

#09



Introducing Aspiration

Healing from child sexual abuse involves the practice of Aspiration, which is directing your thoughts and actions toward healing.



Each Saprea Support Group meeting begins with 'Group Leader A' reading the script while participants follow along. The script will be the same for every group meeting. **To find the script, visit saprea.org/support-groups.** Below are the additional meeting materials for this course.



To watch the intro video for this lesson, scan the QR code or go to <https://vimeo.com/showcase/10293739>.

Group Activity

POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH

Imagine that your healing journey is like a lotus flower. A lotus, though buried in mud, has the capacity to rise through, bloom, and thrive above the surface. Its seeds can lay dormant for hundreds of years but still experience “rebirth” when placed in just the right conditions. Similarly, working through the struggle and difficulties of trauma can lead to unexpected growth and strength on the other side. This is called **post-traumatic growth**, which are the **positive changes that occur as a person works through their healing journey after trauma**.

Sometimes this growth isn't easy to appreciate or see in the moment, but as you cultivate self-compassion, you'll be able to more easily recognize your strengths and growth. By noting your triumphs, ways you've grown, and healing actions you've taken amidst your struggles, you can shift your focus away from perceived flaws and failures and towards your successes and capabilities. This acknowledgement can, over time, help to build up your sense of self-worth and self-kindness, which will make it easier to see yourself in a compassionate light.

As a survivor, you already have strength, but this activity will help you explore other ways you may have grown on your healing journey so far. Take a look at the lotus flower below. On the roots of the flower are examples of struggles someone might experience. On each of the petals are examples of strengths that can be developed through those struggles.



Note: Everyone grows in different ways and at different times. Here, you have the power over your own story.

ACTIVITY STEPS

01 In your notebook, draw a lotus flower that has five large petals and some roots branching beneath.
Or, if you have the supplies with you, gather a handful of sticky notes and place them on the top half of a blank page to represent your petals.

02 Identify a challenge or struggle you have worked through or are currently working through.
(It may be helpful to start with something minor before thinking through a larger one.) Write this challenge or struggle beneath the roots of your lotus flower image or on the bottom half of your blank page.

03 Fill in the petals with potential growth.
Consider areas in which you may have grown (or would like to grow) as you worked through or are working through the challenge. Write these down on the petals of the lotus flower or onto each of your sticky notes.

Below is a list of potential growth areas you can consider if you are struggling to get started. This list isn't comprehensive, so feel free to add your own!

- Personal strength
- Connection with others
- New possibilities
- Spiritual change
- Appreciation of life
- Self-discovery
- Emotional regulation
- Treatment of others
- Enhanced family closeness
- Self-understanding
- Sense of belonging
- Life satisfaction
- Will to live
- Greater belief in self
- Compassion
- Increased faith in people
- Stronger boundaries
- Lifestyle changes
- Optimism
- Empathy
- Resilience
- Perseverance
- Patience

04 Appreciate your growth.
Once you feel satisfied with how many petals you've filled, take a moment to appreciate the amazing qualities you have today that will help you continue taking steps forward in your healing.

05 If you'd like, you can create another flower and follow the same steps using a different struggle or challenge.

Grounding Exercise

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Positive affirmations are sentences you say to yourself to remind you of your value, how far you've come, and how capable you are of continuing your healing journey. They can serve as an anchor to this moment, as well as a tool to nurturing self-compassion.

So let's begin.

Activity Steps

- 01** Select an affirmation from this list or choose one of your own.
 - I am enough.
 - I am learning to love myself.
 - I choose happiness.
 - I am moving forward on my healing journey one choice at a time.
 - I have strength and power to take whatever comes my way.
 - I can do challenging things.
 - I am grateful for this day and the many possibilities it affords.
 - I deserve compassion, kindness, and understanding.
- 02** Repeat the affirmation in your mind as you inhale and exhale, envisioning the words as your anchor to the present.
- 03** As your mind wanders, gently redirect it back to the affirmation, noting your attention with patience and curiosity.
- 04** Continue this exercise for 1–2 minutes. As you do so, you might choose a new affirmation to focus on or stick with the same one—whatever works best for you.
- 05** When you are finished, allow yourself a few paced breaths, imagining feelings of warmth and compassion flowing through you.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

If you are interested in learning more, we invite you to explore the following articles in the Online Healing Resources section of our website at [saprea.org](https://www.saprea.org).

- **ASPIRATION AND ITS ROLE IN HEALING FROM CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**
- **DEVELOPING ASPIRATIONAL THINKING**
- **SELF-COMPASSION**

NEXT TOPIC:

#10



COPING SKILLS—PART 1

Coping skills are go-to behaviors we employ to manage challenging moments. While some coping behaviors may have been helpful in the past, they may no longer be needed in the present and may even lead to additional stressors.