



Healing the Mind, Body & Spirit Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars”. Kahlil Gibran

The Surviving Spirit Newsletter July 2022

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“Art is an effort to create, beside the real world, a more humane world.” - Andre Maurois

“The art of healing comes from nature, not from the physician. Therefore the physician must start from nature, with an open mind.” - Paracelsus

1] [What Happens When We Reconnect With Nature](#) By Rochelle Calvert @ Mindful

Why take your mindfulness practice outside? Rochelle Calvert explains how being in nature releases us from needing to “try” or “do,” so that we can feel more connected to the world around us.

Nature is always changing, evolving, letting go, surrendering, adapting, dying—revealing to us how it is to be alive.

These are beautiful lessons. If we are present in our lives, we can awaken to our own true nature and experience being more fully alive.

- <https://www.mindful.org/what-happens-when-we-reconnect-with-nature/>

“By giving ourselves unconditional kindness and comfort while embracing the human experience, difficult as it is, we avoid destructive patterns of fear, negativity, and isolation.” - Kristin Neff

“Resilience is based on compassion for ourselves as well as compassion for others.” – Sharon Salzberg

2] [10 Health Benefits of Drumming](#) - The Health Benefits of Beating Your Own Drum by Christiane Northrup, M.D.

Not long ago I watched a video on social media showing a room full of women in a guided drumming class drumming and moving to their beats. My first thought was “How fun! I want to do that!” I mean, who doesn’t want to feel like a rock star?

Cardio drumming classes, such as Drums Alive and Pound, have been around for a few years. But, the benefits you receive when you take this type of class are so much greater than those of your average aerobics class. For one thing, everyone is smiling and having a ball! It doesn’t surprise me that this trend has come around now and is especially popular with women because drums put us in synch with Mother Earth. In fact, in ancient cultures sacred drumming was performed by women.

Drums have been used in every culture for many purposes from religious rituals and other ceremonies, to sporting events, and as a way to communicate or signal. Shamans used drumming as a means of reaching an altered or trance-like state so that they can connect with the spirit dimension. Drumming has also been used therapeutically since ancient times.

- <https://www.drnorthrup.com/health-benefits-drumming/>

2a] [Playing the Congas & having fun!!!](#) - Michael Skinner - YouTube 1:02 minutes

Some time for fun and working off stress!!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3YNLIsczys>

“Life is about rhythm. We vibrate, our hearts are pumping blood, we are a rhythm machine, that's what we are.” - Mickey Hart

“You can only really hear the beat of your own drum if you give yourself the space to sit in it.” - Ari Graynor

3] [An activist and artist examines policing, incarceration and trauma - through poetry](#) By Raul A. Reyes @ NBC News

The written word and its power have long fascinated poet [Christopher Soto](#). “I started writing poetry in the first grade,” he said, “so I always knew I wanted to write. Basically, writing has been an obsession for me.”

Soto, 31, is [garnering widespread praise](#) for his [debut poetry collection](#), “Diaries of a Terrorist,” that takes on violence, policing and trauma.

“The heart of the book is to create a world without policing and human caging,” said Soto, who identifies as nonbinary and uses the pronouns he/they. “As poets, we are daydreamers, the people who imagine the world as we want it to be.”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/activist-artist-examines-policing-incarceration-trauma-poetry-rcna35919>

“Poetry is language at its most distilled and most powerful.” - Rita Dove

“When power leads man toward arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the area of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses.” - John F. Kennedy

4] [Choice Heals - The WiseCrackers Group](#) - for any peer over 50 years of age

mutual peer support for 50 years+ mental health change-makers

Mondays

*Pacific Time: 4pm – 5:30 pm

*Mountain Time: 5pm – 6:30 pm

*Central Time: 6pm – 7:30 pm

*Eastern Time: 7pm – 8:30 pm

Register - <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ldO2rrzIjH9LxVrvc-hCamirNM-Lgbzbx>

“The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love.” - Hubert H. Humphrey

“The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing... not healing, not curing... that is a friend who cares.” - Henri Nouwen

5] [How to talk to your employer about trauma](#) by Stefanos Nachmias @ Medical Press

The impact of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a hidden chronic mental health issue in the workplace. A 2016 [survey of U.K. adults](#) found that one in five people between the ages of 18 and 74 said they had experienced at least one form of child abuse, whether emotional, physical, or sexual abuse or witnessing domestic violence, before the age of 16.

