



From Rescuer to Reflector

A Reflective Approach to Healing
and Self-Leadership

DahliaRose

T H E R A P Y + W E L L N E S S

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Learning Objectives

- Examine how trauma disrupts identity and how emotional pain hides beneath over-functioning.
- Learn the process of becoming emotionally present by naming feelings, reflecting on needs, and choosing responses with intention.
- Gain tools to assess readiness for change, identify client strengths, and support new ways of being.
- Explore strategies for implementing reflective practices with clients facing trauma, anxiety, and burnout.

TRAUMA IS...

The Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice defines Trauma as:

Experiences or situations that are emotionally painful and distressing, thus overwhelming people's ability to cope, and leaving them powerless. Trauma has been defined as circumstances that are outside the realm of normal human experience. Unfortunately, this definition doesn't always hold true. For some groups of people, trauma can occur frequently and become part of the common human experience.

"Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life." — Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*

In addition to terrifying events such as violence and assault, we suggest that relatively more subtle and insidious forms of trauma—such as discrimination, racism, oppression, and poverty—are pervasive and, when experienced chronically, have a cumulative impact that can be fundamentally life-altering.

Particular forms of trauma, such as intentional violence and/or witnessing violence, sustained discrimination, poverty, and ensuing chaotic life conditions, are directly related to chronic fear and anxiety, with serious long-term effects on health and other life outcomes

TRAUMA CONTINUUMS

Perception of Event

Non Traumatic-----Traumatic

Degree of Trauma

Little 't' (minor) ----- Big "T" (paralyzing, deeply wounding)

