

ORIENTATION AND SELF-CARE IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

Application of Advanced
Integrative Therapy (AIT)
Trauma Treatment for
Psychotherapeutic
Practitioners

Dr Asuka Yamashina

Chartered Counselling Psychologist

AIT Teacher and Supervisor

DISCLAIMER

This booklet is intended as an informational guide only. The method discussed in this document is intended to supplement health, insight and healing. It should not be interpreted as medical advice, and is not intended to diagnose or cure any psychological and/or medical condition the reader has, or to be a substitute for advice from physicians or other healthcare professionals.

No part of this booklet may be reproduced in any format without the author's written permission.

The methodology of Advanced Integrative Therapy (AIT) described in this booklet has been amended or reproduced with authorisation from and consultations with the AIT developer Dr Asha Clinton who holds copyright for the AIT manuals.

The method described in this handbook is intended solely for the reader's own use at their discretion and risk. It does not entitle readers to practice AIT in their clinical practice with their clients. To practice AIT with patients/clients, it is required to undertake AIT training authorised by the AIT Institute.

Neither the author nor any person who supported the creation of this booklet can be held responsible for any loss or damage caused, or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly as a result of the use, application, or interpretation of this booklet.

Copyright © 2020 by Asuka Yamashina
All rights reserved.

To David Cunial, and people like him who are taking immense risks to serve the welfare of others and of society.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	5
Psychological challenges of COVID-19	6
Unmet needs create fear and anxiety.....	6
Shock, grief and fear about the sudden loss of the world we knew	7
Introduction to AIT theory and its stress reduction technique	11
How the AIT theory of trauma illuminates healing in the pandemic.....	11
AIT’s energetic trauma release	13
AIT Opening of the Heart Meditation	18
Strengthening positive qualities and beliefs with AIT energy treatment.....	19
AIT Centering Meditation	21
Protecting yourself from burnout	22
Preserving our energy while the world is encroached by death	22
Filling ourselves with healing and regenerative emotional frequencies	24
Being filled with love and peace in the eye of the storm	26
COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity for healing and growth	27
Our shared priorities in re-orientation through the crisis	27
Reaffirmation of hope, dreams, joy, peace and love.....	30
Appendix: Further resources on AIT and its seminars	31

PREFACE

As you fulfil your duty of care to those experiencing ill health, unease and vulnerability during these unprecedented challenges caused by COVID-19, you are exposed to overwhelming and negative feelings in your clients, as well as your own fears and anxieties and that of society in general.

As a Counselling Psychologist practicing integrative psychotherapy, I have observed and listened carefully over the past month to reactions, reflections and reporting of this extraordinary 'new reality'. I put this booklet together with the intention to share with the psychotherapeutic community just one perspective on this new and powerful quagmire of insecurity and uncertainty, by presenting an overview of the mental health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and its main themes. I have in my mind, in particular, how we practice our own self-care in order to remain resilient and hopeful as we support others. To that end I would like to share with you some trauma release methodology of Advanced Integrative Therapy (AIT), an integrative energy psychotherapy modality which has transformed my clinical practice and my own self-care. (Please see the [AIT Institute](#) website for further information). I will end this booklet with a reaffirmation of hope for the future, as individuals and as a collective, in which we will do our own best to cultivate our resilience and balance.

Those of you who are familiar with AIT will notice that I have organised my writing in much the same way as we work in AIT: to identify the fundamental core trauma and fear underneath the symptoms, and assist healing and meaning-making of these traumas at multilayered levels of our existence - of feelings, thoughts, physical manifestations, and of spiritual connection. Releasing of the trauma is completed by envisioning and aligning with a more healthy and holistic way of being.

I will be sharing many examples of trauma treatment sentences and positive intentions. Whether you choose to use AIT methods with them or not, I hope many of them will resonate with you and will support your well-being. Unlike standard AIT practice, this booklet only suggests treatment of current traumas. Those of you who are AIT-trained can explore and include originating traumas in a more thorough treatment for yourself and your clients.

