

## **NARM (NeuroAffective Relational Model)**

**Bringing curiosity and interest to our client's inner world  
Bringing humanity to the transformation of complex trauma.**

**Top down/bottom up model bridging psychotherapeutic and somatic approaches**

**It's not what is wrong with you, but the persistence of survival styles that  
disconnects you from your authentic self and from others.**

**Non-regressive, non-pathologizing, experiential, exploration vs goal oriented**

# WORKING WITH “COMPLEX” TRAUMA



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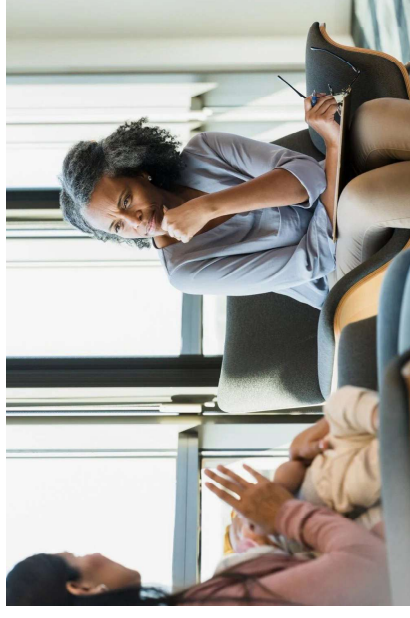


NARM Presentation

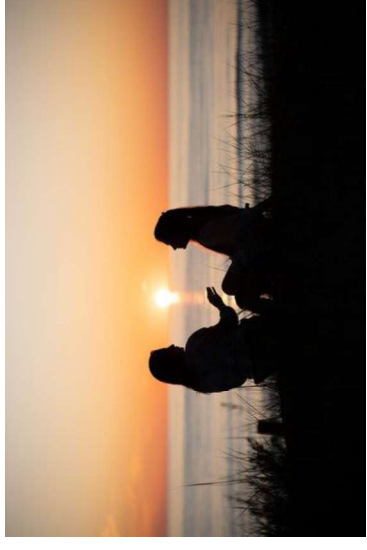
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# Being with vs. Doing to

- Exploration vs. goal oriented.
- If we are over efforting and focused on outcome and want to fix and to care take we miss what is emerging and unfolding in real time. Client can feel fundamentally missed (a common wound).
- We are co-regulating and energetic beings. When we as therapists are calm, present, receptive, settled, curious, it allows our clients to go deeper. When we are over efforting (trying to get our clients somewhere), we are pulling our clients out of this state of being.



# Being with vs. Doing to



- The therapeutic relationship is by far the biggest indicator of positive outcome. Focusing on relational elements makes the change process come alive!!!
- A crucial and vital part of healing is the experience of accompaniment. What was once experienced in isolation is now held in a dyadically regulated relationship.
- **JUST YOUR PRESENCE.** This may be the first time our clients have been seen or understood. Slower is faster; less is more.

# Secure Relating

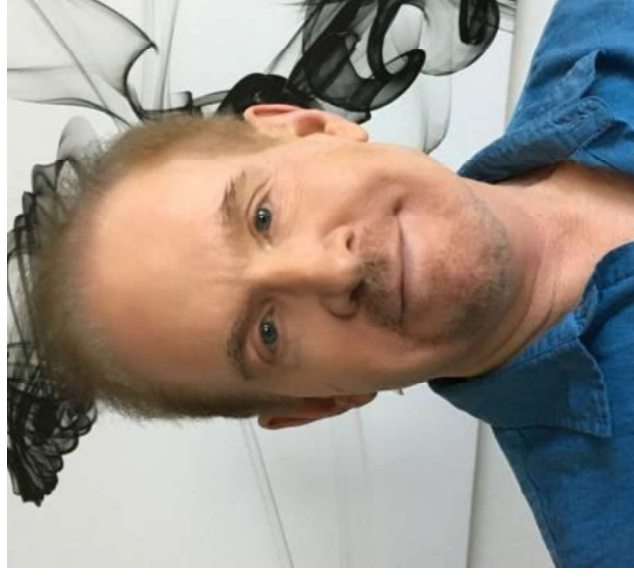
Finding your FLEXIBLE balance between autonomy and connection to your clients. We can meet our clients from authentic care and compassion while at the same time respecting their agency and their own practice of self-care (compassionate presence).

Secure relating: We can hold a connection to ourselves as therapists AND hold a connection to our clients.

