

SESSION 1: WATCHING *THE AMENDMENT* MOVIE

What were your thoughts about the movie? Which scenes were most meaningful for you?



NOTE TO THE GROUP LEADER:

Before the movie starts, introduce yourself and share why you personally chose to share this movie and start a trauma recovery group.

After watching the movie, ask:

- ***What stood out for you in the movie? What scenes were most meaningful for you?***
- ***In what ways were Brooks' and Leslie's lives changed by the trauma they experienced?***

The main reason this movie is named "*The Amendment*" is for the many words and meanings within that word:

- To amend – meaning to make better; to improve
- To mend – meaning to heal; to recover
- To make amends – to compensate for injury, loss, damage, or insult
- Amendment – legislative amendments around victims' rights and services

Over the next 12 sessions, we will work toward amending and mending the brokenness that comes with—and often dominates—after trauma. We will learn real and effective ways for improving the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress symptoms (PTSD) and give you tools to take more control over your lives and your pain. We will walk what can be a very lonely journey *together* with others who have experienced similar emotions, challenges, and grief.

We sincerely hope you will join us in this journey toward peace and purpose—toward feeling real joy again and rediscovering what you have lost through trauma.

[Pass out a sign-up sheet with room for participants' email and phone number if you haven't already.]

[Consider passing out the Table of Contents and letter from us (Julea & Brooks) at this session or the next session.]



Dear Trauma Survivor,

Welcome. We are glad you are curious about this class. You've been through a lot. Someone or something crashed into your life path and sent you reeling into another direction, on another path you never intended for your life. Now you are here—in a trauma recovery class—wanting to heal and get back to the life you were born to live.

One of the hardest things about trauma is loss of control. Someone or something overpowered and overwhelmed you. You felt intense fear, possibly helplessness, and no escape. If your situation went through the court system, you may have continued to feel a loss of control, wanting justice but having to wait for the next slow step in the judicial process.

This class is about taking back control—of your mind, your emotions, your health, and your life course. It begins with **self-awareness**, understanding the physical and psychological effects of traumatic experiences. As you read through the table of contents, you will likely say, “*How did they know?... How did they know I can't sleep? How did they know about fighting back memories? How did they know about faltering relationships?*” Because what you are experiencing is a normal response to tragedy. You are likely feeling many of the repercussions of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a common physiological and psychological response to traumatic experiences. Your symptoms may be mild, severe, or unpredictable. **You are not alone.**

With self-awareness and a true understanding of why your brain functions differently after trauma comes an opportunity to reorganize your reoccurring thoughts and behavior and develop strong and healthy alternatives. This class is about 1) recognizing the effects of trauma then 2) devising strategies to move from surviving to thriving. This can be referred to as a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), meaning thought-action intervention, but the real strength of this class will come in the process of walking this path with your groupmates. After trauma, you may feel like no one can truly understand what you've been through and what it feels like to be you. There is a good chance your groupmates will understand. They have likely felt many of the same emotions and experienced similar struggles—and can join you in your journey.

GUIDELINES

Each chapter is designed to be a 60- to 90-minute discussion. A discussion group is most effective when blanketed in mutual respect and provides opportunities for every member to speak and be heard. Ideally the group is led by a trained counselor or psychologist, but that is not mandatory. This guide is meant for community support groups and can be led by anyone with a heart for and experience with trauma recovery.

Confidentiality is crucial. Trust amongst members is the lynchpin to a meaningful experience. All conversations are to remain within the group and are not to be discussed outside the group. You can share your experiences, but not your groupmates’.

We would love to hear about your experience with the movie and this guide. Please feel free to e-mail Julea directly (Julea@DouglassHouse.org) and/or join the discussion on our website (www.DouglassHouse.org/discussion).

We wish you peace and purpose...

Respectfully, Julea & Brooks Douglass



AMENDMENT TABLE of CONTENTS

Session 1:	Watching <i>The Amendment</i> Movie.....	7
	<i>What did you think about the movie? Which scenes were meaningful for you?</i>	
Session 2:	Finding Commonalities.....	9
	<i>How is your life similar to the characters in <i>The Amendment</i>? How are your life experiences similar to your groupmates?</i>	
Session 3:	Grieving Loss.....	15
	<i>What have you lost as a result of the trauma in your life? How do you grieve for what is lost and restore what can be regained?</i>	
Session 4:	Awaking to a New Reality.....	23
	<i>How do you recover from the emotional effects of trauma and find contentment in life again?</i>	
Session 5:	Fighting Back Memories.....	31
	<i>How do you overcome and soothe flashbacks of past events?</i>	
Session 6:	Sleeping Well.....	37
	<i>Why is sleep important to trauma recovery? What increases sleep quality and quantity?</i>	
Session 7:	Rebuilding Relationships.....	45
	<i>Which relationships do you want to improve in your life? What would help improve those relationships?</i>	
Session 8:	Assessing Coping Strategies.....	51
	<i>What do you do to soothe stress, frustration, or grief? Is it working?</i>	
Session 9:	Overcoming Blame.....	57
	<i>Who/what do you blame for your suffering? What would your life be like without blame?</i>	
Session 10:	Going Face-to-Face.....	65
	<i>If you could sit across from the person/event that traumatized you, what would you say? What would you want to hear?</i>	
Session 11:	Seeking Justice.....	71
	<i>What does justice mean for your life? How do you go on successfully when faced with injustice?</i>	
Session 12:	Moving Forward with Purpose.....	77
	<i>What will your life look like in the future? How do you make a happy ending out of your story?</i>	
Session 13:	Celebrating Together.....	85
	<i>What have you learned from this group? And when will you meet again?</i>	
Appendices:	Healthy Living Charts, Class Evaluation Survey and Follow-Up Reflection.....	87