🧰 Trauma-First Intake & Treatment Checklist

A Clinical Tool for Trauma-Centered Counseling Using the 12STR® Framework

Use this checklist to explore and rule out trauma before defaulting to symptom-focused or diagnosis-first care.

✅ 1. Intake & Assessment Filter

- ☐ **Have I used a source-focused trauma assessment?**
  - *Examples: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), Simple Trauma Source Assessment (STSA)*
- ☐ **Have I identified the primary trauma source(s)** (specific people, events, environments)?
- ☐ **Have I used MI-style (Motivational Interviewing) techniques** such as:
  - Open-ended questions
  - Reflective listening
  - Summaries that link symptoms to survival
  - Affirmations that honor the client's resilience
- ☐ **Have I gently bridged the client's symptoms to trauma education?**
  - "What you're describing is a common response to trauma."
  - "Would it be okay if I shared a framework that explains why this might be happening?"
- ☐ Are there signs of developmental, spiritual, or generational trauma not yet named?
- ☐ Am I remembering to follow the BRIDGE acronym?
- ☐ Am I building the relationship?
- ☐ **Have I reviewed the Trauma Survivor BluePrint with them**?
- ☐ How about the 12STR® Infographic and 12 Stage Handout?

✅ 2. Trauma Reframing

- ☐ Could this be a trauma adaptation rather than a disorder?
  - e.g., Substance use → Self-soothing
  - e.g., Rage → Survival mode
  - e.g., Avoidance or anxiety → Protection from re-traumatization
- ☐ Are we chasing symptoms—or moving toward stories?
- ☐ Have I validated the survival logic of their coping strategies?
- ☐ Have I taught them grounding skills and the purpose of them?

✅ 3. Source-Centered Exploration

- ☐ Have I suggested they start reading "Let God Heal Your Trauma"? or are they ready to start "Break Every Stinking Chain?"
- ☐ Are we moving through all **4 stages of Phase 1** before starting Phase 2?
- ☐ Is there a pattern of symptom flaring when certain sources are brought up?

✅ 4. Spiritual Integration

- ☐ Have I invited the client to include God or their Higher Power in their trauma recovery process?
- ☐ Have I completed a spiritual assessment and informed consent?
- ☐ Are we integrating faith practices (prayer, Scripture, Christian imagery) in a trauma-informed way?
- ☐ Is the client's faith a resource, a wound, or both?

✅ 5. Treatment Direction

- ☐ Am I working from the 12STR® toolbelt or mixing in CBT interventions?
- ☐ Have I outlined a **phase-specific treatment plan** (especially Phase 2 for source work)?
- ☐ Are we allowing space for processing, not rushing to fix or reframe?
- ☐ Am I watching for pressure to "move on" rather than "move through"?

🕊️ Closing Reminder

"The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out." – Proverbs 20:5

Insight leads. Tools follow.
Let trauma be the lens—not the afterthought.

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