

Recovery After Trauma

Disordered Eating Recovery for
Survivors of Sexual Violence



Land Acknowledgement

YOU ARE HERE
ON THE TRADITIONAL
TERRITORY OF THE
HAUDENOSAUNEE,
ANISHNAWBE AND
NEUTRAL
PEOPLES.

"You can have the nicest, most beautiful and most respectful land acknowledgment of all time but if you have no actions to back up your words, then why are you bothering?"

- Devon Saulis.

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SEXUAL ASSAULT
SUPPORT CENTRE
OF WATERLOO REGION

Land Acknowledgement

Body Brave is on the traditional and unceded territory of many nations including the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas.

"You can have the nicest, most beautiful and most respectful land acknowledgment of all time but if you have no actions to back up your words, then why are you bothering?"

– Devon Saulis.



BODY BRAVE
recovery for **every** body

Safer Space

- The risk of talking about disordered eating
- Recognize that we are not always aware of the experience of others
- Respect and listen to one another
- Take care of yourself
- Ask questions



Agenda

- 1) Neurobiology of Trauma
- 2) Disordered Eating as a Function
- 3) Personal Check-In
- 4) Tools for Healing
- 5) Questions



The Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region

24 Hour Support Line

Online Chat Support

Individual and Group Counselling

Family Court Support Program

Public Education and Male Allies

Anti-Human Trafficking Program

Accompaniment and Advocacy

Practical assistance



Other Factors:

Racial Violence
Colonial Violence
Ableist Violence
Violence Against Sex
Workers

Violence between
people in a
relationship.