Lastly, a word of caution that this document is very trauma-heavy as it discusses many difficult themes. As it is important that we do not overwhelm ourselves with yet more exposure to negative energy, if you have already 'had enough' for the day and would like to just read positive intentions, please skim through to [the green fonts](#), which you will find from page 18 onwards.

I would like to thank Ruth Pimenta, Dr Elisa Trotta and Dr Gkolfo Karlou for their support and expert advice. I thank Dr Asha Clinton for her knowledge, creativity, support and permission to use information from her AIT manuals.

Asuka Yamashina
April 2020

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

UNMET NEEDS CREATE FEAR AND ANXIETY

Characteristics of COVID-19 have created immense difficulties in our fundamental needs being met. Combined, these phenomenon challenge the fundamental safety and trust in human nature and community, sparking fears for survival.

COVID-19's problematic implication	Manifestation	Trauma themes that are triggered
• Anti-attachment	Forbids physical closeness and intimacy.	Isolation, Separation, Loneliness, Abandonment
• Anti-social cooperation	My needs vs. Others' needs.	Scarcity mentality, Moral dilemma
• Anti-clarity	Unknown qualities of the new pathogen.	Shaky foundation to make right decisions
• Anti-containment/ protection	Cannot be detected immediately.	Unknowingly being infected and infecting others, Illness, Contamination, Loss of autonomy
• Anti-predictability	Thwarts future planning.	Hopelessness, Lack of control, Interrupted routine and progress, Broken dreams
• Anti-economy	Devastating economic cost to livelihoods of many.	Economic security vs. Preventable deaths

Powerlessness and fear creates:

- General stress, 'fight and flight' or 'freeze' state, sense of being overwhelmed, irritability, anger, confusion, frustration, mistrust.
- Anxiety, paranoia, OCD, panic attacks, insomnia.
- Depression, hopelessness, helplessness, death wish.
- Dissociation: disconnection from body, mind, feelings, reality; denial; inability to be present in here and now and be connected to oneself and others.
- Somatisation: dissociated/disconnected feelings expressed through body e.g. headaches, shortness of breath, chest pain, digestive issues, lowered immune function.

- Unhealthy coping strategies e.g. food/alcohol abuse, eating disorder, substance misuses, abuse of self and the other (e.g. blame, aggression, domestic violence), excessive activities.
- Greed, lack of consideration and compassion for others, “everyone for themselves”.

SHOCK, GRIEF AND FEAR ABOUT THE SUDDEN LOSS OF THE WORLD WE KNEW

The trauma of loss:

One of the major theme is multiple and simultaneous losses, that are either real or feared:

- Loss of one’s life and of loved ones.
- Loss of a job, livelihood and purpose/identity it gave.
- Loss of home.
- Loss of social interaction.
- Loss of freedom and movement.
- Loss of control, planning and autonomy.
- Loss of protection and of the world that is known and safe enough.
- Loss of connection to and trust in the Divine and one’s inner wisdom/centre.

The trauma of catastrophising and panic:

The fear creates negative core beliefs (deeply held limiting beliefs that are generalised and applied to many contexts, situations and judgements) and exacerbate a dysregulated emotional state.

- I will not survive the damage the virus can cause me: physically/psychologically/financially.
- The crisis will be unrelenting, out of control and ever worsening.
- I will fail to fulfil my responsibility.
- I am harmed/infected and harming/infecting a lot of people.
- Things will never go back to normal.

Safety in “the normal reality” being challenged

Old “reality”	New “reality”
Dangers can be seen and be dealt with via our senses.	COVID-19 is invisible to human eyes and asymptomatic for some.
Globalisation will continue to accelerate.	Halted movement of objects and people across borders.
Science has answers to control nature and disease.	Nature throws up a novel pathogen science is yet to cure.
Government is prepared and knows how to protect the citizens.	Leaders do not know what they are facing. Government emergency power may curtail civil liberties.
Post-9/11, Terrorism: Conflict between nations and ideologies.	Post-COVID-19: Conflict between human and nature/Earth’s forces.