I'm a Survivor: Trauma Role Play

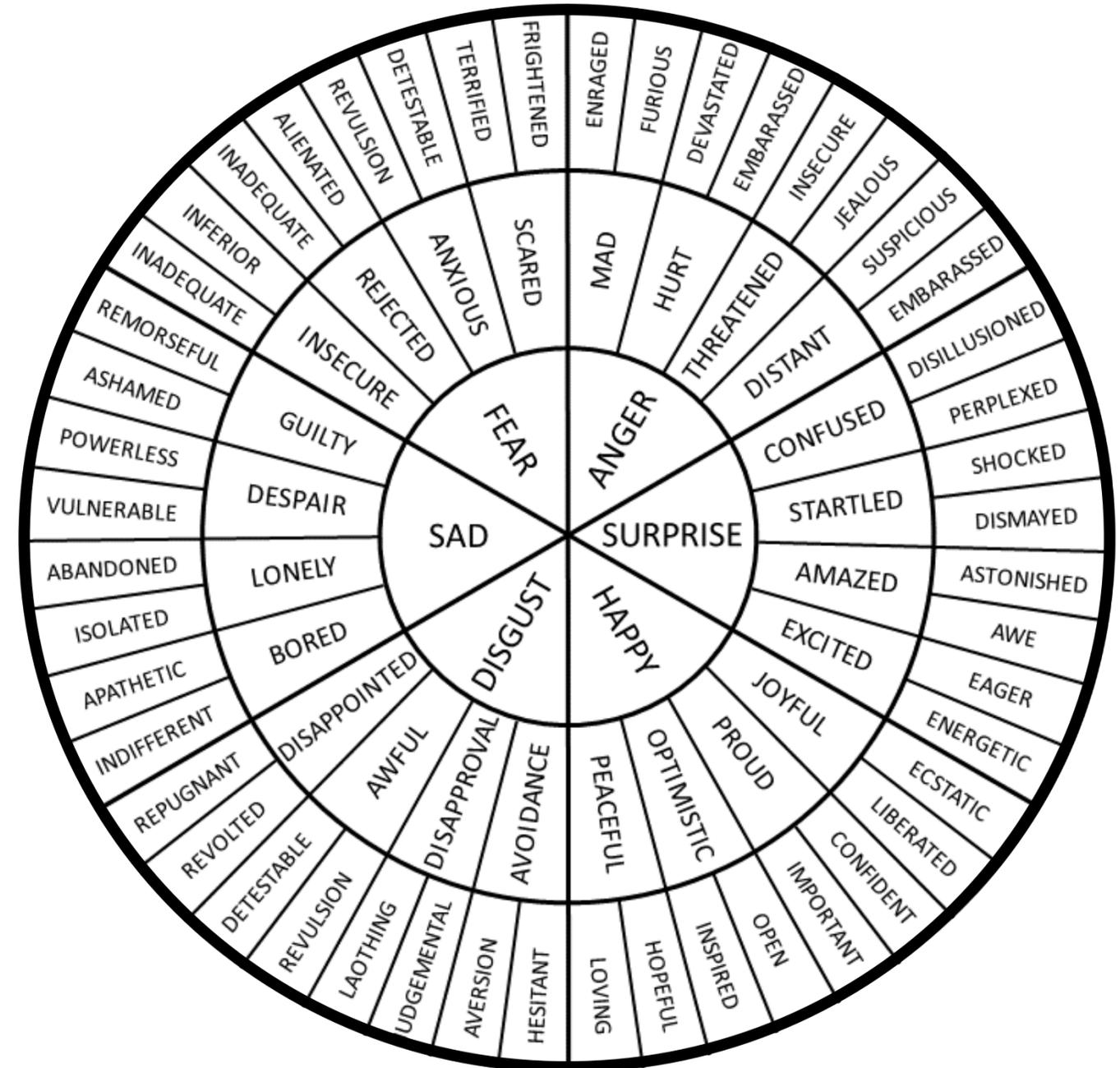


I Feel, But am I Ready to O.W.N?

OBSERVE: What am I noticing right now?

WITNESS: Where do I feel it in my body?

NAME: What am I feeling?



The Reflective Processor is Processing

A **Reflective Processor** is someone who pauses to notice their inner world—thoughts, emotions, needs—and responds with intention instead of instinct.

Reflective processing turns emotional noise into meaningful insight, creating space for clarity, choice, and healing.

insights

Creating Space to Reflect

Reflection occurs when we create space, either internally or externally, to pause, process, create, and reconnect with what is true for us.



