




Healing the Hidden Wounds of Childhood – Module 3

with Karen M. Wyatt MD 



Get Over It For Good!





MODULE THREE: TRUST & HOPE

Childhood development and the first two years of life —



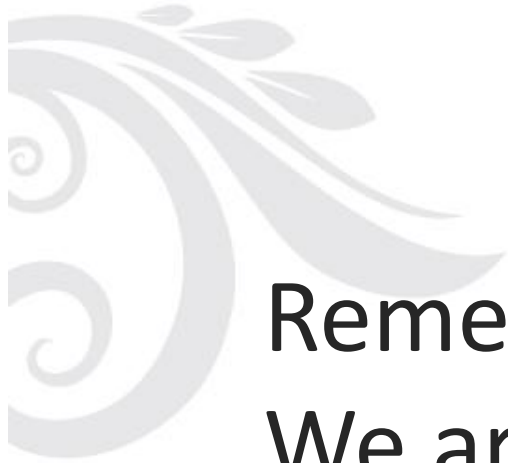
Reminder:

The overall goal of this course is to teach you how your childhood can affect your health and wellbeing as an adult and how you can heal it - for good!


So far we have learned:

- How adverse childhood experiences can cause problems in adulthood
- How the brain manages negative memories and why it creates difficulties for you
- The 3 key steps to help you start the healing process

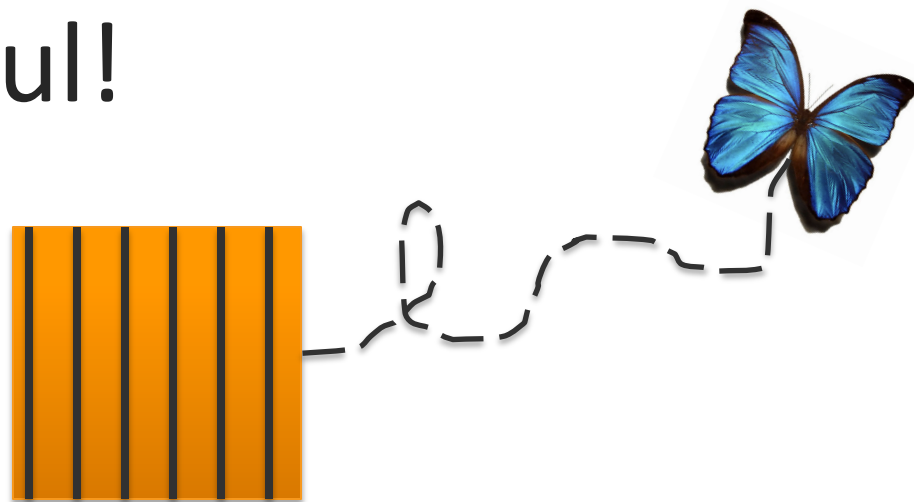
Now it's time to look at childhood development!



Remember:
We are journeying into the past,
not to take up
residence there ...



But to conduct a
Search and Rescue Mission
for your soul!



You Are Learning How To:



By letting go of your childhood wounds —

Module 3 Objectives

- Learn how to complete your own family timeline of significant events
- Understand the basic principles of childhood development
- Recognize why the first two years of life are the most important for development
- Learn the basic emotional, physical, mental and spiritual tasks of development in Stages 1 and 2
- Identify 4 tools for associating positive experiences with old negative memories

Your Developmental Timeline

- Download and print 2 copies of the Timeline template you have been given
- In the large sections on the right side of the page record any events you can think of that may have been significant, corresponding to your age at the time
- Use your ACE questionnaire and fill in any positive experiences in the corresponding age range (to the best of your ability to remember)
- Refer to the list of additional family events to help you recall other situations that may have been significant
- Get started now and know that you will probably remember more and more information as we proceed
- You can reorganize the events into chronological order when we finalize the timeline at the end


Principles of Childhood Development:

- Each stage of development has certain tasks that must be completed before moving on to the next stage
 - Emotional
 - Physical
 - Mental
 - Spiritual
- Each stage builds upon the previous stages
- When something goes wrong in one stage it has an impact on every other stage
- Each child has his or her own timeline for development so the ages given for each stage may vary



“The first two years of life are
the most important.”

-Maria Montessori, MD



The development that occurs in the first two years of life forms the foundation for all the rest of the stages. Just as with a building, if the foundation is weak, the subsequent levels will be unstable.

