

Lifespan Integration

Lifespan Integration is a new technique which promotes rapid healing in adults who experienced abuse and/or neglect during childhood.

This new method relies on the innate ability of the body-mind to heal itself. Lifespan Integration uses a psychological technique called an "affect bridge" to find a memory which is connected to the current problem. The therapist guides the client to imaginably re-visit this past memory, bringing into the past whatever is needed to resolve the memory. After the memory is resolved, the therapist leads the client through time to the present using a Time Line of visual images of scenes from the client's life. This Time Line of memories and images proves to the client's body-mind system that time has passed and that life is different now. This "proof" occurs at a deeper level than is possible with commonly used cognitive behavioral [talk therapy] methods.

During Lifespan Integration clients produce and watch "movies" of their lives.

In Lifespan Integration therapy, the client's movement forward in time is done visually in such a way that the client "watches a movie" of his or her life. This "movie" is spontaneously generated by the client's unconscious mind, and shows a sequence of scenes, many of which are in some way related to the current problem. Through watching this "movie" of his or her life, the client sees how the past continues to impact his or her behavior and choices in the present. Traveling through time from the past memory scene to the present is usually repeated three to eight times during an LI session. (Older clients and clients with more traumatic childhoods will require more repetitions of the LI protocol to clear the the neural (cellular) memories of trauma, and to "re-write" the life script more accurately). Each repetition of the protocol shows the client a slightly different "moving picture show". LI also works well with people who have trouble remembering their pasts. During Lifespan Integration therapy, clients who began with memory gaps are eventually able to connect the pieces of their lives into a coherent whole.

Talking about past abuse in therapy doesn't necessarily help people to move beyond it.

It is well known by therapists that adults who experienced abuse or neglect during childhood often spend years in therapy emoting and talking about their past traumas, yet they still have trouble moving beyond these past traumas. This is because people who were traumatized while their neural systems were developing are often "hard-wired" to interpret events in a negative way. Adults who were abused in childhood often have poor self-images, an ongoing internal dialogue of negative self-talk, and chronic anxiety and/or depression. This often remains the case no matter how successful these people have become in their present lives, and no matter how much "talking" therapy they have done.

Adults who were abused in childhood often react in patterned, dysfunctional, and sometimes self-destructive ways.

Adults who experienced childhood trauma often continue to be "triggered" in their present lives. When people are "triggered", they often react in old patterned ways which are not helpful to the current situation and sometimes are harmful. Continuing in these repetitive and self-destructive patterns only makes the person feel worse and more hopeless.

Lifespan Integration therapy heals deeply and completely without re-traumatizing.

Finally there is a therapy that can change all this without re-traumatizing. Lifespan Integration is a very gentle method which works on a deep neural level to change patterned responses and outmoded defensive strategies. LI therapy helps people connect unpleasant feelings and dysfunctional patterns with the memories of the past events from which these feelings and strategies originated. Making these connections at a deep level of the body-mind "re-sets" the neural system so that it is more in line with the current life situation. This "re-setting" happens very rapidly for most people. After LI therapy, people find themselves spontaneously reacting to current stressors in more age appropriate ways. After several sessions of LI, clients have reported that they feel better about life, are more self-accepting, and are better able to enjoy their intimate relationships.

Preparing a memory cue list:

When first beginning to do Lifespan Integration therapy, many people are unable to get a spontaneous flow of memories during the Time Line step of the LI protocol. This is the step when the adult self proves to his or her inner child self that time has passed, and the child has grown up. Even people who have fluid memory recall for most years of their lives may have some gaps or stretches of years where memories are much harder to access when going visually through all the years from the memory to the present.

The Time Line cue list is a stepping stone or aid which helps speed up the process of memory recall. It will only be used until your memories become more fluid and spontaneous. The goal for integration is to move you toward a more free association of memories as you go from year to year visually. You will notice as you experience a Lifespan Integration session, that when a memory cue is read to you, other memories from that same time frame will spontaneously begin to enter your mind.

To prepare the memory cue list, begin with your earliest memory. Write down the age you were at the time of this memory, and after the age write a word or phrase that will remind you of the memory when I read the word or phrase to you. Some people find it helpful to also write down the year it was. For example:

1953 Age 2 “Sitting on Potty chair”

1954 Age 3 “Riding tricycle

1955 Age 4 “Digging for bugs with Joe

Try to think of one memory for each year of your life, from your earliest memory all the way to the present. Record your memory cues chronologically. Write legibly or type your memory cues on your computer. The cues should be events that you actually remember as opposed to a scene which you have seen in a photograph but when you look at the photo you don't really recall having been in the scene. The cues can also be the name of a friend you spent time with at a certain age, or a place from the past that you remember.

The memories do not need to be significant in any way. Even remembering what a house or school building looked like is enough detail for this skeletal Time Line. The memory cues should be neutral in tone if possible, however DO include significant events which impacted your life such as deaths of people important to you, marriages, divorces, births, etc. The cues should be **remembered** events from your life which will orient you to a particular time frame. Trips taken, names of friends, various workplaces or living spaces all work well for cues.

If you are able to get this done ahead of time, we will be able to begin the actual healing process sooner. If this “assignment” feels too overwhelming, and brings up too much emotion, then only do as much as you are comfortable with.