

Lesson 02 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 trauma-informed, evidence-based methods, gentle body-based 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 2: Safety, Stabilization, and Crisis Planning

WHEN TO USE	PURPOSE	OVERVIEW
Complete after listening to Lesson 2. Stop if you feel too activated, and focus on physical safety first if in real danger.	Notice current safety, identify early warning signs of overwhelm, and establish a practical personal safety plan.	Build stabilization tools (slow breathing, grounding) and identify when self-guided care is not enough and urgent help is needed.

COMPANION NOTES

Foundations of Crisis Planning & Self-Regulation

1. Key Idea from Lesson 2

Early trauma recovery often begins with safety and stabilization. This means helping the person become safer, calmer, and more able to think clearly before doing any deeper trauma work.

2. What Safety Means

TYPE OF SAFETY	WHAT IT MAY MEAN
Physical Safety	Protection from immediate harm, violence, or danger.
Emotional Safety	Having simple ways to settle fear, panic, or overwhelm.
Relational Safety	Having at least one trusted person, place, or service to contact.
Practical Safety	Knowing what to do, where to go, and who to call if risk increases.

3. Warning Signs of Overwhelm

An early clue that stress is rising and extra grounding or support is needed:

- Racing heart, tight breathing, shaking
- Feeling unreal, numb, or trapped
- Thinking "I cannot cope" or wanting to run away
- Sudden anger, crying, or inability to think clearly

4. Calming and Grounding Tools

Brief, practical actions to return attention to the present moment:

- Slow breathing & feet on the ground
- Naming things you can see, feel, and hear
- Holding an object; noticing its texture
- Orienting to the room; steadying statements

5. Crisis Boundaries

Self-guided tools can help many people, but they are not enough in every situation. Urgent outside help is needed when there is immediate danger, strong self-harm risk, inability to care for oneself or dependents, escalating flashbacks or panic that do not settle, or ongoing violence and protection concerns.

WORKSHEET 1 • REVIEW OF THE AUDIO LESSON

Core Conceptual Takeaways

Complete the sentences below after listening to the audio lesson. Short answers are fine.

1. One main idea I remember from this lesson is:

Write your reflection here...

2. The lesson taught that safety means:

Write your reflection here...

3. One sentence from the audio lesson that stood out to me is:

Write your reflection here...

4. One thing I learned about crisis planning is:

Write your reflection here...

WORKSHEET 2 • MY CURRENT SAFETY CHECK

Immediate Safety & Needs Assessment

Read each line and tick the answer that fits best right now. This worksheet helps the learner review current safety level and immediate needs.

RIGHT NOW:

1. Am I in immediate physical danger?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

2. Does my body feel as if danger is here right now?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

3. Do I know where I can go if I need help?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

4. Do I know at least one person or service I can contact?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

5. My safety level right now feels:

☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

Reflection: What makes my safety level feel this way?

Write your reflection here...

**THIS IS A PREVIEW ONLY OF
THE TRAUMA MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL
WORKBOOK FOR AUDIO LESSON 02**

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 and empirical support for emotion regulation, autonomic stabilization, and crisis safety planning.

1. The Benefits of Grounding Strategies in Emotion and Arousal Regulation

Demierre Berberat, P. (2023). *Mental Health & Human Resilience International Journal*, 7(2), 233–241.

Reviews how grounding strategies modulate emotional distress and physiological arousal, bringing attention back to the present moment during episodes of overwhelm. Directly supports Lesson 2's use of sensory grounding and orientation as first-line tools when stress spikes or flashbacks occur, validating them as accessible, low-intensity skills for self-guided crisis planning.

2. Stress Reduction Experiments in Daily Life: Scaling from the Lab to the Field

Laborde, S., et al. (2024). *npj Mental Health Research*, 3(1), 14.

Synthesizes experiments demonstrating that paced-breathing exercises with a longer exhale than inhale produce short-term improvements in autonomic regulation (heart-rate variability) and subjective affect. Underpins Lesson 2's emphasis on extended outbreaths as an immediate calming tool during acute stress or panic within unstable environments.

3. Efficacy of Progressive Muscle Relaxation in Adults for Stress, Anxiety, and Depression

Systematic Review (2024). *Journal of Integrative Medicine*, 22(1), 1–15.

Finds that progressive muscle relaxation reliably reduces stress, anxiety, and depression across 24 stress studies and 21 anxiety studies. Supports Lesson 2's integration of brief somatic tension-and-release exercises as a scalable, non-pharmacological method to dampen physiological activation during early stabilization.

4. The Effectiveness of Breathing and Relaxation Techniques on Somatic Tension and Anger

Randomized Controlled Trial (2025). *Journal of Personality and Psychosomatic Research*, 3(1), 45–62.

Demonstrates that structured programs combining diaphragmatic breathing and muscle relaxation significantly reduce somatic tension and trait anger, with gains maintained at five-month follow-up. Validates pairing slow breathing and physical release as core self-regulation elements in crisis management.

5. Empirical Studies on Sensory-Based Grounding Methods for Dissociation and PTSD

Kim, J., D'Andrea, W., Briere, J., & colleagues (2025 review of 2010–2020 studies). *Grounding Techniques for Overcoming Dissociation*.

Shows that sensory grounding exercises improve emotion regulation and reduce dissociative and PTSD symptoms when tailored to individual contexts. Frames grounding as a vital first-stage stabilization tool that prepares individuals for deeper trauma processing and functions reliably in temporary shelters and queues.

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