

Lesson 01 Workbook

A Trauma Management Protocol: Beyond War and Violence

*A self-guided,
evidence-informed
protocol.*



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A Trauma Management Protocol

What to Expect

A Trauma Management Protocol is a compassionate, self-guided, and trauma-informed framework designed to help you gently understand your nervous system's stress responses, navigate triggers and intrusive memories, and gradually rebuild daily structure and a sense of personal agency over time. We recognize that living through overwhelming events, loss, or ongoing uncertainty can feel exhausting and disorienting.

That is why this protocol is structured as an invitational, non-pressured space for learning and self-regulation—serving as a grounded supportive resource alongside your broader journey rather than a replacement for clinical treatment or emergency care.

Our goal is to help demystify the physiological, cognitive, and relational impacts of traumatic stress. By bridging practical psychological insights with an understanding of your body's natural survival alarms, we invite you to move away from self-blame and step into a more informed, compassionate, and empowered way of living.

How It Works

Trauma affects the entire system—altering body arousal, emotional regulation, thoughts, and daily relationships. Rather than viewing these reactions as personal weaknesses or character flaws, this protocol treats them as understandable survival adaptations that can be softened and grounded through targeted, phase-based skills:

- **Safety & Somatic Stabilization:** Learning to downshift physiological hyperarousal and shutdown using gentle, non-demanding body practices—such as paced breathing, muscle release, and sensory grounding—to communicate present-moment safety back to your nervous system.
- **Differentiating “Then” from “Now”:** Developing skills to recognize common environmental and internal triggers, creating space between trauma memories and current reality so unhelpful beliefs have less grip on your life.
- **Rebuilding Daily Rhythms & Agency:** Restoring predictable, manageable routines around sleep, gentle movement, and daily tasks using tiny, achievable behavioral steps that prove to your system that your choices still matter.
- **Relational Safety & Values-Guided Living:** Navigating communication boundaries, honoring grief and continuing bonds, and reconnecting with your core values and strengths as a survivor—allowing you to move forward at a pace your system can tolerate.

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An Important Safety Reminder

This protocol is educational and supportive. It is not a substitute for psychotherapy, medical care, or crisis intervention. If your symptoms are severe, rapidly worsening, or involve immediate concerns regarding your safety, please reach out to qualified professional services or local emergency care alongside these self-guided materials.

A Word from Our Director

Trauma Management Protocol: Beyond War and Violence

If you are reading this, you may be living with memories that feel almost too much to bear—images of ruined streets, missing loved ones, or young people sent to fight and never returning. The destruction of homes and communities, and the loss of so many young lives, are not distant headlines; they are painful reminders that war and political violence tear through real families and real futures.

In my clinical work, it became clear very quickly that in war there are no true winners. The suffering reaches everyone: children growing up in fear, civilians trying to rebuild from ruins, and combat personnel who come home with invisible wounds. I once worked with a sniper who clung to official justifications for violence, repeating them like a script, even as he privately admitted he no longer wanted to live with what he had seen and done. His story, like many others, showed me how deeply war can damage the human spirit.

This **Trauma Management Protocol** grows out of a deep empathy for all who are touched by conflict and violence—civilians, former fighters, aid workers, and witnesses from afar. It brings together traumainformed, evidencebased methods, gentle bodybased practices, and simple exercises to help you find moments of safety, steadiness, and connection in the middle of very hard circumstances. It is not a replacement for intensive therapy, but it is designed to be an accessible online resource you can use at no cost, wherever you are, and at your own pace.

As you move through this workbook, you are invited to take things slowly, pause when you need to, and return to the practices that offer even a small sense of relief. You cannot change what has happened, but you can strengthen how you carry it—and you do not have to do that alone.

Gary Pike
Clinic Director
wisemind.com

Lesson 1: What Trauma Is and How War Affects the Mind

WHEN TO USE	PURPOSE	OVERVIEW
Complete after listening to Lesson 1. Go slowly, pause freely, or skip activating prompts.	Normalize reactions as adaptive survival responses and initiate safety and grounding.	Build psychoeducational clarity on war stress across mind, body, and relationships.

