

Opening:

We see healing as possible for ourselves.

Hope grows within us as we come to understand that healing the impact of trauma is possible. However, at the beginning, many of us struggle to feel that healing is possible for ourselves. It can be difficult to see that what appears to be irreparable damage; is actually emotional wounds that can be healed. Seeing others' healing from these wounds helps us to know that healing is possible for us. The negative myths about ourselves stemming from the trauma can make it challenging to realize that we deserve to heal. We can heal because we want to. We do not need to wait until we heal enough to know that we deserve to heal. This is a very painful part of our lives, and it is important to be gentle with ourselves as we face it. For many of us being open was dangerous in the past. Now we can choose safe ways to share about ourselves with others. As we move toward healing it is helpful to share about our traumas only with those who support our healing. It is also helpful to share at a manageable pace.

There are some common myths that can be hurdles to openness in healing. Over time, we replace the myths with empowering truths.

Examples of myths and empowering truths:

Myths	Empowering Truths
My pain is "my shit."	My pain is a result of past traumas and deserves compassionate healing.
"I am bad and do not deserve to heal." "It was my fault."	What happened to me was bad, and I deserve to heal from it. It was the perpetrator's fault.
"It is wrong to talk about what happened."	What happened was wrong. Telling safe people helps me heal. I can claim my innocence and right to talk.
"If I start crying, I will never stop."	Once I start crying, the grief can begin to subside, and I can begin to heal.
"My family will be destroyed if I talk about this."	The perpetrator's actions hurt the family. Only through openness with safe people can I heal.
"I am not strong enough to deal with this."	With gentle pacing, and the right support, I can heal my wounds.

We can help ourselves be open to more healing by reminding ourselves of the progress we have made in the past.

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

Activity 1: Make a list of ways you can help yourself be open to healing.

- Activity 2:** Talk to three people who have done some emotional healing, and find out what it has done for them. Write down ideas from what they said in your Healing Journal.
- Activity 3:** Look over the list above, and talk with others about those myths that have stuck with us, and then list the empowering truths. Talk about other empowering truths that apply to these myths.
- Activity 4:** Make a list of myths not covered in the list above, and their corresponding empowering truths. Talk about these with a safe person.