A.C.E. The Process

ASSESS

Internal Skill: Self-awareness

Therapeutic Function: Emotional inventory + Pattern recognition

CURIOUS CONSIDERATION

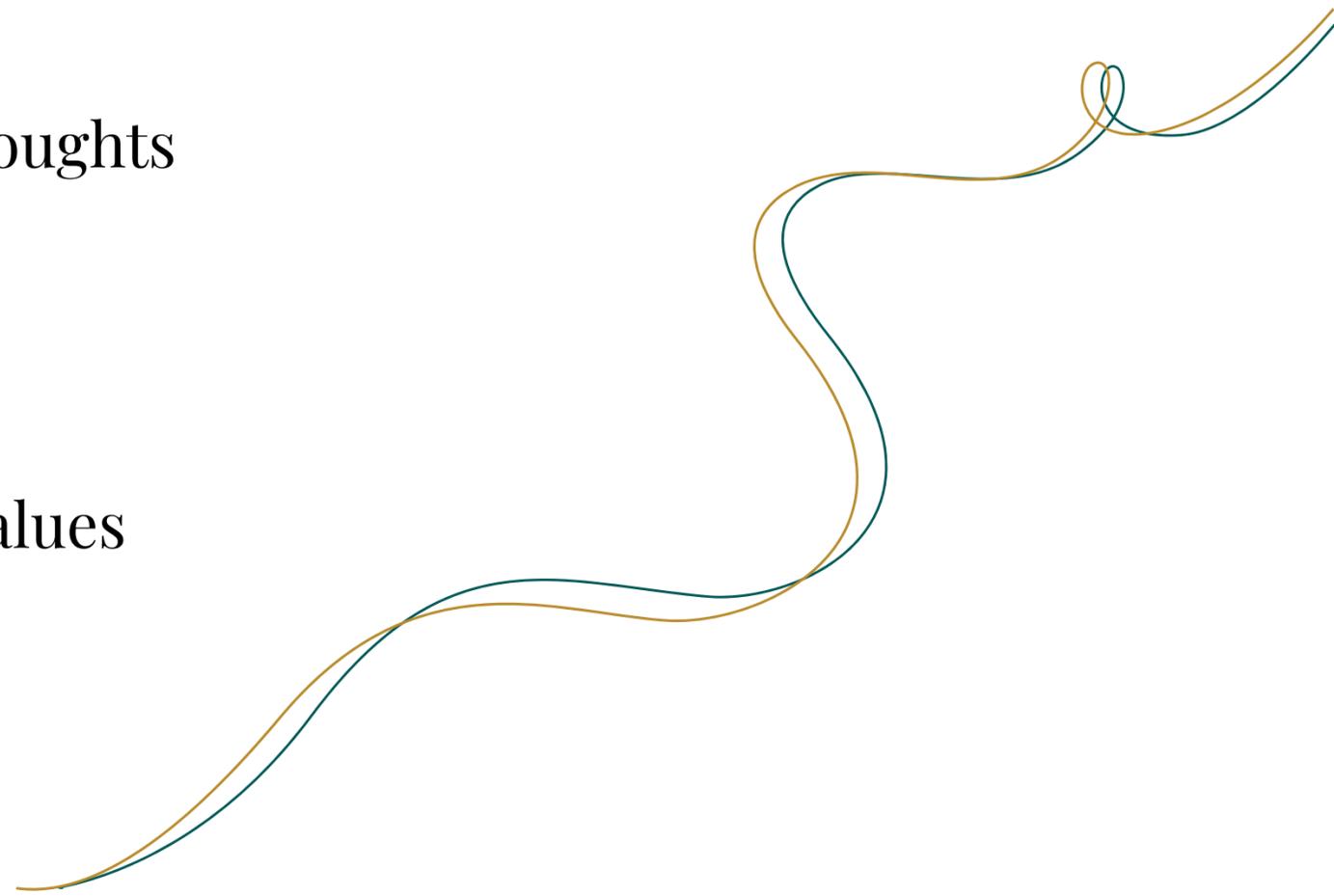
Internal Skill: Emotional flexibility

Therapeutic Function: Exploration of behaviors, feelings, thoughts

EVALUATE

Internal Skill: Self-honesty + emotional processing

Therapeutic Function: Aligned decision-making with core values



L.I.V.E. Framework: Designing a Reflective Space

LIVELINESS

Internal Skill: Emotional attunement

Therapeutic Function: Regulate emotions + Awareness to the present

INSPIRATION

Internal Skill: Curiosity + Creative thinking

Therapeutic Function: Vision-casting + Expansive ideation

VISUAL REMINDERS

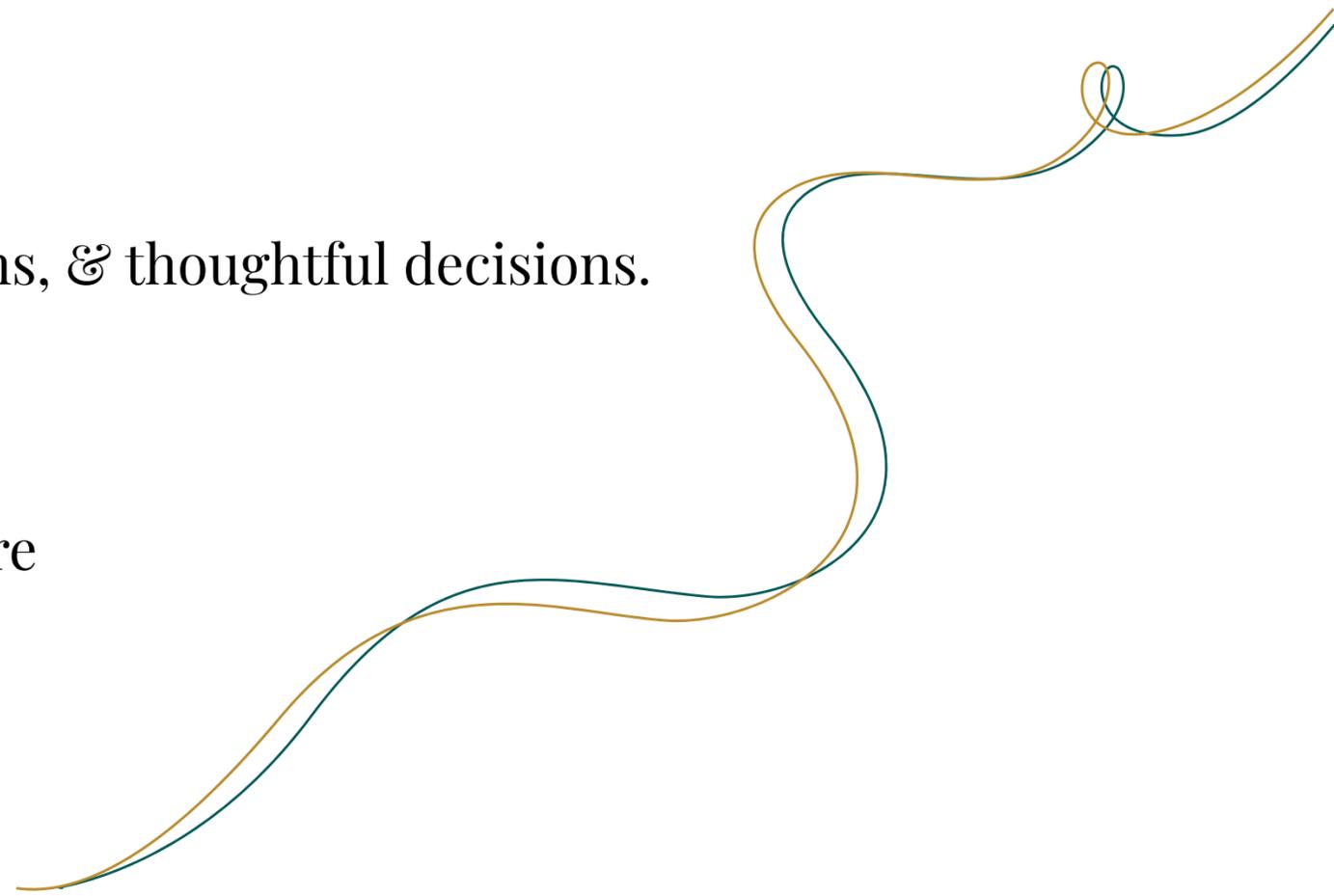
Internal Skill: Value alignment + Clarity

Therapeutic Function: Promotes clarity, reduces emotional reactions, & thoughtful decisions.

EXPRESSION

Internal Skill: Self-expression + Inner awareness

Therapeutic Function: Reflective communication + Creative pleasure



The Environment Creates Structure...

What Happens in it is Fluid

- Foster the potential for personal growth, self-exploration, cooperation, creative expression, and exploration, and nurture.
- Create a climate of kindness, respect, mutual regard, and tolerance rather than one of hostility, fear, disrespect, shame, or intolerance.
- Conflicts are expressed openly and respectfully and must be resolved at the level at which is occurred.
- When an environment is not overly constricted, people are often very funny, and comical things occur in any community.
- Recovery from trauma and neglect is all about relationships—rebuilding trust, regaining confidence, returning to a sense of security, and reconnecting to love
- Healing and recovery are impossible without lasting, caring connections to others
- Strong social network of those who surround and support them
- People who respect them, who are tolerant of their weaknesses and vulnerabilities, and who are patient in helping them slowly build new skills
- People who have experienced trauma need a healthy community to buffer the pain, distress, and loss caused earlier in life
- Consistent, patient, and repetitive loving care

Becoming a Reflective Processor gives you GRACE

Grounding

Internal Skill: Emotional regulation + Mental rest + Behavior reset

Therapeutic Function: Creates internal safety through stillness + settles the nervous system