For many of those 8.5 million people, the experiences will continue to affect them into adulthood, in the form of trauma. They might experience [panic attacks](#), flashbacks or intense and ongoing emotional upset due to what they experienced earlier in life.

These mental health challenges affect all areas of a trauma survivor's life, but can be particularly detrimental in the workplace. Poor concentration, problems with trust, and feeling disconnected or socially isolated are all symptoms that trauma survivors [report experiencing](#) at work.

The pandemic has enabled us to talk more about well-being and psychological safety [at work](#). But getting support for trauma and PTSD at work isn't always simple. It can be extremely challenging for a survivor to openly discuss their trauma. It can even lead to a recurrence if they are exposed to people, incidents, or environments that cause them to relive their experiences.

But not disclosing can also be harmful.

– <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-05-employer-trauma.html>

“Most of us carry more than our fair share of shame, I will not add to the problem by using cruel, clever words to humiliate a fellow human being. In doing so, I would be shaming myself.” - Courage to Change

“We ought not to insist on everyone following in our footsteps, nor to take upon ourselves to give instructions in spirituality, when perhaps, we do not even know what it is.” - Teresa of Avila

6] [HOP – Honest, Open, Proud Program](#) – to erase the stigma of mental illness

Why Honest, Open, Proud?

Research shows those who have disclosed aspects of their mental illness report a sense of personal empowerment and an increase in confidence to seek and achieve individual goals. HOPp is a three-session group program run usually by pairs of trained leaders with lived experiences with the objective of reducing the self-stigma associated with mental illness.

The three lessons include:

1. Considering the Pros and Cons of Disclosing:

My identity and mental illness.
Secrets are part of life.
Weighing the costs and benefits of disclosing.

2. Different ways to Disclose:

Five ways to come out.
Testing a person for disclosure.
How might others respond to my disclosure?

3. Telling your Story:

How to tell a personally meaningful story.
Who are peers that might help me with coming out?
Review how telling my story felt.
Putting it all together to move forward.

– <http://www.comingoutproudprogram.org/>

“Nothing on earth consumes a man more completely than the passion of resentment.” Friedrich Nietzsche

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” - Helen Keller

7] [How stress affects your brain](#) - Madhumita Murgia – YouTube 4:16 minutes

Stress isn't always a bad thing; it can be handy for a burst of extra energy and focus, like when you're playing a competitive sport or have to speak in public. But when it's continuous, it actually begins to change your brain. Madhumita Murgia shows how chronic stress can affect brain size, its structure, and how it functions, right down to the level of your genes.

Lesson by [Madhumita Murgia](#), animation by Andrew Zimbelman.

– <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuyPuH9ojCE>

“Don't be afraid to cry. It will free your mind of sorrowful thoughts.” – Hopi

“Grown men can learn from very little children for the hearts of the little children are pure. Therefore, the Great Spirit may show to them many things which older people miss.” – Oglala Lakota Sioux

8] [Year of the Tiger – An Activist's Life](#) by Alice Wong - Penguin Random House Books

This groundbreaking memoir offers a glimpse into an activist's journey to finding and cultivating

community and the continued fight for disability justice, from the founder and director of the [Disability Visibility Project](#).

In Chinese culture, the tiger is deeply revered for its confidence, passion, ambition, and ferocity. That same fighting spirit resides in Alice Wong.

Drawing on a collection of original essays, previously published work, conversations, graphics, photos, commissioned art by disabled and Asian American artists, and more, Alice uses her unique talent to share an impressionistic scrapbook of her life as an Asian American disabled activist, community organizer, media maker, and dreamer. From her love of food and pop culture to her unwavering commitment to dismantling systemic ableism, Alice shares her thoughts on creativity, access, power, care, the pandemic, mortality, and the future. As a self-described disabled oracle, Alice traces her origins, tells her story, and creates a space for disabled people to be in conversation with one another and the world. Filled with incisive wit, joy, and rage, Wong's *Year of the Tiger* will galvanize readers with big cat energy.

- <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/688504/year-of-the-tiger-by-alice-wong/>

“In helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us.” – Flora Edwards

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.” – Charles Dickens

9] [Poor Physical and Mental Health Among Older Adults Linked to Childhood Abuse History](#) - Neuroscience News - Source: University of Toronto

Summary: Older adults who experienced physical abuse as children are significantly more likely to develop chronic pain and other chronic health issues. Additionally, they are also three times more likely to develop mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety.

They were also twice as likely to develop depression and anxiety disorders compared to those without this early trauma.