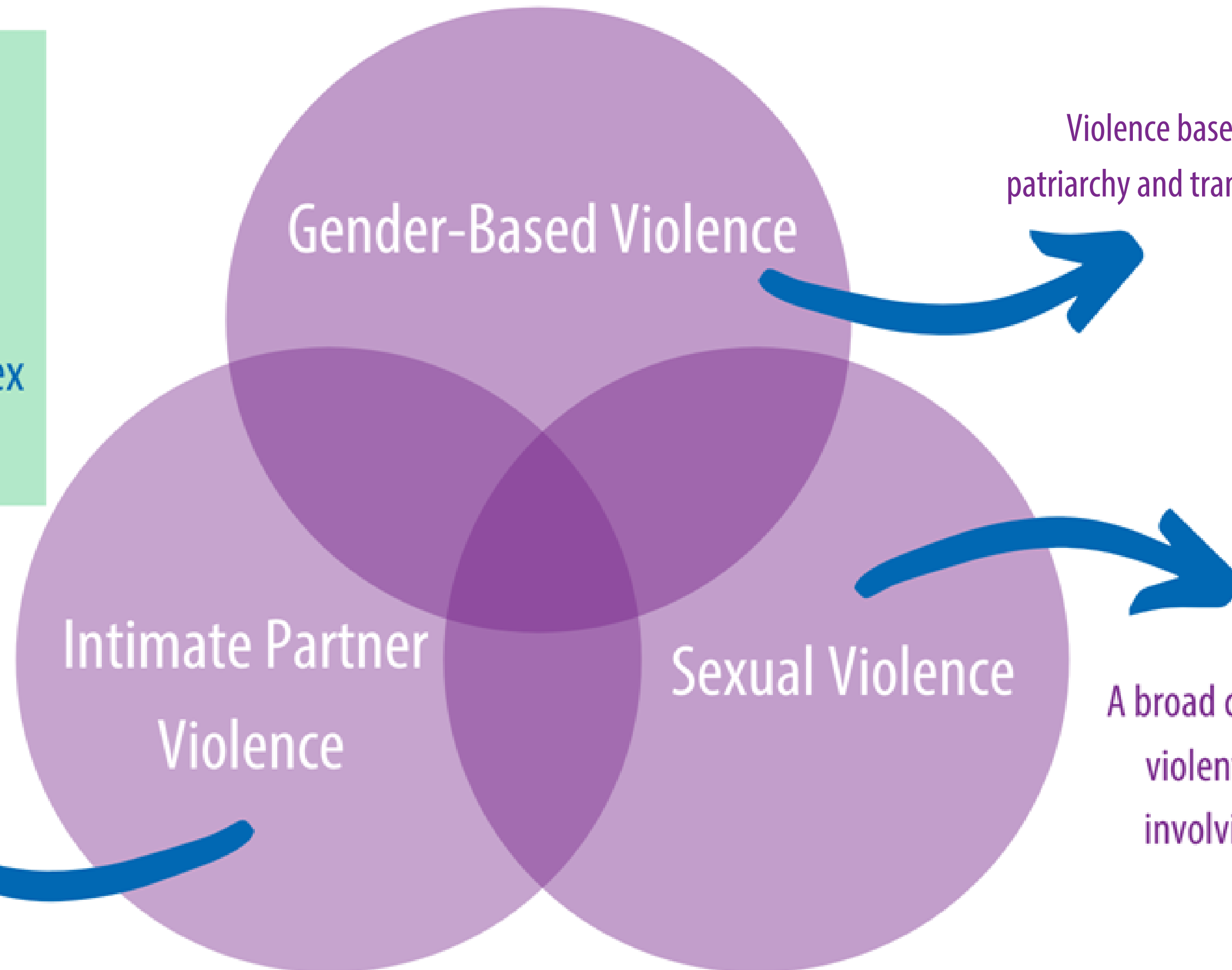
Intimate Partner
Violence

Gender-Based Violence

Violence based in
patriarchy and transphobia.

Sexual Violence

A broad category of
violent crimes
involving sex.



The background is a solid purple color. It features several overlapping circles. On the left, there is a large, light purple circle. Overlapping its bottom-left edge is a smaller, solid dark purple circle. Below the solid dark purple circle is a large white outline circle. On the right side of the image, there is another large, light purple circle. Overlapping its top-left edge is a small white outline circle. The title text is centered horizontally across the middle of the image.

The Neurobiology of Trauma

Cortisol shuts down the part of your brain that forms long-term memories.

Adrenaline turns up the part of our brain that forms sensory memories and gets us ready to fight or run.

Your pre-frontal cortex that helps you make decisions and solve problems goes off line.



Your Brain On Trauma



The Four F's of Trauma Response

Your brain responds to trauma automatically, you don't get to choose how you respond. Your brain reacts involuntarily and there is no right way to respond.

Fight

This might look like yelling, arguing, or physically fighting. People often feel intense anger and a want to control or over power the threat.



Flight

Flight might look like leaving or avoiding a threatening situation. People often feel anxious and restless when in flight mode.



Fawn

Fawn response might look like being passive and nice to the threat. People often react this way if they fear the threat will be worse if they respond another way.



Freeze

This response might look like "freezing up", going numb, feeling foggy, dissociating, and/or staying still. Your brain has decided that this is the safest course of action.



Your Brain On Trauma

Our body seeks to release stress hormones and complete stress cycles. We turn to coping methods to do this, and when we can't we experience hyperarousal, burnout, chronic health problems and more.

Seeking Safety



Common Impacts of Trauma

Every Survivor is Different.

- Internal vs external processing
- Nightmares and flashbacks
- Anxiety and hyper vigilance
- Disordered eating
- Substance use disorders
- Dissociation



Common Impacts of Trauma

Every Survivor is Different.

- Memory loss
- Loss of trust
- Problems focusing
- Changes in personality or behaviours
- Depression
- Suicide





Disordered Eating as a Function

Functions of ED Behaviours

Self-soothing

Social
reinforcement

Preservation of
relationships

Safeguard
against
failure

Avoidance of
sexuality

Avoidance of
memories &
feelings

Coping with
negative
emotions

Maintaining
control

Self-concept

Punishment &
self-harm



Security Blanket

Disordered eating is like a security blanket for our stress cycles. It is a coping strategy like any other.

These behaviours numb us out and provide calm and control.