Reassurance

Internal Skill: Self-trust

Therapeutic Function: Making choices from your core

Awareness

Internal Skill: Self-observation

Therapeutic Function: Staying present under pressure

Clarity

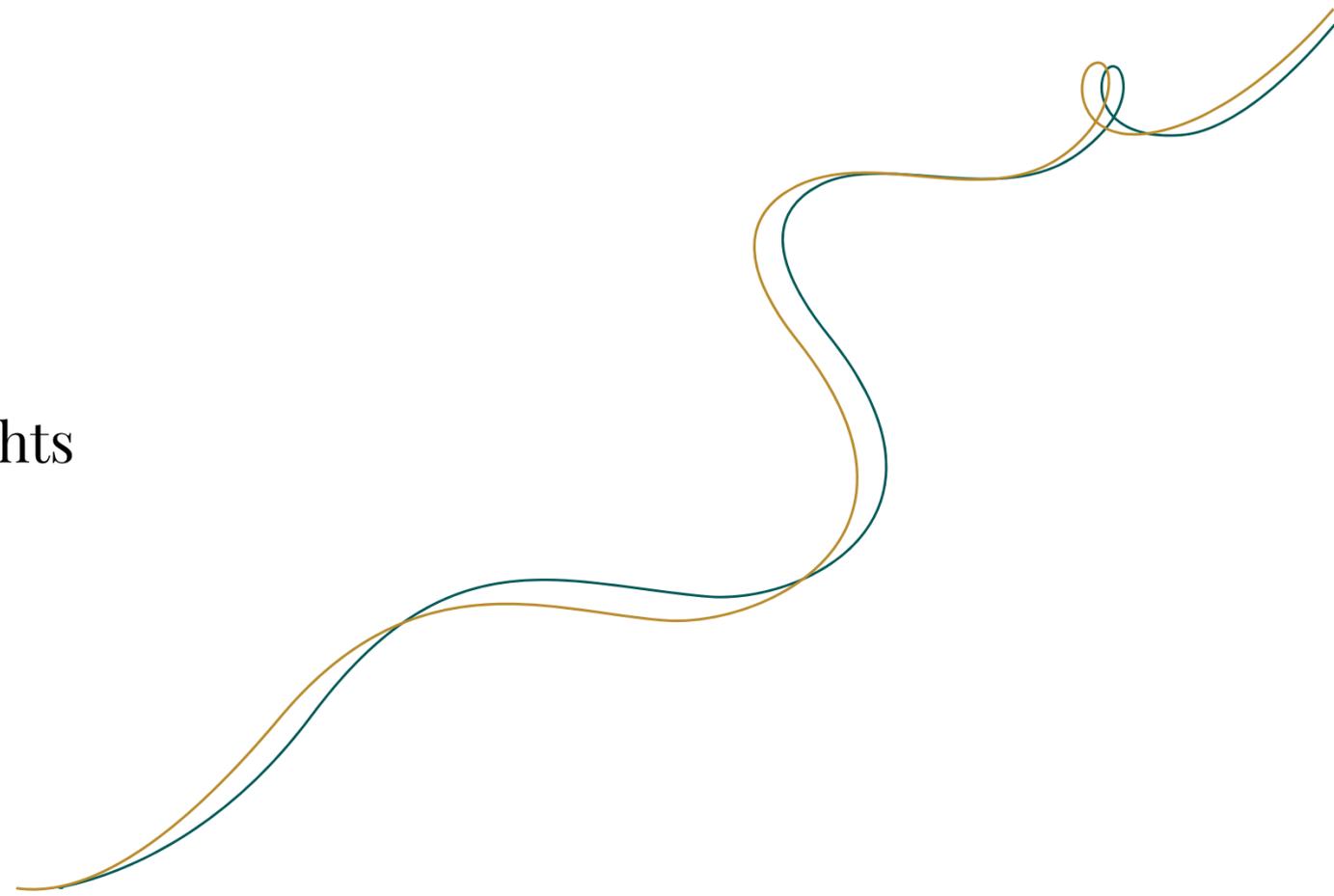
Internal Skill: Acceptance of Inner guidance

Therapeutic Function: Organize + understand the wisdom of thoughts

Embodiment

Internal Skill: Emotional integration

Therapeutic Function: Practice processing not perfection



A.C.C.E.P.T. - A Practice for Presence™

Acknowledge the Effort: Recognize and reflect on what it took to achieve this.

Create Space to Breathe: Slow down. Let the moment settle, no rushing to the next thing.

Choose Presence Over Perfection: Be with what is, not what you wish it were.

