

Developing compassionate resilience as part of a phased approach to treating complex PTSD: 12 session group outline.

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Level: Intermediate to Advanced

This workshop outlines theory, therapeutic aims and practice of using compassion focused therapy to develop compassionate resilience in those who suffer from complex PTSD. The literature suggests that a phased based approach is appropriate to consider in treating complex PTSD. Most evidence based practice suggests that phase 1 develops stabilisation, phase 2 develops psychological life skills and phase 3 attends to trauma memory work.

The therapeutic work presented in this workshop can be considered as part of phase 2 as compassionate resilience enhances affect regulation, interpersonal functioning, problem solving and the ability to hold trauma memories with a caring compassionate mind. For instance shame-based trauma memories are highly distressing and disturbing for most people. High levels of self-criticism appear to maintain the sense of current psychological threat. The personal meaning conveyed in the fragmented images and flashbacks is often painful, condemning and shaming. Compassionate resilience enhances feelings of self-soothing and safeness in these memories and reduces self-critical maintenance cycles by developing compassionate self-talk. It helps the development of the capacity to self-soothe to those who feel deeply shamed about who they are and what they have been through.

The workshop will present the 12 session group outline used by Berkshire Traumatic Stress Service to develop compassionate resilience as part of a phased based approach to treating complex PTSD.