the week).
- Acceptance Meditation (daily).

## Week 6 Handout 1

### Acceptance Meditation

You can practice this exercise whenever you feel distressed in your daily life. If you prefer to listen to the instructions, first record them on your smartphone.

To begin, find a place where you won't be disturbed for at least 15 minutes. Turn off the ringer on your smartphone. Find a comfortable position to relax, whether you're sitting or lying down. Then use Still Mind Meditation to help you breathe and focus for two or three minutes. Allow your belly to gently expand as you breathe in and effortlessly collapse as you breathe out. Find a slow, natural rhythm of breathing and allow your body and mind to relax. Establish your breath as the center of your awareness.

When you are ready, discover where the stress or difficult emotion manifests in your body. You might notice tension, pain, an itch, or just a strange sensation in your body. Just notice it without judging it, and place your attention there for a minute.

Next, *soften* toward that stress or difficult emotion in your body. Allow the muscles to release around it. Just notice the feeling or emotion without trying to control or push it away. Your body can be soft around the edges of the feeling, making room for it. Letting go...letting go...letting go of tension around the edges of the feeling.

As you're observing, if you experience too much discomfort from an emotion, just do your best to note your experience and return to the rising and falling of your breath; use your breath as your anchor. Do your best not to judge your emotion and not to get distracted by it.

Similarly, if a difficult thought arises, do your best to just notice it and let it go. Again, return to the rising and falling of your breath as your anchor. Do your best not to judge yourself or the thought.

Now *hold* the feeling or emotion kindly. Move your hand to cover and hold the spot. Breathe into that feeling; breathe in a kind regard for that stress or difficult emotion. Think of this place as yours to take care of, to hold as if it were precious and needing your love.

Finally, let this feeling or emotion be. *Let it be* there without resistance. Let it go or stay. Let it change or not change. Let it be where it is or move. Let it be what it is, making room for it, holding it, accepting its presence in your body and your life.

Soften...hold...let be. Soften...hold...let be. Soften...hold...let be. Repeat these words to yourself, holding any pain you may have kindly. Allowing it to stay or leave or change.

As you continue, allow difficult thoughts to arise—just noticing them and letting them go.

As you continue, you may find that the emotion moves in your body, or even changes into another emotion. Try staying with your experience, continuing to use the technique of Soften—Hold—Let Be.

Finally, return your attention to your breath, simply noticing the rising and falling of your breath: breathe in and breathe out. Then, when you are ready, slowly open your eyes when you're done.



## Week 7 Clinician Guidelines

### A. *Still Mind Meditation and Self/Other Compassion Meditation*

Lead the group in Still Mind Meditation with Self/Other Compassion Meditation. Discuss how clients experienced their meditation during the week.

To create a Self/Other compassion meditation, add these instructions at the end of the Still Mind Meditation:

*Script: Now place your hands over your heart, feeling the warmth and gentle pressure of your hand... Now bring to mind a person who makes you smile, who naturally brings happiness to your heart... Let yourself feel what it's like to be in that person's presence... Now recognize that this person wishes to be happy and free of suffering. As you hold that awareness, mentally repeat the following phrases, letting them be a deep wish:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be safe.*

*May you be healthy.*

*May you be happy and free from suffering.*

*Now bring to mind the image of a difficult person. Remind yourself that the difficult person is struggling to find his or her way through life, and in doing so is causing you pain. Mentally repeat:*

*Just as I wish to be peaceful and free from suffering, may you too find peace.*

*May you be safe.*

*May you be healthy.*

*May you be happy and free from suffering.*

*Now bring your awareness inside your own body, noting the world of sensation there at this very moment. You live in this body—let yourself be aware of your breath, your life force. As you hold that awareness, mentally repeat the phrases:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be safe.*

*May I be healthy.*

*May I be happy and free from suffering.*

*Finally, taking a few breaths, just rest quietly, savoring the good will and compassion.*

Distribute **Week 7 Handout 1: Compassion Meditation Phrases.**

### B. *Review Barrier Worksheet and Log*

Encourage group members to share experiences regarding the barrier worksheet and log. What barriers did they encounter during the week? What actions or strategies did they use to overcome certain barriers? For one or two barriers that were difficult to surmount, brainstorm with the group possible actions that might help.

### C. *Moment of Choice Exposure*

Explore barriers to values-based choices that came up during the exercise. How did group members deal with barriers during the moment of choice exposure?

### D. *Deep Knowledge Meditation—On the Go*

*Script: The Deep Knowledge Meditation can be modified for use any time, anywhere, especially in situations in which you are feeling painful emotions or facing difficult choices.*

*Instructions are as follows:*

1. *Take one deep breath.*
2. *Focus on or visualize the talisman.*
3. *Ask the question.*
4. *Listen for the answer.*

Distribute **Week 7 Handout 2: Deep Knowledge Meditation—On the Go**

### E. *Work at Home*

- Practice Deep Knowledge Meditation—*On the Go* throughout the week in situations requiring an immediate choice.
- Continue the Moment of Choice Journal or the Barriers Log (1-2 times during the week).
- Continue Self and Other Compassion Meditation (daily).
- Continue Acceptance Meditation (daily).

## *Week 7 Handout 1*

### Compassion Meditation Phrases

Place your hand over your heart and notice the warmth and gentle pressure there. After noticing your breath for a little while, begin to repeat these phrases:

May you be peaceful.

May you be safe.

May you be healthy.

May you be happy and free from suffering.

May I be peaceful.

May I be safe.

May I be healthy.

May I be happy and free of suffering.

## *Week 7 Handout 2*

### **Deep Knowledge Meditation—On the Go**

Use this version of the Deep Knowledge Meditation any time, anywhere, especially in situations in which you are feeling painful emotions or facing difficult choices.