COMPANION NOTES

Foundations of Trauma & Early Recovery

1. Key Idea from Lesson 1

Trauma is not a sign of personal weakness. Trauma reactions occur when the body and mind are overwhelmed by danger, displacement, helplessness, loss, or ongoing threat, keeping the nervous system locked in survival mode.

2. Common Trauma Reactions Across Life Domains

DOMAIN	COMMON MANIFESTATIONS
Body	Fast heartbeat, shaking, muscle pain, chronic tiredness, poor sleep, frequent nightmares.
Thoughts	Self-blame, racing fear, hopeless thoughts, trouble focusing, constant sense of worry.
Feelings	Fear, anger, pervasive sadness, guilt, emotional numbness, acute grief, shame.
Behaviour	Avoiding reminders, isolating from loved ones, hypervigilance, checking for danger.
Relationships	Trouble trusting others, pulling away, interpersonal conflict, feeling alone, fear of loss.

3. Early Recovery Focus: Safety & Stabilization

Early trauma recovery prioritizes establishing safety and stabilization. Psychoeducation clarifies why symptoms occur, normalizes triggers, and builds accessible stabilization tools before any deep trauma processing begins.

4. Helpful Reminders to Ground Yourself

- My reactions make sense in light of what I have survived.
- My body is operating to protect me from harm.
- Healing is not all-or-nothing; recovery begins with small, steady steps.
- I have permission to pause, ground myself, and request support.

**THIS IS A PREVIEW ONLY OF
THE TRAUMA MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL
WORKBOOK FOR AUDIO LESSON 01**

wisemind.com members can access the full
workbook. [Sign up or login to access the whole
workbook.](#)

Evidence Base & References

EMPIRICAL SUPPORT

Key clinical research underpinning psychoeducation, safety-first protocols, and phased trauma recovery in humanitarian contexts.

1. Traumatic Stress in Times of War: A Shared Responsibility for Health Systems

Global Mental Health Journal Article (2025). Available via PubMed Central.

Describes how armed conflict produces immediate and sustained distress (PTSD, depression, anxiety, grief) when structural supports collapse. It underpins Lesson 1's principle that trauma is an understandable response to extreme events rather than personal pathology, highlighting system-level responsibility.

2. From Trauma to Recovery: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis on Psychosocial Interventions

Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 32(6), e70192 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.70192>

Demonstrates that scalable psychosocial interventions offer measurable improvements in mental health and functioning for war victims. Supports the lesson's premise that recovery is attainable through structured, early-stage psychosocial support rather than purely medicalized modalities.

3. Trauma, PTSD, and Psychosocial Support Interventions in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas

XCEPT Research Report (2025).

Evaluates interventions in fragile settings, supporting phased, context-sensitive models combining stabilization and psychoeducation prior to exposure. Echoes Herman's framework by treating distress as a normal human reaction to extreme sociopolitical disruption.

4. Phase-Based Versus Non-Phase-Based Psychological Interventions for PTSD

Journal of Affective Disorders Reports, 14, 100628 (2026).

Confirms that multi-phase interventions integrating safety and stabilization prior to memory processing achieve superior outcomes in emotion regulation. Empirically validates Lesson 1's role as a non-retraumatizing, stabilizing entry point.

5. Trauma, Stress, and Mental Health Outcomes

Hosted on PMC (2025).

Examines multi-systemic impacts across cognition, affect, and somatic systems, identifying evidence-based interventions and social support as primary protective factors that normalize somatic reactions and foster long-term recovery trajectories.

Key Points to Remember: Audio Lesson 01

List the 6 *Key Points to Remember* as mentioned at the end of [Audio Lesson 01](#):

Key Point 1......
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Key Point 2......
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Key Point 3......
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Key Point 4......
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Key Point 5......
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Key Point 6......
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