Restrict-Binge Cycle



Sources: Bacon, 2010;
Bacon & Aphramor,
2011; Mann et al.,
2007; O'Hara & Taylor,
2018



Developmental Trauma

As a child you are forming your core sense of self.
Abuse may teach you that there is something inherently wrong with you.



Other Connections

- Wanting to change body to prevent further abuse
- Looking to punish a body that didn't protect you
- Self-harm
- Self-blame, low self-esteem



Coping is Coping

- How has the eating disorder protected you? Why isn't it working anymore?
- Building more tools in the tool box instead of just throwing out old tools



Other Causes

- Biological/genetic
- Struggles with identity
- Stress, anxiety, & depression
- Body dysmorphia
- Cultural issues such as transphobia, racism, patriarchy, and fatphobia
- ... and many more

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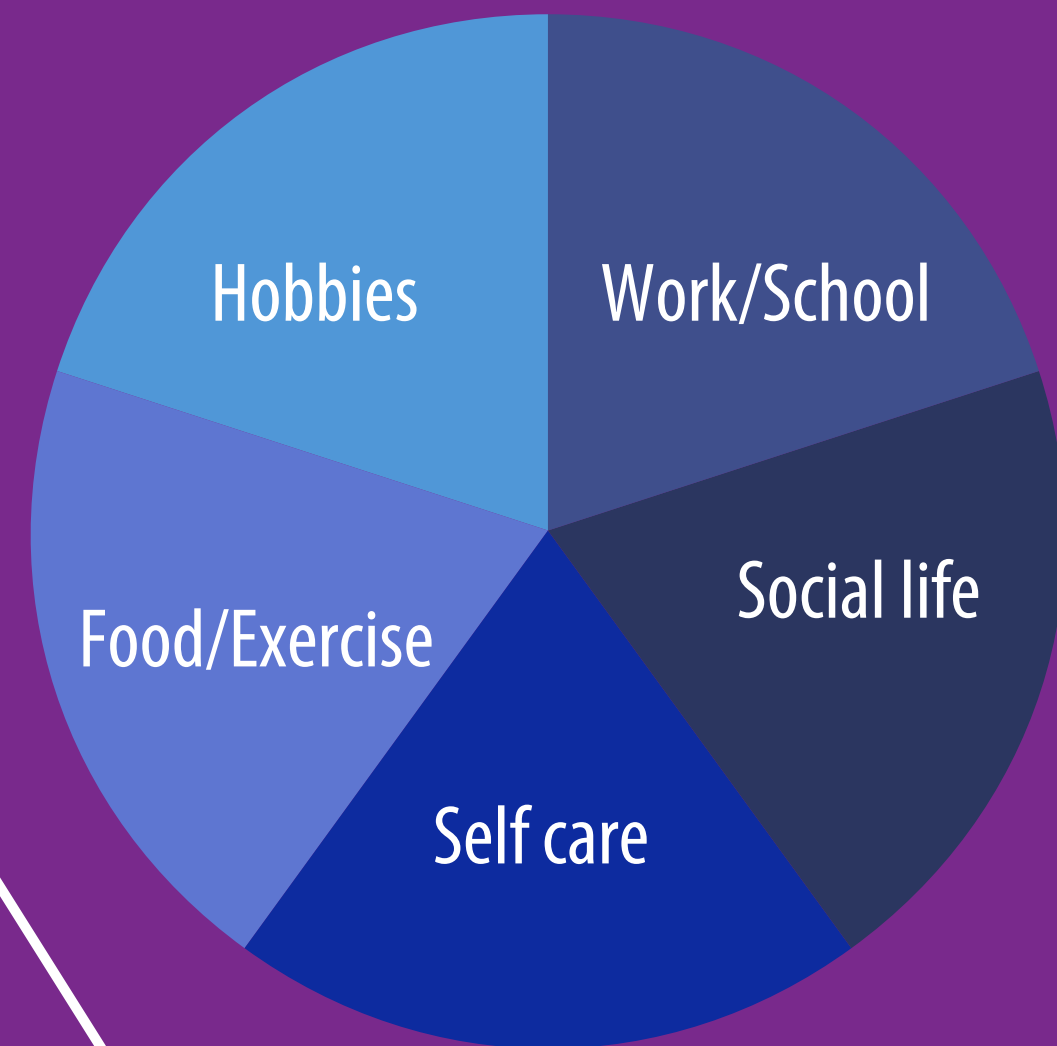
Personal Check-In

Where is Your Energy Going?