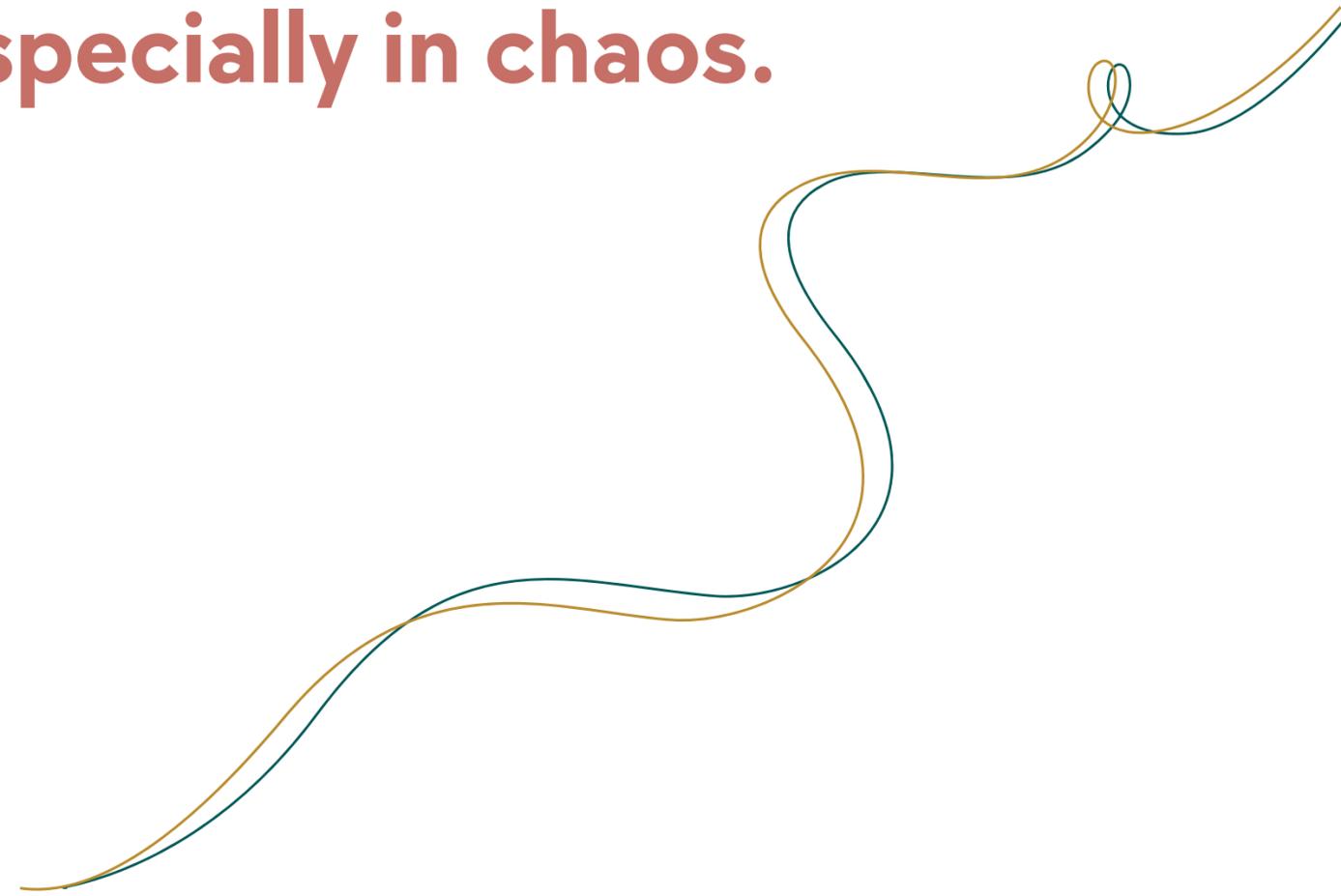
Embrace the Outcome: Accept that what you created is here regardless of how it looks -

Pause the Judgment: Notice your self-talk. Lead with compassion, not critique.

Tell Yourself the Truth: “This is mine. I did this. I am still becoming.”

REFLECTION is Your Super Power

- ✓ You can heal with calm, clarity, and truth.
- ✓ You are worthy of healing with peace, not pressure.
- ✓ It keeps you calm when everything around you feels loud.
- ✓ You make space for what matters most.
- ✓ It brings you back to what's true, especially in chaos.



THANK YOU

Scan the QR code to obtain a recap, reflective prompts, and a calming practice to support insight, regulation, and intentional action for you or your clients.

