

# Strategic Trauma & Abuse Recovery©: A Source-Focused Model for Healing

## Introduction

STAR is an evidence-derived, structured process for conducting trauma recovery education and treatment. “Evidence-derived” means that it is built using techniques similar to evidence based treatment models, including: Exposure Therapy, Emotional Reprocessing Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. In addition, the process is, in part, influenced by Alcoholics Anonymous© and spiritually integrated therapies.

Techniques utilized in the STAR 3-phase process have been built to support the heart of the model which is relationship. While the developmental context has been one of Christian spiritual belief, like A.A. terms like “Higher Power” can be alternately inserted for use in non-Judeo Christian environments or for people who may be not yet able to acknowledge God. The term Higher Power can refer to any power which transcends the individual, and each individual gets to determine this for themselves. It is intended to meet individuals where they are. The point is to acknowledge that we cannot heal ourselves from trauma and must surrender to the healing process which is designed by God. Acknowledging powerlessness over the wound of trauma, the act of having been wounded, and the offender creating the wound can be intimidating, but is a necessary step in the healing process. Turning to a “higher power” for safety and stability while the wound is healing can be comforting, encouraging, and provides a sense of security necessary to address the wound.

The Backbone of S.T.A.R. is *The 3 Progressive Phases of Trauma and Abuse Recovery©*. These 3 phases are further broken down into 12 stages, which provides for transitions and breaks down the process in a simpler fashion. The stages provide a strategy for moving through the healing process, much like a map.

## The 3 Progressive Phases of Trauma and Abuse Recovery©

### **Phase One-Safety and Stabilization: Feeding my FAITH**

1. I admit that I am wounded by a relationship, a substance, or an event, and I am accepting that I am powerless over the wound, the wounding, and the one creating the wound.
2. I have decided to give up trying to fix myself and will humbly ask a Higher Power to heal me; fully understanding that healing will require my participation.
3. I am accepting that I have to grieve in order to heal and I’m determined to give up any substance use that results in numbing my grief and I will allow myself to feel as I move through the healing process even though it will be painful and scary at times.
4. I am forming a partnership with at least one other person (counselor or recovery coach) to boldly identify and process in a focused and structured manner the people or events that have wounded me.

### **Phase Two-Grieving and Reprocessing: Snowballing my HOPE**

1. I am courageously choosing to tell my story using structure and detail to my counselor/recovery coach, and, when possible my fellow burden bearers.
2. I am identifying the beliefs that have grown out of the hurtful events, along with my initial survival responses.

3. I am humbly identifying and admitting to myself, my partner or group, my own survival responses even when they contradict my own expectations of myself.
4. I am embracing and grieving all of the losses I experienced during this source of trauma; those the offender caused me, and those caused by my own survival responses.
5. After completing this thorough inventory of my experiences, contradicted expectations, losses, survival behaviors and the losses these caused me, I humbly and courageously choose forgiveness; forgiving my offender for robbing me and forgiving myself (as I have been forgiven) for my responses.
6. I understand that healing is an ongoing process from the inside-out, and I humbly acknowledge where I've come from and those who have contributed (including my Higher Power) to my healing and will make a spiritual or personal marker to represent where I have traveled on my path of healing with this source of trauma.

### **Phase Three Integrating and Reconnecting: Activating my LOVE**

1. I am beginning to intentionally move toward reconnecting with myself, with God (as I understand Him), and with others.
2. I am remaining open to identifying other wounds in my life that need to be healed, without attempting to heal them myself, while maintaining a willing attitude to work through these steps again if necessary, or to assist someone else who needs to work through these steps to healing.

## Training for Treatment Providers

Training is provided for professional counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, addiction counselors, pastoral counselors, students working toward licensure or certification in the behavioral health field, and experienced lay-counselors working under supervision. At this time, certification is not offered, but the author intends to build toward providing a certification in the future. Current training will serve as the "level 1" requirement.

Current training consists of 2 or 3 day workshops which cover the following information:

1. The need for trauma recovery
  - a. Research on the impact of trauma including the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study and others.
    - i. Impact on adult addiction.
    - ii. Impact on serious social problems.
    - iii. Impact on severe and persistent emotional problems.
    - iv. Impact on self-perception.
    - v. Impact on adult disease and disability.
    - vi. Impact on spirituality and spiritual development.
    - vii. Impact on neurological development.
    - viii. Impact on society financially.
  - b. Implications for evaluation and treatment
  - c. Research supporting a paradigm shift in our understanding of addiction.
2. Developing a more usable and accurate definition of psychological trauma.

- a. Addressing the research gaps in the ACE Pyramid using the Trauma Survivor Blueprint©
3. Implementing Trauma-Informed care using a Source-Focused© Treatment Model
4. Strategic Trauma and Abuse Recovery©
  - a. The 3 Progressive Phases of Trauma and Abuse Recovery©
    - i. Phase 1: Safety and Stabilization
    - ii. Phase 2: Reprocessing and Grieving
    - iii. Phase 3: Reconnecting and Integrating
5. Phase 1: Safety and Stabilization
  - a. Goals
  - b. Tasks
  - c. The 4 Stages
  - d. Using “Inside-Out Recovery: Let the Healing Begin”
    - i. Structure
    - ii. Resources
6. Phase 2: Reprocessing and Grieving
  - a. Requirements
  - b. The 6 Stages
  - c. Increased structure
  - d. Stage 1
    - i. Structured Writing
    - ii. Structured processing
    - iii. Demonstrate and Role Play non-addict client.
    - iv. Working with addiction as trauma.
    - v. Demonstrate and Role Play addict group.
    - vi. Practice one-on-one
7. The Value and Importance of Grief
8. Phase 2: role play continues
9. Impact of trauma on family systems: lecture and role-play. Using STAR with families as an intervention.
  - e. Stage 2: Lecture and role-play
  - f. Stage 3: Lecture and role-play
  - g. Stage 4: Lecture and role-play.
  - h. Stage 5: Lecture and role-play.
  - i. Stage 6: Lecture and role-play.
10. Phase 3: Reconnecting and Integrating
11. STAR and its theoretical underpinnings.
12. Implementing the program in your setting.
13. Review and test.