Disordered



Healthy Balance



Tools for Healing



Handout - Recognizing Your Strengths



Hunger and Fullness Cues

1. Famished, faint, irritable
2. Very hungry, need food fast
3. Hungry and ready to eat
4. Beginning to feel signs of hunger
5. Neither hungry or full
6. Satisfied, no longer hungry
7. Slightly full feeling
8. Feeling full, loosen belt
9. Too full and really uncomfortable
10. Over full, feeling sick



BODY NEUTRAL AFFIRMATIONS



THIS IS MY BODY.

I ACCEPT MY
BODY JUST HOW
IT IS.

MY BODY DESERVES
RESPECT.

I RELEASE ALL
JUDGEMENT
TOWARDS MY
BODY.



MY BODY IS
HEALING.



MY BODY IS
INNOCENT.

I DON'T NEED
TO CHANGE
MY BODY.



I AM MORE THAN
A BODY.

I AM GRATEFUL TO
HAVE A BODY.

SOURCE: WWW.BODYLOVEBOSS.COM

Body neutrality is body acceptance, a stop on the train to body love. You can get off here or stay on for the ride toward the final destination. The point is, once you're here, you'll never look back and long for the place that you left."

- Melissa Fabello

Body Neutrality





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recovery for every body



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Intuitive Eating

"Good" Foods	"Bad" Foods
(examples) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rotten or spoiled food• Food that you are allergic or intolerant to (these are bad for <i>you</i>, not for everyone)• Food that is trying to rob a bank• Food that calls you names at recess 

- Opposite of a diet
- Listening to what your body needs
- All food is good food
- Eating what and how you want
- Trusting your body

*Book by Elyse Resch and Evelyn Tribole

Trauma and the Body Group

An 8-week group for survivors of sexual violence struggling with disordered eating. This group uses psycho-education and connection building to foster a community of recovery.

- Foster a recovery focused community for support and learning
- Educate participants about diet culture and fatphobia
- Provide practical skills, tools, and resources for disordered eating recovery
- Create a trauma-informed recovery space inclusive of all struggles with disordered eating
- Connect clients with disordered eating treatment and support options

Program Goals

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Treating Self Destructive Behaviours in Trauma
Survivors - Lisa Ferentz

Health at Every Size - Linda Bacon

Intuitive Eating - Evelyn Tribole, Elyse Resch

You Have the Right to Remain Fat - Virgie Tovar

Life Without Ed - Jenni Schaffer

Unashamed, Musings of a Fat, Black Muslim -
Leah Vernon

Recommended Reading



**Connect
with us!**

Erin Huston

Training & Education Coordinator

Body Brave

Email: erin@bodybrave

Sarah Wiley

Violence Prevention Educator

Sexual Assault Support Centre

Email: vpeducator@sascwr.org



Thank You!



Questions?



Recognizing My Strengths

Survivors of trauma are incredibly strong and brave. However, we often get into negative thought spirals that make it difficult to remember our strength. This worksheet encourages you to consider your strength and how it has helped you survive your trauma. Use this workshop to explore the strengths you used to cope with traumatic experiences and how you can use those strengths going forward in your healing.

1. List five things that you are good at. Think about your skills.

Example: I am good at gardening.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. List five personal strengths. Think about the traits that make up your personality.

Example: I am creative.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

3. Which of the above things did you use to survive your trauma?

Example: Gardening helped me to feel grounded when I felt anxious.

4. What is a new skill or strength or skill you have developed recently?

Example: Meditation.

5. How can you use your new and old strengths in your healing journey?