The change or destruction of the “normal world” by the virus - the sudden breakdown of our usual life, and exposure to danger that most people have never expected - happened in the space of 1-2 months. As I write this at the beginning of April 2020 when global cases of the COVID-19 virus have gone above the one million mark, we are still in the shock phase, just coming out of ‘denial’ and ‘disbelief’ towards ‘adjustment’, trying to make sense and prepare for what’s next.

However, many are still in either ‘panic: fight and flight’ or ‘dissociation/denial: freeze’ mode, faced with the fear of the unknown. The impact of the virus is indefinite, and will worsen as the quarantine is prolonged and economic damage grows. It seems that we as individuals have little control over how the crisis is unfolding: the “enemy” is invisible and omnipresent, and humanity is not united on how to go forward.

Then how do we arrive at the next stage, ‘acceptance’ of the current reality, so that we will be present here and now, and act appropriately in the current situation without fight and flight, freezing, denial and dissociation?

Some people are already framing their present in line with their vision of what kind of world they want after the pandemic. Yet others are finding it difficult to accept the current situation. Such differences may be due to:

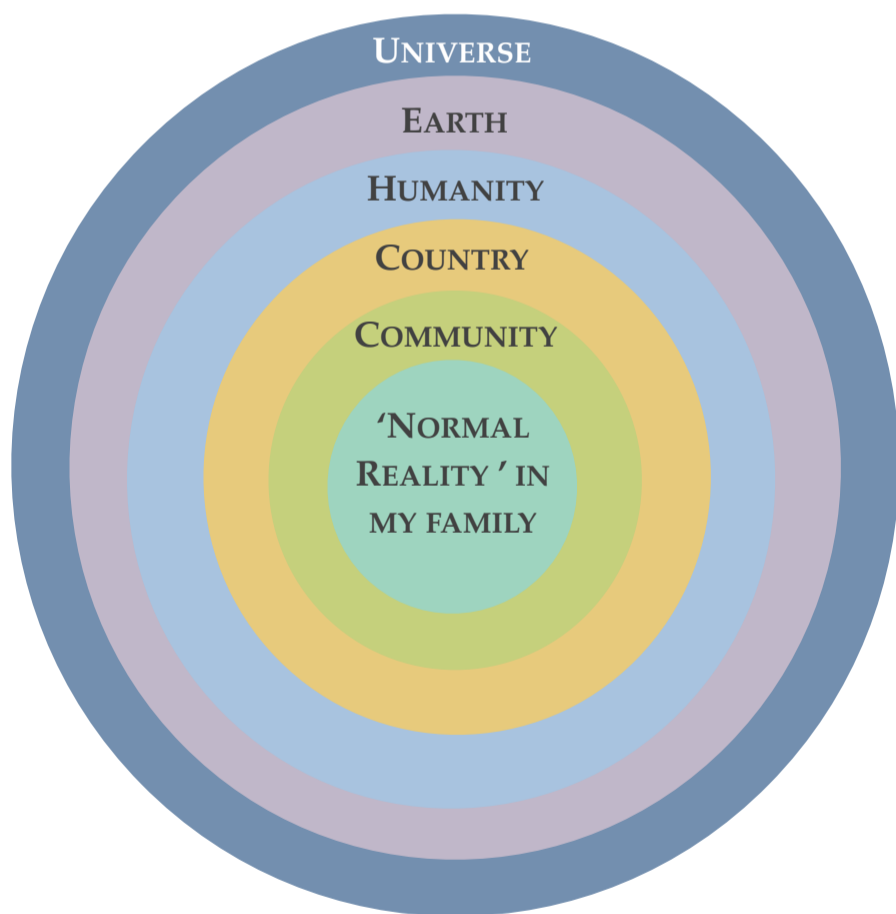
- Different levels of exposure to risk (lack of protection)
- Different levels of ego strength (resilience in sense of self)
- Past experiences of similar traumatic events/patterns

Levels of exposure to risk: lack of protection

- I risk **my life** in the current crisis : Most exposed to risks and need for protection.
 - Frontline caregivers (e.g. health and support workers)
 - Essential service workers (e.g. in supermarkets, transport, logistics)
 - Those with underlying health conditions or in old age
 - Those who are deprived of own private space to self-isolate e.g. refugees, homeless, those existing below the poverty line, prisoners.
- I risk **my livelihood** in the current crisis: with time, can slip into the above level of risk. e.g. self-employed, zero-hour contractors, hospitality, travel, entertainment sectors.
- I risk **my way of life** in the current crisis: has more means of controlling the risks or have less responsibility to support oneself and others.