1. Take one deep breath.
2. Focus on or visualize the talisman.
3. Ask the question.
4. Listen for the answer.

## Week 8 Clinician Guidelines

### A. *Still Mind Meditation and Self/Other Compassion Meditation*

Lead the group in the Still Mind Meditation with Self/Other compassion. Discuss, debriefing how clients experienced their meditation during the week.

### B. *Deep Knowledge Meditation Discussion*

Review and troubleshoot Deep Knowledge Meditation—*On the Go*. Solicit and explore situations where clients have used the meditation successfully and unsuccessfully in the last week.

### C. *Review Barriers Worksheet and Log*

Problem-solve cognitive and emotional barriers that show up when clients attempt to act on values-based intentions. (10 minutes)

### D. *Acceptance Meditation*

Return to and do the Acceptance Meditation and discuss how willingness to feel whatever there is and acceptance of painful thoughts and feelings can help clients act on values and intentions, and stay in alignment with life purpose and mission.

### E. *Mindfulness of the Moment of Choice and Other Practices*

Discuss the morning commitment to Mindfulness of the Moment of Choice. Are clients continuing to make this commitment? If not, encourage clients to return to it and problem-solve around barriers. For those who are using it, discuss ways it helps them choose values over pain-driven and emotion-driven responses.

Distribute **Week 8 Handout: Checklist of Practices**, and have clients mark with an X practices they do at least once a week, and with a 0 practices they would like to do. (10 minutes)

### F. *Work at Home*

Encourage clients to do practices marked with an X or a 0 on their Checklist of Practices.

Ask them to set a desired frequency (or days reserved for the practice) for each practice marked with an X or a 0, and to commit to this plan for the coming week.

*Week 8 Handout*  
**Checklist of Practices**

- Still Mind Meditation
- Still Mind and Self/Other Compassion Meditation
- Deep Knowledge Meditation
- Morning commitment: Mindfulness of Moment of Choice
- Moment of Choice Journal
- Acceptance Meditation
- Remembering Life Purpose/Mission
- Barriers Worksheet and Log

## Week 9 Clinician Guidelines

### *A. Still Mind and Self/Other Compassion Meditation*

Lead the group in the Still Mind Meditation with Self/Other compassion. Discuss, debriefing how clients experienced their meditation during the week.

### *B. Return to Life Purpose/Mission*

How have clients enacted their work on life purpose and mission? How has acting on life purpose or values made changes in clients' lives? Use the whiteboard to list some of these experiences. Encourage sharing.

### *C. Review Barriers Worksheet and Log*

List on the whiteboard some of the barriers to values and life purpose clients are encountering. Encourage clients to problem-solve some of these barriers as a group and list possible solutions on the whiteboard. Emphasize the importance of willingness and acceptance in the process of acting on values and life mission.

### *D. Acceptance Meditation*

Lead clients through the Acceptance Meditation. Encourage discussion of what this feels like and how clients may use acceptance during the week. How are meditations supporting clients' ability to engage in more values-based action?

### *E. Review Client Practices*

What practices on their checklist will they commit to do this week?

## Week 10 Clinician Guidelines

### A. *Still Mind and Self/Other Compassion Meditation*

Lead the group in the Still Mind Meditation with Self/Other compassion. Discuss, debriefing how clients experienced their meditation during the week.

### B. *Deep Knowledge Meditation*

Review and troubleshoot Deep Knowledge Meditation. Encourage clients to expand situations where they use Deep Knowledge Meditation—*On the Run*, particularly where pain, strong emotions, or impulses are pushing them *away* from values and life purpose.

### C. *Choices and Barriers*

Review client experiences with choices toward values/mission versus barriers that may have blocked those choices.

### D. *Group Experience*

Review the practices and group experience. What are clients' strongest memories of the group and their practices? What worked best? What didn't work so well?

### E. *"One Thing" Exercise*

What's the one most important thing each client achieved as a result of the group? Celebrate that—perhaps list on the whiteboard.

### F. *Long-Term Plan Review*

Distribute **Week 10 Handout 1: Long-Term Plan Review** and **Week 10 Handout 2: Long-Term Plan Worksheet**. Discuss the need to practice skills regularly and emphasize the use of the handout to maintain what clients have achieved.

## *Week 10 Handout 1*

# Long-Term Plan Review (How to Continue Making Progress in the Future)

If you've completed the Ten-Week Post-Trauma Growth and Wisdom Group, and all of its exercises, you've likely seen some progress in challenging your trauma-related symptoms. You've learned how to make choices based on your values, how to recognize and calm your thoughts and feelings, and how to develop your own deeper wisdom. Your key to success in the future will depend on your continuing to practice these skills and continuing to make choices based on your values. Simply put, the more consistent your choices are with your values, the more fulfilling your life will feel despite the impact of the trauma on your life. Conversely, the more inconsistent your choices are with your values, the more unfulfilling your life will feel.

That's why it's so important to monitor your progress each day, or at a very minimum every week. Every day, or every week, ask yourself if you've made choices based on your values and your Life Mission Statement. Print out copies of your Mission Statement and post them in your home, car, workspace, and other places where you'll see it regularly (or take a photo and keep it on the phone for easy access). Take every moment to remind yourself what your current purpose is here on this planet. Then, using Deep Knowledge Meditation, make choices based on your goals. You'll recognize when you're "off course" or drifting from your life's purpose because your life will start to feel more painful, unfulfilling, empty, and purposeless. When that happens you simply need to return to your Mission Statement and start making choices based on your values.

For these reasons, it's critical that you continue practicing your meditation skills and review your values and Mission Statement on a regular basis. If you do this consistently, you are likely to find satisfaction, purpose, and meaning in your life despite the impact of the trauma.

