The Trauma Story is the centerpiece of healing the visible and invisible wounds of violence and traumatic life experiences.

1. CENTRALITY OF THE TRAUMA STORY: The universal experience of tragedy, including the suffering associated with grief, illness, and violent events.

2. COMMON MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS: Depression, grief, anxiety, insomnia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injuries are often associated with traumatic life experiences.

3. COMMON PHYSICAL PROBLEMS: “The body is impacted by history”, e.g., over 25 medical diagnoses (e.g., pelvic pain, infertility, infection) are associated with sexual violence and abuse.

4. PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IS ESSENTIAL: Routine appointments with your primary care doctor(s) can help identify and treat health problems stemming from trauma.

5. EARLY HEALTH PROMOTION IS NECESSARY: The ACE (Adverse Childhood Events) studies and HPRT studies reveal the serious long-term chronic diseases associated with trauma.

6. HUMILIATION: The major instrument of violence used to create the state of humiliation, including feelings of shame, guilt, betrayal, uncleanliness, and loss of dignity.

7. “LOSING THE WORLD”: Everything the survivor is taught to be morally correct is “turned upside down”. They become a “stranger in a strange world”.

8. CULTURAL ANNIHILATION: Major goal of mass violence, war, and ethnic conflict is to eliminate the person, their family, their community, and their society.

9. LISTENING TO THE TRAUMA STORY IS A KEY TO HEALING: USE THE NEXT STEPS AS A GUIDE...
   a. STEP 1 - TIMING: Go slowly; Do not try to “dig up buried treasure”. Wait until trust is established.
   b. STEP 2 - “A LITTLE BIT, A LOT, OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME”: The Trauma Story can be told in brief, small pieces (e.g.,

10. BUILD ON SELF-HEALING: The survivor is the teacher; the healer is the student. Create and build on self-healing and self-care efforts.

11. RECOMMEND AND SUPPORT: Altruism, work/school, social connectedness, and spirituality – are major key factors for resiliency and wellness.

12. HEAL THE PHYSICAL BODY: Promote yoga, meditation, mindfulness, deep breathing, walking, exercise, and massage.

13. USE THE HEALING POWER OF NATURE: Recommend connecting with nature, plants, and animals; Take up gardening or caring for houseplants.

14. NO HEALING WITHOUT JUSTICE: Explore what justice is possible and obtainable.

15. NO HEALING WITHOUT BEAUTY: Engage beauty at all levels of storytelling and reflection; See the beauty in the healing journey; Healing activities include poetry, haiku-writing, reflective writing, singing, making music, dance, visual arts and more.

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