

AMENDMENT

Trauma Recovery Guide: A Journey Toward Peace and Purpose



*By Julea Douglass, Ph.D.
with Brooks Douglass*

Group Discussion Guide to Accompany *The Amendment* Movie

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Amend

verb

- to change for the better; to improve
- to alter, modify, rephrase, or add or subtract from

Amends

Noun

- reparation or compensation for a loss, damage or injury
- to make amends, to compensate for injury or loss

Mend

noun

- to make (something broken or damaged) whole, sound

verb

- to progress toward recovery; to set right; make better; improve

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For Richard and Marilyn Douglass
Your love lives on



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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