



DENVER WELLNESS COUNSELING

CLIENT WORKBOOK | Small t Trauma

In therapy we often talk about “big T” or “little t” traumas. A big T trauma is something that is obviously and objectively traumatic, such as an incident of abuse, or an experience where we thought we may die. Little t traumas are less obvious, but just as powerful and influence how we think/feel/act in the present. Little t traumas are often repetitive and build over time.

Look through the following examples of “small t trauma” and circle any that apply to you:

- Bullying by family or peers
- Lack of eye contact by primary caregivers
- A shortage of love or affection by primary caregivers
- Lack of emotional attunement by primary caregivers (emotional experiences are not validated, nor responded to with empathy)
- Emotional abuse, criticism, name-calling, being yelled at or threatened
- Being adopted
- Having parents who have unrealistically high standards, are overbearing, or critical
- Being ignored or neglected
- School problems or lack of success in academics
- Infidelity by a partner – either physical or emotional
- Being in a controlling/abusive relationship
- Divorce – either parents or self
- Feeling alienated, or separate/different from the social group for any reason, including disabilities, sexual orientation, sexual identity, cultural issues, weight, etc.
- Moving multiple times as a child/adolescent
- Repeated conflict or estrangement from family
- Illness – physical or mental/emotional
- Legal troubles, and/or being incarcerated
- A parent with legal troubles or incarceration
- A parent with substance abuse issues
- A parent with mental health issues (PTSD, depression, trauma, narcissism, borderline)
- Poverty
- Oppression
- Racism