

# Restoring a Sense of Well-Being After Trauma

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Outline, notes, handouts, and references are here: <https://www.annegiles.com/wellbeing/>

## Overview

1. Definitions of terms:  
*mental health*: able to value and engage  
*well-being*: a state of *contented* mental health  
*trauma*: experience so alarming and painful that it overwhelms the brain
2. Maintaining a sense of mental health and well-being:  
self-kindness, self-care, awareness, emotion regulation
3. Impact of trauma on mental health and well-being (our focus):  
attention; attention to thoughts; attention to self, others, and the world; self-efficacy
4. How to begin to restore a sense of well-being? Acknowledge. Adjust.

## Breakout session questions

**1. *Self-care.*** How are you doing with the fundamentals of self-care: sleep, nutrition, exercise, schedule? In what areas do you have the strongest self-care practices? In what one area do you think a small improvement might have a significant positive impact on your sense of mental health and/or well-being?

**2. *Emotion regulation.*** What do you find activating? In what situations do you find yourself feeling intense emotions very quickly? Where are you, who is present, what is happening? [Consider transforming vocabulary from "triggering" to "activating." "Awareness circles" handout is a visual depiction of using the fundamentals of cognitive behavior therapy and mindfulness to regulate emotions.]

**3. *Acknowledge reality as it is.*** Now that you've got your emotion regulation skills in place, what realities do you think you need to acknowledge? About your interiority, your words and actions, your situation, and the context of reality as it is? What is "the writing on the wall billboard"?

**4. *Attention to thoughts.*** If you imagine the content of your thoughts as a pie chart or circle graph, what percentage of your thoughts are about the past, the present, the immediate future, or the longer-term future? What percentages do you think would enhance your sense of well-being?

**5. *Attention to self, others, and the world.*** After examining the three-lane highway metaphor handout, to what lane do you think you give most of your attention? What awarenesses and insights do you gain from answering that question?

**6. *Self-efficacy*** is the belief in one's capability to produce desired outcomes *within one's realm of influence*, i.e. within one's own lane. What is the smallest unit of self-efficacy in which you might engage after this workshop that might foster your sense of well-being?

**7. *Acknowledge. Adjust.*** With self-kindness, with emotion regulation skills in place, with attention management skills in place, with the writing on the billboard acknowledged, *towards a sense of well-being*, what skills will you use and what next steps will you take?