We are honoring our client's organismic capacity for change with the right holding environment.



“The spontaneous movement in all of us is toward connection, health, and aliveness. No matter how withdrawn and isolated we have become, or how serious the trauma we have experienced, on the deepest level, just as a plant spontaneously moves toward sunlight, there is in each of us an impulse moving toward connection and healing. This organismic impulse is the fuel of the NARM approach.”



Laurence Heller, PhD  
Founder of NARM

What is taking you away from being curious, present  
and receptive with your clients?

**Common Countertransference Dynamics**

Steer away from relational and emotional and go cognitive.

Disconnect from myself as the therapist.

Need my client to need to me (Be indispensable).

Be overly pleasing and accommodating to be liked.

Pressure ourselves to “fix” our clients- problems to be solved.

Avoiding conflict with our clients

Want to be idealized and admired.

Empathic Distress

Unmanaged Empathy

Compassion Fatigue

Burnout

Feeling Stuck with Clients

Pressure to Fix

## Reflective Exercises

What is your relationship to your feelings of helplessness?  
How might this show up clinically?

How do you experience and demonstrate empathy?



# The 50/50 Split

50% connected to myself and 50% connected to my client

Know when I am out of this split and how to get back.

# The NARM Relational Model

Internal States of the Therapist

Curiosity

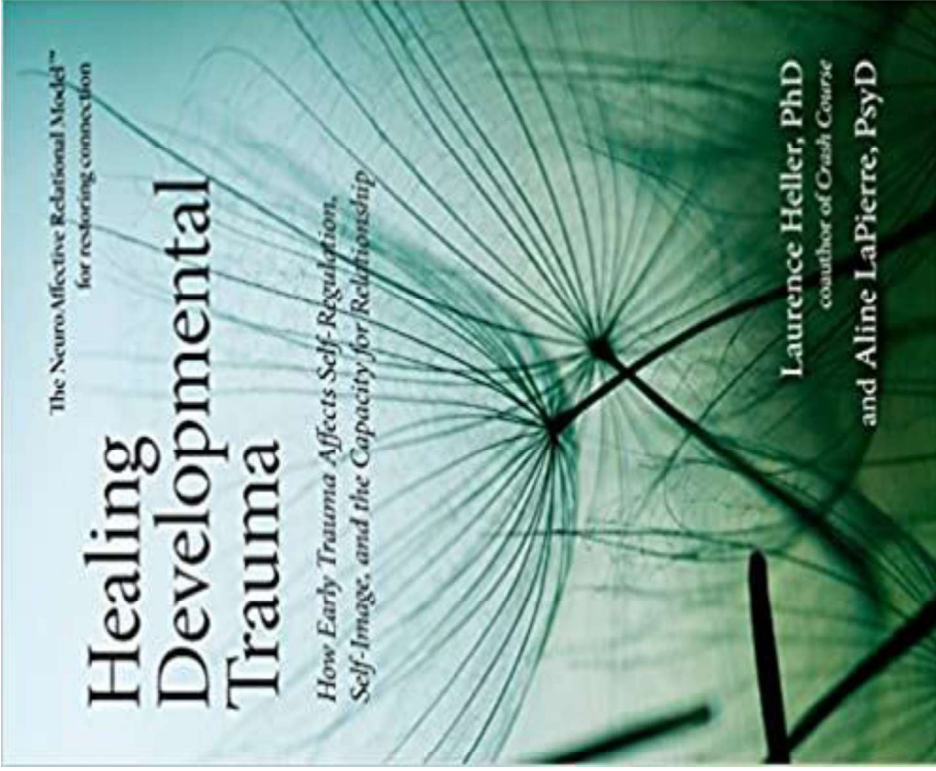
Presence

Self-Inquiry

# Authentic Compassion

We can experience that we are GENUINELY moved by our clients. We can be open to being moved.

Self-disclosure can be a VERY powerful relational intervention.



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"A thorough guide to a modality of therapy far deeper than the prevailing cognitive and behavioral treatments."

—Gabor Maté, MD, author of *When the Body Says No*

# THE PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR HEALING DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA

*Using the NeuroAffective Relational Model  
to Address Adverse Childhood Experiences  
and Resolve Complex Trauma*



LAURENCE HELLER, PhD AND BRAD J. KAMMER, LMFT

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# NARM Relational Skills

Attunement

Acceptance

Reflection and Exploration

Mindful Interventions

Integration