Healing Ourselves from 2020 Worksheet

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1. **Trauma (the event) may or may not be traumatic.**

    a. Identify an event or situation from your past that was traumatic for you. In that moment, situation or during that time of your life:
        - Were you unable to "fight" (or do something)?
        - Were you unable to "flee" (or get away)?
        - Did you feel alone (or not seen or heard)?
        - Did you feel helpless?

    b. Identify an event or situation that could have been traumatic (or was traumatic to other people), but was not for you. In that moment, situation or during that time of your life:
        - Were you able to "fight" (or do something)?
        - Were you able to "flee" (or get away)?
        - Were you with supportive other(s)?
        - Did you feel a sense of self-agency? (i.e., voice, choice, and personal power)

2. **Trauma (the event) impacts us all differently.**
   Consider the year of 2020 and how you felt, coped and responded.
    a. Past history of trauma:
        - Did it remind you of personal past traumatic situation(s)?
        - Did it remind you of family or loved one's traumatic situation(s)?
        - Did it remind you of cultural/racial/historical traumatic situation(s)?
    b. Past history of coping/behaviors:
        - Did it trigger a personal past coping response or behavior?
        - Is that response or behavior something you also witnessed as a child?
        - Is that response or behavior something your parents struggled with?
        - Is that response or behavior something your culture/media portrays?
    c. Current protective/resilient factors: [during 2020 and into 2021 now]
        - Did/do you have a safe environment and/or community?
        - Did/do you have a job or enough money?
        - Did/do you have a sense of supportive other(s)?
        - Did/do you have at least 1 "compassionate witness"?
        - Did/do you have the ability and willingness to ask for help?
        - Did/do you have skills in self-care, emotional regulation and problem solving?

3. **Coping responses/behaviors.**
   Have you (or a loved one) been struggling with any of the following:
   - Eating (not eating; over-eating; or binge eating)
   - Purging (vomiting, laxative use; or over-exercising)
   - Physical activity (move less; or constantly move; or exercise)
   - Alcohol, tobacco or other drug use
   - Sexual behaviors (porn, sexting, sexual acts; or avoidance of)
   - Gambling
   - Shopping
   - Screen time (TV, computer, phone, media, social media, or gaming)
   - Over-working (not taking breaks; working past hours; doing more)
   - Keeping busy
   - Cleaning
   - Organizing
   - Twirling or pulling out hair (eyelashes, brows, head, body)
   - Biting nails
   - Picking at or cutting skin
   - Fidgeting
   - Other

4. **Changing coping responses/behaviors.**

   - What behaviors would you like to let go of; and if not now, maybe one day?

   - What behaviors/skills would you like to learn and practice?

   - Who can you reach out to for help with these things?

5. **Post-traumatic growth "resume" exercise.**
   [From Douglas C. Smith's book, "Being a Wounded Healer."]

   a. On a sheet of paper, list every traumatic thing that has happened to you throughout your life, by age.

   b. On another sheet of paper, write a resume. Do NOT include your school history, professional training, or work history. Instead, write the trauma you experienced, and then list what that gave you, taught you, made you become, what you can do now because of it, or how you can help people because of it.

   c. Other things to consider: what other "good" things happened due to the trauma. How did you change, evolve, grow, etc.? What did you do? Who did you meet? What direction did it set you on? And so on.

6. **The Hero's Journey myth.** After reading the stages below, consider how you (and we all) have been on this journey.
    - The ordinary world
    - The call to adventure or challenge
    - The refusal of the call (denial, fear, anxiety; stalling)
    - Meeting a mentor (someone that gives advice for our journey)
    - Crossing the threshold (we step into 'uncertainty')
    - Tests, allies and enemies (we get challenged along the way)
    - The abyss/the innermost cave (we go "deep" into our "darkness")
    - The supreme ordeal (face a life-or-death moment and fight through)
    - Reward or 'seizing the sword' (we survive the challenge; and get something valuable out of it – love, freedom, wisdom, knowledge, skills, etc.)
    - The road back (we deal with the consequences of change)
    - Resurrection (we are transformed; we are a new person)
    - Return with the elixir (we return 'home' to help others with our gifts)
    - *If there is more to learn, we cycle through the stages again.*

7. **Discovering positive through negative.** Consider the year of 2020 and into 2021, and all that you (and we) have experienced. Ask yourself:
    - Who am I now because of this?
    - What has this made me aware of?
    - What have I learned about myself or others?
    - What have I learned about life?
    - What has this motivated me to do?
    - What direction has this set me (or us) on?
    - What is my (or our) "call of duty" here?

8. **Healing through 3 steps: regulate, relate and reason** (model by Dr. Bruce Perry). When you feel stressed/overwhelmed, create your self-care/healing to do list.
    - **Regulate.** Which of these will you choose to do:
        - Grounding and breathing
        - Getting out in nature
        - Focusing on your senses (sight, sound, touch, feel)
        - Moving the body
        - Co-regulating with other(s)
    - **Relate.** Who will you reach out to:
        - Family, friend or loved one.
        - Doctor, counselor, coach, teacher, or pastor.
        - Support group, church or community group, or other.
    - **Reason.** What can you focus on that you can control.
        - Name thoughts, behaviors, and actions.