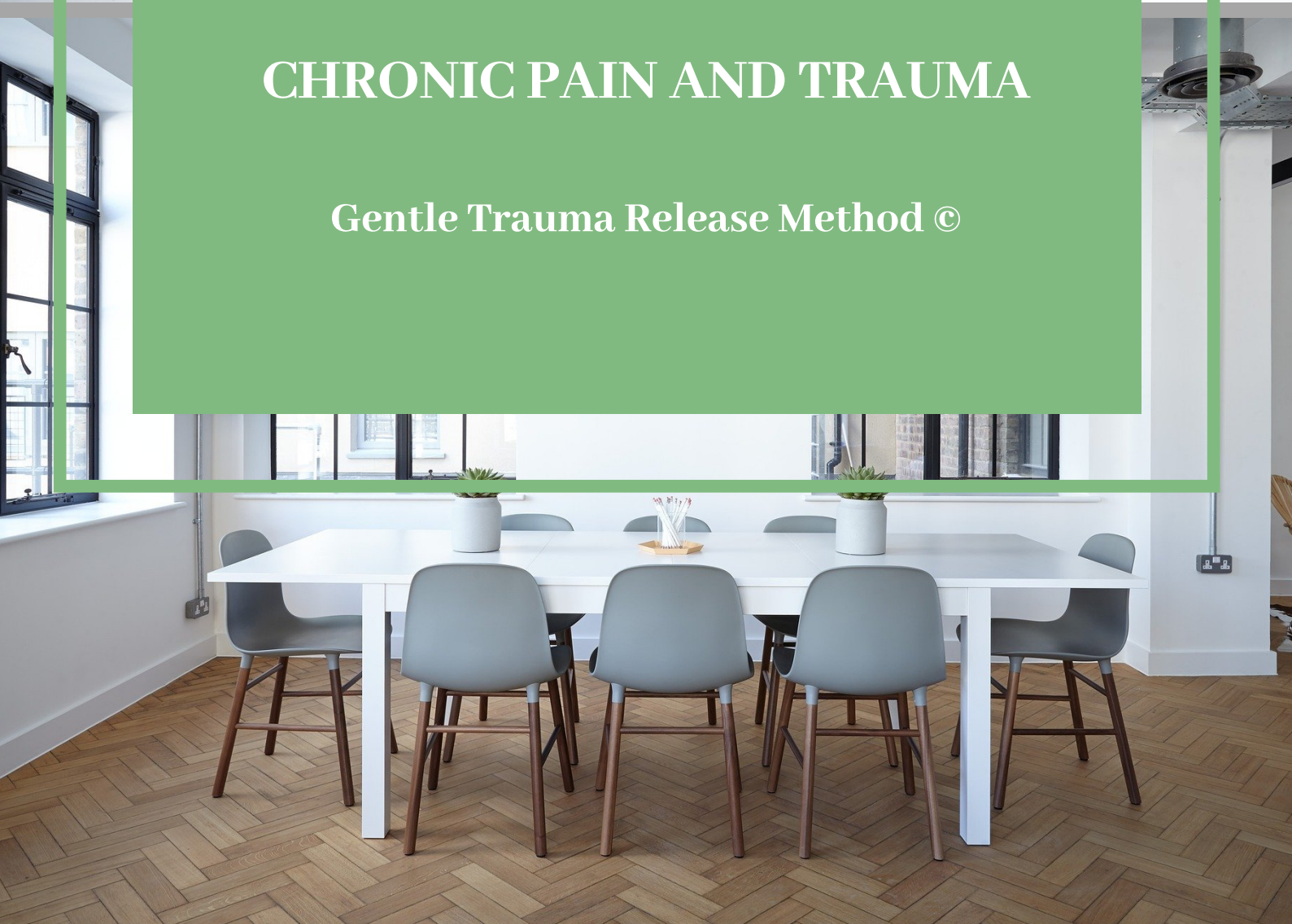




CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

Gentle Trauma Release Method ©





CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

CHRONIC PAIN IN A NUTSHELL

- Chronic pain is pain that persists over months or years. The official definition of chronic pain is pain that lasts for more than three months. Some definitions work with 6 months as a minimum duration requirement. However, this is just an arbitrary criterium. Chronic pain is really any pain extending beyond what is normally considered the usual recovery timeframe, or time that we can reasonably expect in order for someone to heal and recover.
- Chronic pain can be both a pain that's always present (to different degrees) or pain that can come and go over time, but without getting resolved in the long run.
- A common by-product of chronic pain is that it significantly interferes with a person's usual activities in a negative way - be it personally or professionally. Chronic pain undermines their work performance or their ability to work altogether, their social life, their ability to take care of people who depend on them, as well as themselves. For example, their sleep, eating, or body movement may be compromised. In a nutshell, chronic pain adversely affects one's quality of life.





CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

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- Chronic pain is an integral part of some medical diagnoses (e.g. arthritis or neuropathy). When chronic pain is part of a particular diagnosis, the cause of the pain is not a mystery. In many cases, however, the cause of chronic pain is not clear or cannot be found altogether.
- Chronic pain can also be a physical symptom of emotional trauma and that's the instance where it may appear that its cause is a mystery. As a rule of thumb, chronic pain is often a result of emotional trauma, when the following conditions are in place:
 - No medical or anatomical reason for the pain
 - Lack of response to usual treatment
 - Presence of unresolved trauma from the past
- There is scientific evidence of a link between chronic pain and trauma. However, chronic pain is not officially a diagnostic criterion for PTSD. Said differently, there is a good amount of people who meet the diagnostic criteria for PTSD and they also suffer from chronic pain.
- Chronic pain can be:
 - The result of trauma (i.e. symptom of past trauma)
 - The root cause of future trauma
- Not all chronic pain is the result of emotional trauma! However, a portion of chronic pain cases respond to resolving emotional trauma. The pain either goes away completely or is significantly diminished.
- When working with a client, we don't automatically assume that their chronic pain is caused by trauma. We explore this possibility during the history-taking process if the issue of chronic pain comes up.



CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

FINDING THE ROOT CAUSE OF CHRONIC PAIN

- The main working principle behind chronic pain elimination and mitigation in the GTR Method© is that there is a specific traumatic event (or events) behind a person's pain. In other words, physical pain (for instance lower back pain) is a symptom of trauma...the aftermath of a traumatic event or several traumatic events from the client's past.
- The traumatic event behind chronic pain doesn't have to be an event where there was an actual physical injury. For instance, if someone suffers from chronic pain today, the traumatic event behind it doesn't have to be a car accident that caused that lower back pain. It could be an event that had to do with betrayal or abandonment.
- Sometimes, the client doesn't know exactly which one out of the many traumatic events that they experienced, is behind their chronic pain. That's perfectly ok. In the GTR Method©, we would use the process of creating the Emotional Freedom Plan to help the client identify the likely candidates (i.e. events from their past that could have potentially traumatized them).
- Often, people are so used to living with their chronic pain that it doesn't even cross their mind that it could be trauma-related and they only realize it after doing some GTR© work. This is actually quite common. Chronic pain is such a given in many people's lives that they don't even mention it as a challenge or an issue during the history-taking process.





CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

CHRONIC PAIN RESOLUTION

- **Short-term** reduction in pain is something that can be observed within a GTR© session itself. This can mean:
 - Reduction in acute pain: For example, the client's head has been hurting the whole day (and it's not chronic pain) and the pain stops in the session
 - Reduction in chronic pain. This means that the client's chronic pain is reduced or goes away completely during the GTR© session (although we have yet to know if it will be permanently gone).
- These short-term results of pain reduction could potentially be the effect of current acute stress resolution - that is, stress that was dissolved in the GTR session and hence the reduction in pain.
- **Long-term** reduction in pain takes place when the pain doesn't come back after GTR© session(s) or when it's significantly reduced and this state is sustained in the long run. Clearing past traumatic events has the potential to lead to a long-term reduction in chronic pain provided that these events are the root cause of the pain.
- **What makes chronic pain resolution possible?** In a situation of threat, the body tries to protect us by taking “defensive actions” to avoid the threat. This can be fighting the threat (say fighting an attacker), fleeing the threat (e.g. running away from a building on fire) or by freezing in order to minimize the pain.
- The movements of the body conducted as we engage in these defensive actions to protect ourselves are meant to serve us at the moment of imminent threat. But if the body doesn't understand that the danger is gone, the defensive actions that the body never stopped engaging in, can become the source of chronic pain today.

CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

CHRONIC PAIN RESOLUTION

- These defensive actions rely heavily on the action of our muscles. The muscles tighten, tense and brace. In the case of the client featured in the video class, for 12 years, her muscles would continue to get locked in the same defensive position no matter how much massage or physio she had. This is because the original trauma stayed unresolved. What that meant in practical terms for her, is that the body continued to feel as though the original threat was still out there to get her and hence kept locking her back into that same defensive position.
- **In a nutshell: Until the body starts to feel like the threat is gone now, it will not let go of its defensive response.**
- When the body feels like you're in a life or death situation, it won't relax. It will continue to protect you, which often means locking your muscles in a defensive position and hence the pain will stay.
- The only way to melt those muscles is to support them in losing the grip causing that trauma-related chronic pain and to help them realign back into the original pain-free state. This can be accomplished if you can give the body a visceral experience of feeling safe again in relation to the traumatic event(s) behind the pain.
- In the GTR Method©, we accomplish this by applying our simple, healing protocols. These protocols have the ability to help the system experience kinesthetically that the threat is gone now and that the body can let go and return to a state of wellbeing.





CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

HOW DO WE KNOW IT WORKED?

- How do we know that the trauma release worked? Well, with chronic pain, this is relatively straightforward. The person will not experience chronic pain any longer or it will be significantly diminished. Often, people with chronic pain are so used to it that they only notice not feeling it anymore when their pain medication starts piling up.
- In the long run, being free from chronic pain will improve their overall quality of life. They can move with ease, they can get a good night's sleep, they don't have to organize their life around the pain, they can meet up with friends and laugh, they can take on more demanding work projects because they know they'll be able to tackle them. Often, people who get rid of their chronic pain say that they can "live again".
- There are many shifts that you can spot directly in the session, letting you know that the client's muscles have started to unlock and melt. This is usually a very good indicator of their chronic pain (and other traumatic symptoms) going away in the near future.
- For example, after we have applied the appropriate GTR© healing protocols, we can always spot clear signs of the client's muscle relaxation during the sessions: the client's shoulders drop, the neck loosens up, the facial muscles relax. These are some of the direct effects of engaging the body in the trauma release process in a targeted way.
- Think of the client Becky featured in the video class. Before we started clearing one of her core traumatic events in the session, there was tension in her shoulders (her shoulders were high up, tense, giving her a squared contour. One of her shoulders is higher than the other. There was tension in her neck (two deep lines on the sides of her neck). And her whole face is tense - especially in and around her mouth and around her eyes. There was tension in her jaw, making it look squared because it was clenched.

CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

HOW DO WE KNOW IT WORKED?

- At the end of the session, Becky's whole face was relaxed. The tension in her mouth and jaw was gone (she wasn't clenching the jaw anymore which made it look softer and rounder as opposed to that squared shape it had before). Her eyes looked sleepy and relaxed, The tension around the eyes was thus gone too. Overall, she seemed to be glowing.

BEFORE



AFTER



- You can see, the tension in Becky's neck is gone as well (the two lines on the side are gone). Her shoulders are way lower now...they just dropped. They even gained a softer, rounder contour now that the tension is gone (while before they were squared). Also, both of her shoulders are at the same height (while before, the left shoulder was higher up). Mind you, this was in a matter of minutes, not hours, days, weeks or months.



CHRONIC PAIN AND TRAUMA

CHRONIC PAIN COUPLED WITH EMOTIONAL ISSUES

- There are instances when the physical pain is correlated with what's going on for us emotionally. For example, when we have to fight back the tears because we're in an environment where it's not safe or appropriate for us to let go and reveal what we're truly feeling, it can lead to a sore throat. This is because we have to tense the muscles in the throat and neck in order to fight back the tears. The tension of having to hold back emotionally can even give you a splitting headache because of tightening and bracing these muscles.
- **To summarize: Some people's chronic pain is trauma-related. The physical pain is then a symptom of trauma, rather than the aftermath of an injury. We can thus approach chronic pain as any other symptom of trauma. This means that once we identify the traumatic event(s) behind the symptom (in this case chronic pain) and clear that traumatic event, chronic pain will resolve itself or become significantly reduced in intensity.**



