

Study guide for *Healing Your Traumatized Child*

by Aletha Solter, Ph.D.

Copyright © 2022 by Aletha Solter. (Last updated August 29, 2022.) All rights reserved. This study guide may be printed for personal use, but it may not be published on other websites or reproduced in any other form without permission from Aletha Solter, founder of the Aware Parenting Institute (www.awareparenting.com).

This study guide focuses on the key concepts and information in Aletha Solter's book, *Healing your Traumatized Child* (<http://www.awareparenting.com/healingtrauma.html>). For each question, there is only one correct answer, which is easy to find by reading the book. Please write your answers on the blank answer sheet here: (<http://www.awareparenting.com/healingtraumaanswersheet.pdf>)

Chapter 1: The recognition of childhood trauma

1. Which of the following statements is correct?

- a) Adults heal more quickly than children.
- b) Experiences after conception do not influence the expression of genes.
- c) The basic principles for healing from trauma are the same at all ages.

2. Which of the following statements is correct?

- a) *All* Freudian psychoanalysts have emphasized childhood trauma
- b) *Some* Freudian psychoanalysts have emphasized childhood trauma
- c) *No* Freudian psychoanalysts have emphasized childhood trauma

3. What is the main contribution of behavioral psychologists to the understanding of childhood trauma?

- a) Conditioned fear responses.
- b) Behavior modification techniques.
- c) Attachment theory.

4. Which aspect of research in the physiology of trauma has most contributed to our understanding of childhood trauma?

- a) The discovery of genetic brain diseases.
- b) The impact of trauma on the brain and body.
- c) The development of psychiatric medication.

5. Which factor most contributed to the gradual recognition of trauma and the new diagnostic category of PTSD in 1980?

- a) The symptoms of returning combat veterans.
- b) The increased awareness of childhood sexual abuse.
- c) The new brain imaging techniques.

6. Which of the following statements is correct?

- a) Early trauma does not cause later mental disturbances.
- b) Early trauma is adaptive for our survival.
- c) Our long infancy makes us vulnerable to early trauma.

Chapter 2: The neurobiology of trauma

1. What is the book's definition of a traumatic event?

- a) Anything that causes physical or emotional pain.
- b) Anything that causes dissociation.
- c) Anything that causes hyperarousal.

2. What are children's two primary reactions to threats?

- a) Fight and flight
- b) Crying and laughter
- c) Hyperarousal and dissociation

3. Which part of the nervous system plays a major role in hyperarousal?

- a) The sympathetic nervous system.
- b) The parasympathetic nervous system.
- c) The cerebellum.

4. Which part of the nervous system plays a major role in dissociation?

- a) The sympathetic nervous system.
- b) The parasympathetic nervous system.
- c) The cerebellum.

5. Which statement about memory is correct?

- a) Memories of personal experiences don't change.
- b) Traumatic experiences are processed and stored differently than neutral ones.
- c) Children cannot remember anything that happened before they could talk.

6. What happens when children encounter a trauma trigger without feeling safe?

- a) They begin to remember and talk about the traumatic event.
- b) They start crying.
- c) Their body reacts with either hyperarousal or dissociation.

7. Which of the following are typical symptoms of posttraumatic hyperarousal?

- a) Hitting and biting.
- b) Crying and raging.
- c) Self-harming behaviors.

8. Which of the following are typical symptoms of posttraumatic dissociation?

- a) Agitation and impulsivity.
- b) Yelling and screaming.
- c) Self-soothing behaviors (such as thumb sucking).

9. Which of the following statements is correct about children with hyperarousal symptoms?

- a) They should be taught calming techniques or given tranquilizers.
- b) They don't consciously choose to act in these ways.
- c) They need firmer discipline.

Chapter 3: Posttraumatic emotions and basic principles of healing

1. What do children need to do in order to recover from trauma?

- a) Complete natural biological healing processes.
- b) Avoid trauma triggers.
- c) Calm down.

2. Which are the primary and most immediate emotions caused by trauma?

- a) Guilt.
- b) Terror and rage.
- c) Confusion.

3. Which of the following statements is correct?

- a) *All* exposure therapy approaches are beneficial.
- b) The Aware Parenting approach is a form of exposure therapy.
- c) *None* of the exposure therapy approaches are beneficial.

4. What is likely to happen if a child feels safe while revisiting trauma?

- a) The child will begin to cry.
- b) The child will calm down.
- c) The child will become re-traumatized.

5. How do children's memories of trauma become transformed?

- a) By the gradual process of forgetting, which naturally occurs with time.
- b) By positive thinking and non-traumatic experiences.
- c) By revisiting trauma and completing natural recovery processes.

6. What best describes a child who has healed from trauma?

- a) The child knows how to use self-soothing behaviors to calm down.
- b) The child becomes passive, obedient, and undemanding.
- c) The child no longer reacts to trauma triggers.

Chapter 4: Natural healing mechanisms part 1: play and laughter

1. Which of the following statements about laughter is correct?

- a) Laughter indicates dissociation.
- b) Laughter can reduce anxiety.
- c) Laughter indicates hyperarousal.

2. Which child would most benefit from having a puppy?

- a) A child who was sexually abused and resists human contact.
- b) A child who had birth trauma.
- c) A child who survived a terrorist attack.

3. Which of the following kind of play is most helpful for revisiting a traumatic experience?

- a) Symbolic play with specific props or themes.
- b) Activities with body contact.
- c) Cooperative games and activities.

4. Which of the following kind of play is most helpful for a child who has been bullied?

- a) Separation games.
- b) Regression play.
- c) Power-reversal games.

5. What is the most helpful way to respond to a child who cheats at games?

- a) Teach the child about the importance of honesty.
- b) Turn the game into a power-reversal activity with laughter.
- c) Refuse to play with the child.

Chapter 5: Natural healing mechanisms part 2: crying and raging

1. Which of the following statements is true during the months after a natural disaster?

- a) There is no change in children's crying patterns.
- b) Children typically cry *less* than before the disaster.
- c) Children typically cry *more* than before the disaster.

2. What best completes the following sentence: "Body movements while crying...."

- a) ... help transform children's memories of trauma."
- b) ... indicate hyperarousal and should be stopped."
- c) ... indicate that the child is being re-traumatized."

3. Which of the following statements about crying babies is most correct?

- a) Crying alone and crying in arms have different physiological and psychological effects.
- b) Crying in arms can prevent the development of independence.
- c) Crying alone causes the secretion of oxytocin.

4. Which of the following statements is correct?

- a) Babies need to suck on something to fall asleep.
- b) Babies don't need to suck on anything to fall asleep.
- c) Babies who fall asleep while sucking usually sleep better.

5. Which is the best way to respond to children during a tantrum (loud crying with no violence or destructiveness)?

- a) Children should never be held during a tantrum.
- b) Children should always be held during a tantrum.
- c) Children should be held during a tantrum only if they want to be held.

6. Which of the following statements about tantrums is correct (loud crying with no violence or destructiveness)?

- a) Tantrums indicate an attempt to manipulate the parents.
- b) Tantrums indicate emotional dysregulation.
- c) Tantrums indicate a beneficial stress-release mechanism.

Chapter 6: Additional tips for helping children recover

- 1. When do children acquire the ability for symbolic thought (including symbolic play)?**
 - a) During the first year.
 - b) During the second year.
 - c) During the third year.

- 2. At what age are children most likely to blame themselves for a traumatic event?**
 - a) Twelve to 24 months.
 - b) Two to eight years.
 - c) Eight to twelve years.

- 3. What is usually the best way to introduce a trauma trigger?**
 - a) Through play.
 - b) By returning to the location of the trauma.
 - c) By talking about the trauma.

- 4. Which approach is most likely to transform memories of trauma?**
 - a) Systematic desensitization.
 - b) Calming techniques.
 - c) Healing techniques that allow emotions to be released.

- 5. What approach to discipline is recommended for a traumatized child?**
 - a) Parents should become stricter and set firmer limits.
 - b) Parents should avoid setting or enforcing limits.
 - c) Parents should continue to set reasonable limits.

Chapter 7: Case histories part 1: birth to five years

- 1. What was the primary trauma trigger for the 5-month-old boy who had surgery?**
 - a) Being exposed to strangers.
 - b) Being placed on his back.
 - c) Returning to the hospital for a later check-up.

- 2. What did the 3-year-old boy do while waiting to evacuate from a wildfire?**
 - a) He trembled.
 - b) He yelled and screamed.
 - c) He dissociated.

- 3. In the example of the 3-year-old girl who had a traumatic visit to the dentist, when did she briefly dissociate?**
 - a) During the first dental appointment.
 - b) After the first dental appointment.
 - c) During the second dental appointment.

- 4. What kind of play helped the 4-year-old girl whose parents got divorced?**
 - a) Contingency play.
 - b) Regression play.
 - c) Symbolic play.

Chapter 8: Case histories part 2: six to twelve years

- 1. What is one of the conclusions from the example of the 6-year-old boy who had a serious accident?**
 - a) Children can benefit from symbolic play simply by watching.
 - b) Children can heal only by crying.
 - c) Professional therapists are necessary for serious medical traumas.

- 2. What does the example about the frightening incident at school illustrate (the boy who found a hypodermic syringe)?**
 - a) Children can be traumatized by an adult's reaction to an event.
 - b) Children don't always know what they need in order to recover.
 - c) Drawing is not an effective way to revisit trauma.

- 3. In the sexual abuse example, what was a big trauma trigger for the child?**
 - a) Being around horses.
 - b) Being around teenage girls.
 - c) Being around teenage boys.

- 4. What was the major trauma for the 8-year-old boy who had been in the emergency room?**
 - a) The fall from the couch and ear injury.
 - b) The double, unexpected injections.
 - c) The way the doctor spoke to him.

- 5. What aspect of healing was illustrated in the earthquake example of the 12-year-old girl?**
 - a) Playful approaches only work with younger children.
 - b) Children often dissociate after natural disasters.
 - c) A balance of attention between fear and safety is necessary for healing to begin.