“Sadly, our findings suggest that the traumatic experience of childhood physical abuse can influence both physical and mental health many decades later. It also underlines the importance of assessing for adverse childhood experiences among patients of all ages, including older adults,” said Anna Buhrmann, who began this research for her undergraduate thesis in the Bachelor of Arts and Science program at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario and is a research assistant at the Institute of Life Course & Aging at the University of Toronto.

The physical illnesses that developed included diabetes, cancer, migraines, arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, and chronic-obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The links between childhood abuse and poor physical and mental health persisted even after accounting for income, education, smoking, binge drinking, and other causes of poor health.

“Health professionals serving older adults need to be aware that it is never too late to refer people for

counseling.

- <https://neurosciencenews.com/child-abuse-aging-health-20980>

“It shouldn't hurt to be a child.” - Unknown

“You can recognize survivors of abuse by their courage. When silence is so very inviting, they step forward and share their truth so others know they aren't alone.” - Jeanne McElvaney

10] [Strong Link Found Between Emotional Childhood Abuse and Schizophrenia-Like Experiences in Adulthood](#) - Neuroscience News - Source:University of Hertfordshire

Summary: Study reveals a strong association between emotional abuse experienced during childhood and an increased risk of developing schizophrenia-like symptoms in adulthood.

A new University of Hertfordshire study has, for the first time, identified a strong link between childhood emotional abuse and schizophrenia-like experiences in healthy adults, such as paranoia, hearing voices, and social withdrawal.

Researchers say that those who have experienced emotional abuse in early life are 3.5 times more likely to have schizophrenia-like experiences in adulthood. Researchers also say that the more significant the abuse, the more severe the schizophrenia-like experiences adults have.

The research, published in PLOS ONE, is the first to summarize and quantify studies (25 in total) that have explored the relationship between childhood trauma and schizophrenia-like experiences in over 15,000 healthy people.

Researchers at the University of Hertfordshire analyzed the findings of past research to see whether specific types of abuse, such as emotional, sexual and physical abuse, as well as emotional and physical neglect, increased the likelihood of having schizophrenia-like experiences in later life.

They found a much stronger link between childhood emotional abuse and schizophrenic-like experiences in adulthood than other types of childhood abuse.

The relationship between childhood trauma and schizophrenia, a serious mental health condition, is well known. However, far less research has examined the impact of childhood trauma on the prevalence of less severe schizophrenia-like experiences in healthy adults.

- <https://neurosciencenews.com/child-abuse-schizophrenia-20944/>

“You can recognize survivors by their creativity. In soulful, insightful, gentle, and nurturing creations, they often express the inner beauty they brought out of childhood storms.” - Jeanne McElvaney

“Don't hide your hurt, beautiful soul. Grab a hold of it. Run it through the purifying flame of your heart and mold it into something beautiful. Allow the depths of your pain to expand the breadth of your compassion. Gather up your stumbling stones and build a bridge for someone else. Remember what it's

like to be lost in darkness so you can be someone else's much needed light. Don't deny your pain or bury it away. Let it rise to the surface. And then transform it into something that makes it worthwhile."
- Cristen Rodgers

11] [Compassion It](#) - Sara Schairer - TEDxUCSB – YouTube 18:11 minutes

In my heart of hearts, I believe that if every single person including our leaders would Compassion It as often as we google it, we will not only heal ourselves but we will solve many of our worlds problems This talk was given at a TEDx event using the TED conference format but independently organized by a local community.

– <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcM1y72kGkk&t=20s>

"Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day." – Sally Koch

"If you want to touch the past, touch a rock. If you want to touch the present, touch a flower. If you want to touch the future, touch a life." – Unknown

12] [Writing Therapy Author - Capture Life Writing](#) - Mary Clista Dahl

Rewriting The Current Concept Of Mental Illness

Mary Clista Dahl was born with a violet-colored, fine point plastic pen in her mouth. She learned how to command that at age three and has written about anything and everything since, first publishing in her early twenties.

She enjoys working with the energy and enthusiasm of the teen and young adult populations, and spent thirty-five years in higher education guiding students toward their chosen careers before making her own vocational shift to integrative health, consciousness studies and neuroscience, where she uses writing, listening, nature, human connection and other compassionate tools to bring hope and restore mental, physical and spiritual health to her earth family. An avid nature lover, Mary lives in a home in western New York that is a certified National Wildlife Habitat. She is transforming that into a wellness resource center.

Mary is passionate about connecting, conversing with and uplifting her fellow humans, so feel free to contact her here.

