

3 Phases of Healing from Trauma

Healing from trauma is a transformative journey, often experienced in distinct stages. While the process is deeply personal, understanding these phases can provide clarity, validation, and a sense of direction.



CHAOS
Phase 1



REGULATE
Phase 2



INTEGRATION
Phase 3

Phase 1: Chaos In this initial phase, life feels overwhelming and unmanageable. Individuals may feel stuck in survival mode, unsure how to help themselves. A triggering event—such as a loss, a major life change, or a relationship conflict—often amplifies the sense of chaos.

Signs of Chaos Phase:

- Emotional overwhelm or numbness.
- Difficulty maintaining daily routines or responsibilities.
- Heightened anxiety, depression, or physical discomfort.

Key Focus:

The goal is to stabilize and create a sense of safety. Support might include reaching out for help, identifying small, manageable steps, or prioritizing basic needs like sleep, hydration, and nourishment.

Phase 2: Regulate This phase is about actively learning tools and techniques to regain stability and self-regulation. While this process requires effort and consistency, it lays the groundwork for lasting healing.

Examples of Tools and Techniques:

- **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Cultivating awareness of the present moment.
- **Daily Routines:** Building structure to create predictability and safety.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** Identifying and reframing unhelpful thought patterns.
- **Physical Exercise:** Engaging the body to release tension and support healing.

At this stage, individuals often feel like they are “managing” their healing, consciously practicing these tools to navigate challenges.

Key Focus:

Consistency is key, but so is flexibility. It’s okay to experiment and discover what works best for you. These tools are like building blocks that can be relied upon even in future moments of stress.

Phase 3: Integration In this phase, the skills and practices learned in Phase 2 become second nature. What once required effort and intention now feels organic, as though it’s part of the individual’s natural rhythm.

What Integration Looks Like:

- Using grounding techniques instinctively in stressful situations.

- Feeling a greater sense of balance and resilience in daily life.
- A sense of increase capacity to deal with comes your way.
- Experiencing a deeper connection to personal values and inner wisdom.

Key Focus:

Integration is about embodying success—both cognitively and somatically. The nervous system learns and adapts, making it easier to navigate future challenges.

Healing as a Lifelong Process Healing from trauma is not always linear. Life's stressors may cause a return to earlier phases. However, once someone has progressed through these stages, their body holds the successes of that journey.

- **The Body as a Resource:** Each phase contributes to a deeper sense of safety and resilience that resides in the body. This embodied wisdom makes it easier to move through the phases again, should the need arise.
- **Returning to Regulation:** If the integration phase begins to falter, individuals can rely on the tools and practices from Phase 2. These are reliable anchors—both cognitively and somatically—that can help them regain stability.

A Note on Growth:

Every return to earlier phases is an opportunity to build on past successes and deepen self-awareness. The healing process is cyclical, with each cycle offering new opportunities for growth.

Credits:

This concept is inspired by Steve Hoskinson, whose work emphasizes the body's innate intelligence and capacity for healing through Somatic Experiencing