

Lesson 03 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
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Lesson 3: Grounding the Body and Calming the Nervous System

WHEN TO USE	PURPOSE	OVERVIEW
Complete after listening to Lesson 3. Try one skill at a time and stop if an exercise feels too activating.	Review short, repeatable body-based practices that lower physiological arousal and support return to the present moment.	Track body state before and after exercises to build practical tools for shelters, shared spaces, or moving.

COMPANION NOTES

Somatic Regulation & Present Orientation

1. Key Idea from Lesson 3

Grounding helps a person return to the present moment when stress, panic, flashbacks, or dissociation pull attention away. Practices do not need to be long; short, repeatable tools help the body feel steady and less overwhelmed.

2. Body Signs of Activation or Shutdown

STATE	COMMON SIGNS
High Activation	Fast breathing, tight chest, shaking, racing thoughts, feeling jumpy, panic.
Shutdown / Disconnection	Numbness, feeling unreal, heaviness, fogginess, feeling far away, blankness.

3. Grounding Tools Reviewed

- Paced breathing:** Slow breaths with an extended exhale.
- Feet on the ground:** Noticing physical floor contact.
- Surroundings orientation:** Naming objects and colors.
- Sensory & muscle release:** 3-2-1 senses and tension release.

4. Before and After Tracking

Notice whether the body changes, even subtly. Track breathing, shoulder and jaw tightness, hand tension, ground contact, and general distress before and after each practice to find what fits best.

5. Real-World Use in High-Stress Environments

In humanitarian and high-stress settings, tools that can be executed quietly, without equipment, and in shared rooms or queues are the most effective for restoring stability.

WORKSHEET 1 • REVIEW OF THE AUDIO LESSON

Core Somatic Concepts

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

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

Write your reflection here...

2. The lesson taught that grounding is:

Write your reflection here...

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

Write your reflection here...

4. One thing I learned about my body is:

Write your reflection here...

WORKSHEET 2 • MY BODY CHECK BEFORE PRACTICE

Baseline Somatic Inventory

Before doing a grounding practice, notice how your body feels right now. This helps you compare "before" and "after".

BREATHING

- ☐ Fast
- ☐ Slow
- ☐ Shallow
- ☐ Steady
- ☐ Hard to notice

SHOULDERS

- ☐ Tight
- ☐ Raised
- ☐ Heavy
- ☐ Relaxed

JAW

- ☐ Tight
- ☐ Clenched
- ☐ Loose
- ☐ Not sure

HANDS

- ☐ Tense
- ☐ Shaky
- ☐ Cold
- ☐ Calm
- ☐ Numb

FEET / LEGS

- ☐ Grounded
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Shaky
- ☐ Far away
- ☐ Not sure

Overall Distress Level Right Now:

- ☐ Low
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ High

**THIS IS A PREVIEW ONLY OF
THE TRAUMA MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL
WORKBOOK FOR AUDIO LESSON 03**

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 somatic grounding, paced breathing, and autonomic regulation.

1. Earthing (Grounding) the Human Body and Cardiovascular/Autonomic Balance

Chevalier, G., Sinatra, S. T., Oschman, J. L., Sokal, K., & Sokal, P. (2012). Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, 18(2), 1–10.

Shows that direct physical grounding produces measurable changes in autonomic balance, heart rate variability, and stress physiology. This aligns with Lesson 3's use of floor contact and body awareness to influence physiological arousal, confirming that grounding produces observable somatic shifts toward a calmer nervous system state.

2. Acute Effect of Breathing Exercises on Muscle Tension and Psychological Stress

Kotański, K., et al. (2023). International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20(11), 6235.

Finds that slow, mindful breathing acutely reduces muscle tension and psychological stress compared with baseline breathing. Underpins Lesson 3's use of paced breathing with extended exhalations in non-clinical environments, proving that short, repeatable breathing practices remain effective in temporary shelters or on the move.

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

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

Concludes that progressive muscle relaxation reliably reduces somatic distress across diverse adult samples. Validates Lesson 3's brief tension-and-release exercises for hands, shoulders, and jaw, demonstrating that even low-intensity, targeted muscle release significantly lowers physiological arousal.

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

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

Highlights how sensory grounding (3-2-1 technique), room orientation, and present-moment statements modulate emotional arousal and interrupt overwhelm. Supports the lesson's delivery as an accessible, self-guided toolkit that can be deployed outside specialist clinical settings.

5. Emotional Stress, Heart Rate Variability, Grounding, and Improved Autonomic Balance

Chevalier, G., et al. (2015). Integrative Medicine: A Clinician's Journal, 14(3), 16–24.

Demonstrates that repeated body-anchored grounding practices reduce emotional stress and enhance heart rate variability. Provides an empirical psychophysiological foundation for Lesson 3's core principle that brief, consistent somatic exercises build durable internal stability over time.



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