You will always get a personalized response. No canned emails or generic form letters!

maryclistalaughs@gmail.com

Mary's mantra:

"I wish I could show you when you are lonely or in darkness, the astonishing light of your own being."
- Hafiz of Shiraz

MISSION

To...

- ...make others aware of the myriad of alternative avenues to wellness and how journaling can be used as a catalyst to expedite the benefits
- ...empower each other by pointing out what is right about us instead of what's wrong with us, sending the message that no one is the least bit disordered
- ...focus on personal stories, not labels, symptoms or medication side effects
- ...encourage and cheerlead each other without judgment
- ...provide a respite, a virtual and physical space for learning, sanctuary, quiet or play in a nature setting for individuals or organizations
- ...build true, loyal, deep and lasting relationships throughout our networks , connecting people on a deep human level

– <https://www.capturelifewriting.com/>

“I need to listen well so that I hear what is not said.” - Thuli Madonsela

“You have trust in what you think. If you splinter yourself and try to please everyone, you can't.” - Annie Leibovitz

13] [Art, Trauma, and PTSI: An Interview with Dr. Frank Ochberg](#) – by L Abbott @ JMVH

Dr Frank Ochberg is a pioneer in the study and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which he believes should be renamed post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI). As his research developed, he believed that PTSI was a more relevant term. Approaching combat trauma through the lens of an injury rather than a disorder was, to him, more beneficial. In 2012, he noted that traumatized people ‘tell us that they will feel less stigmatized. But they also explain how the concept of an injury, rather than a disorder, does justice to their experience. Once they were whole. Then they were shattered. When their counselors, employers, friends and loved ones behaved as though they were survivors of injuries, with lingering wounds, they could heal. When they felt like mental patients and were treated as persons with pre-existing weakness, they could not heal’ .1

Dr Ochberg developed what he termed the Counting Method, a form of exposure therapy. After establishing a relationship based on trust, the therapist counts to 100 as the patient silently recounts their experience. Afterwards, the patient and therapist discuss what has occurred. Dr David Van Nuys notes that ‘it has been Dr Ochberg’s experience that through this sort of procedure, patients will recall forgotten aspects of their trauma experience that help maintain PTSD symptoms. Through the recall process, some of the intensity of the PTSD symptoms are reduced’ .2

He received his BA from Harvard and his MD from Johns Hopkins. From 1969 to 1979 he held numerous positions in the National Institute of Mental Health, including serving as Associate Director. Following this, he became director of the Michigan Department of Mental Health for three years. At present, he is a clinical professor of psychiatry at Michigan State University. He was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, of which he was a founding board member. In addition to his work with veterans, Dr Ochberg founded the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma in order to work with war- zone journalists who suffer from PTSI.

– <https://jmvh.org/article/art-trauma-and-ptsd-an-interview-with-dr-frank-ochberg/>

“A daily dose of daydreaming heals the heart, soothes the soul, and strengthens the imagination.” - Jhiess Krieg

“Our hearts are made for Healing not for Hurting, Our hearts are made for Empathy not for Envy, Our hearts can give Affection not to Affect bad, Our hearts are made for Reliance not to be Ruined, Our hearts are made for the Truth, not to be Tortured.” - Unknown

14] [How You Can Help – Michael Skinner - Healing Childhood Trauma in Adulthood](#) - YouTube 29:54 minutes

I share my chapter from the book [“You Can Help - A guide for Family & Friends of Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Assault”](#) by Rebecca Street

along with some passages from [“Trauma into Truth - Gutsy Healing and why It's Worth It”](#) by Rythea Lee and I close out the video with a live performance of “My Back Door.”

– <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAvBwDfO68A&t=5s>

“Anything that has real and lasting value is always a gift from within.” - Franz Kafka

“Staying quiet about one’s struggles limits that person’s ability to seek proper help or treatment.” - Sarah Bregel

Thank you & Take care, Michael

PS. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know – mikeskinner@comcast.net

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A diagnosis is not a destiny

[The Surviving Spirit](#) - Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy - Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

[The Surviving Spirit Facebook Page](#)

mike.skinner@survivingspirit.com 603-625-2136 38 River Ledge Drive, Goffstown, NH 03045

[@SurvivinSpirit](#) Twitter

[Michael Skinner Music](#) - Hope, Healing, & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health - Music, Resources & Advocacy

Live performance of "By My Side", "Joy", "Brush Away Your Tears" & more @ [Michael Skinner – You Tube](#)

"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi