

Learning:

We explore, adapt and hone the most effective healing methods for ourselves.

Learning is one of the single most empowering things we can do for our healing. Knowledge and skills are powerful. There are countless healing methods in the world today, and new ones are being developed all the time. Only you can know through exploring which ones appeal to you, and which are the most effective for you at a given time. Each of us can adapt healing methods to fit ourselves better. We are all different and find that different methods work better for each of us. We also find that what is most effective may change over time. The most effective methods may be ones that ignite our passion, hope, and even laughter.

Here are some commonly used healing methods:

- Self-led independent tools, including journaling, meditation, prayer, exercise, emotional venting, psychodrama, art and other creative expressions.
- Self-led peer support activities, including a variety of peer activity communities – 12-Step groups, groups based around specific activities, such as creative dance, focused peer support, such as psychodrama.
- Professionally assisted: talk therapy, Internal Family Systems models, psychodrama, art therapy (and other creative expressions), dance therapy, guided visualizations, religious or spiritual counseling, and EMDR (Eye Movement, Desensitization and Re-Processing), body work (acupuncture, cranial-sacral, massage therapy, Tai Chi, Yoga, chiropractic care, breath work, etc.)

A foundation of physical and mental health makes healing much easier. Here are some examples of good self-care that build that foundation: balanced exercise, good nutrition, sufficient sleep, appropriate medical care, healthy hygiene, and dressing in alignment with a healthy self-image.

These Healing Principles can help you in deciding what healing methods to explore:

- Focus: Maintaining a vision of joy and healing helps us choose the best healing methods for us in the moment.
- Integrity: We use healing methods that are in alignment with our authentic core values, replacing those methods that do not fit well.
- Safety: Remember, while exploring and adapting healing methods that healthy boundaries, respect, and gentleness sustain our healing environment.
- Celebration: Look for and enjoy the moments of clarity, progress and healing your learning brings you.
- Acceptance: The most effective healing methods honor all emotions and memories we have.
- Playfulness: It's most effective to balance healing play with healing work. We can learn to bring a playful spirit into our work, relationships and home life. Laughter helps reduce stress and supports our immune systems. This is the most affordable healing method we have access to... and it's fun!

The more we use a method the more we increase our skill and comfort with it. Learning as a life-long habit helps us heal, develops ourselves, and keeps life interesting. Some of us come to master some methods over years of practice. We may end up using these methods for self-development in general as much as in healing. It's helpful to regularly assess our healing methods and replace some with alternatives that are faster, easier, more fun, more respectful or otherwise more helpful.

Activities: (The following activities can be done in a Healing Journal and/or with the support of others.)

- Activity 1:** Find and adapt methods. Use the above Healing Principles to guide which healing methods you explore.
- Ask 5 people what they do for healing.
 - Go to the Vital Cycles website and look for new ideas posted since the last time you looked (www.VitalCycles.org).
 - Contact Vital Cycles members for their ideas.
 - Visit other healing related websites.
 - Which ideas are the most appealing and seem to fit the Healing Principles the best?
 - Try some of these ideas out, adapt them to fit.
 - Choose the best methods for you at this time and continue to use them.
 - Look for ways to improve your skills in these methods.
 - Adapt these methods to work better for you.
 - This is ongoing...

Activity 2: Build something fun into your day, every day.