Stages of Childhood Development

Stage 1: 0 - 9 months Infancy

Stage 1 Emotional Tasks

- Developing TRUST is the most important emotional task for the infant (trust for adult caregivers, self, the surrounding world)
- This TRUST forms the basis for all future emotional development and relationships
- A sense of HOPE arises from healthy completion of this stage
- An infant with ACE's may suffer from insecurity and mistrustfulness that can persist throughout life

Other Stage 1 Tasks

- Physical: Skills include grasping, focusing vision, hand-eye coordination, rolling over, sitting up, and often crawling
- Mental: The early beginnings of speech; recognizing familiar objects and people
- Spiritual: Egocentric judgment with no concept of rules or others

What Stage 1 Infants Need from Parents:

- Be available to the child physically, mentally and emotionally
- Respond consistently to the child's needs
- Make eye contact
- Become familiar with the child's unique personality
- Offer a warm, comfortable, secure environment to nourish a sense of trust
- Avoid prolonged absences from the child
- Good self-care so parents have adequate energy for meeting the child's needs

Stages of Childhood Development

Stage 2: 9 - 18 months
Toddler: Exploratory Phase

Stage 2 Emotional Tasks

- SELF-AWARENESS is important at this stage as the child first develops a concept of self
- Stranger anxiety occurs early in this stage as the child begins to recognize “others”
- New skills such as crawling and walking lead to a sense of power and accomplishment
- A confident toddler enjoys exploring his/her environment
- Beginning some self-care such as feeding
- Experiencing full range of emotions (joy, anger, sadness)

Other Stage 2 Tasks

- Physical: Walking and talking are the most important skills along with reaching, grasping and letting go
- Mental: Beginning to recognize “cause and effect” relationship, taking in huge amounts of information about the world through the 5 senses, but with no concept of time or imagination
- Spiritual: Still focused only on the self and the needs of the self

What Stage 2 Toddlers Need from Parents:

- Safe environment for exploration
- Variety of experiences for learning through the senses (textures, colors, shapes, sizes, temperatures, odors, flavors)
- Tolerance for messiness during self-feeding attempts
- Time for play and fun interactions
- Speaking directly to the child with simple words
- No expectations for sharing (too young to accomplish that)
- Positive encouragement and praise for new skills

Possible characteristics at the end of Stage 2:

- Healthy Child

- Enthusiastic about exploring the world
- Able to walk and talk
- Sense of trust and hope
- Some anxiety around strange people or places
- Beginnings of positive self-esteem

- Wounded Child

- Timid about trying new things
- Hesitant to express feelings or explore the world
- Mistrustful and fearful of everything
- Lacking confidence



How to heal those hidden wounds of Stages 1 and 2

Remember: The 3 Keys to Creative Healing



Follow these steps to free yourself from the painful past —



Name It: identify the wounds of your childhood

Trace your family timeline to discover the stresses and losses that occurred in your past – without *blame* or *shame*. —




Reclaim It: own the past as part of the gift of your life

Cherish all of your life experiences with reverence – practice *self-piety* rather than *self-pity*. —



Reframe It: find the good
in everything

**Rewrite your story from a positive perspective and
nurture yourself with love and compassion.** —



Healing comes from combining a painful negative memory with a positive current experience.

To RECLAIM Stages 1 and 2 of your childhood:

- While you are thinking about the painful memories from this time of your life, do something for yourself at the same time that is soothing and nurturing
 - Rock in a rocking chair
 - Cuddle with a soft blanket or even a stuffed animal (or, better yet, a person or pet who loves you!)
 - Listen to soothing music
 - Focus on self-compassion

To REFRAME Stages 1 and 2 of your childhood:

- Think about the difficulties facing your caregivers during these stages of your life:
 - What issues were they facing
 - What were their wounds
 - How much did they know about parenting
 - What was the state of their emotional and physical health
- Focus on an attitude of forgiveness toward your caregivers
- Feel gratitude for your life and the fact that you have survived
- Journal about what has made you happy and grateful each day

Module 3 Homework

- Complete these assignments before moving on!
- Print the handouts:
 - Timeline
 - Timeline Instructions
 - Journal Prompts
- Begin working on your family timeline
- Try at least one therapeutic practice: rocking, cuddling, music, or self-compassion
- Journal about these questions:
 - How do I feel about my childhood caregivers?
 - What emotions come up when I imagine myself as an infant?
 - When have I felt most loved during my life?
 - What do I dislike about myself and why?