These levels of risks differ but **they all have implications for mental health** at each level.

Levels of ego strength: resilience in sense of self



We all have our own multi-layered schema of what is deemed 'normal reality' e.g. for oneself, for one's family of origin and in each greater level of belonging e.g. to community, country, humanity, Earth, and ultimately the universe. Psychotherapy often deals with discrepancy or frictions between norms in these different levels of identity and belonging experienced by the individual.

The ego (our conscious self) is where our internal reality meets the external reality, physical or co-constructed. Ego-strong individuals are adaptable to changes in the external world. Ego-weak individuals are less so.

For example, for someone who grew up in a family in which it was 'normal' to not be connected to oneself, uncertainty in the external world can be a greater existential threat. Their outer reference is too dynamic and mutable now to serve as their identity and anchor, in this paradigm shift caused by the pandemic.

Dissociation due to past traumas

'Freeze' response during trauma happens when we are overwhelmed by the experience of the damage, yet we cannot 'fight' nor 'flee'. We then shut down and disconnect from our sensations physically, mentally and emotionally. It is almost as if we leave our own body. Such experiences are traumatic in themselves, as we are stuck with unexpressed impulses and responses, and we become easily triggered. When such trauma is a repeated pattern from the past, when we could not defend ourselves or escape to safety, dissociation becomes a habitual and chronic coping mechanism.

In this pandemic, which we cannot control or escape, those who had deep trauma of dissociation in the past find it hard to be present within themselves and to respond appropriately to the challenges and changes they find themselves in now. The frozen traumatic reactions that had been unexpressed and therefore stuck within us need to be released. In the next chapter, I will explain how Advanced Integrative Therapy (AIT) energy treatment allows for the safe and gentle removal of such trauma charge in the body, mind and spirit.

INTRODUCTION TO AIT THEORY AND ITS STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUE

HOW THE AIT THEORY OF TRAUMA ILLUMINATES HEALING IN THE PANDEMIC

AIT is a trauma-focused psychotherapeutic method developed in the 1990s by Dr Asha Clinton, energy psychotherapist. AIT synthesises psychodynamic, Jungian, cognitive, behavioural, body-centred and transpersonal psychology with energy psychology.

Energy psychology is based on the premise that everything –including our thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, memories and trauma - consists of energy. Trauma blocks the flow of energy in the body and causes negative beliefs, desires, compulsions, obsessions, addictions and other symptoms – AIT helps to release it.

The AIT definition of trauma is broad and includes any situational and developmental trauma that disturbs integrity and coherence of our being:

"Any occurrence which, when we think about it or when it is triggered by some present event, evokes difficult emotions and/or physical symptoms or sensations, gives rise to negative beliefs, desires, fantasies, compulsions, obsessions, addictions or dissociation, blocks the development of positive qualities and spiritual connection and fractures human wholeness." (Asha Clinton, *The AIT Basics Manual*, 2019, p.9)

AIT therapists help clients identify the connection between past trauma and current suffering and clear the whole traumatic pattern, using a safe and gentle energetic method, without re-traumatisation.

Current vulnerability repeats the past traumas

The current pandemic has triggered the fear and anxiety for our survival and security **that we have experienced in the past**, especially in our early years of life when we needed the most care and protection. Linking past and present traumatic patterns is the principle of AIT.

AIT energetically treats firstly the past trauma/traumatic pattern, secondly the present trauma/traumatic pattern, and thirdly the connection between them. By such a through treatment, defensive mechanism that are no longer useful can be let go safely.

Examples of the traumatic pattern repeating:

- Trauma of being overwhelmed: **I am overwhelmed** by fear and anxiety in the society in crisis because *I was overwhelmed by fear and anxiety in my mother when I was a child.*
- Trauma of not being protected: I believe **I am not protected** from the risks caused by COVID-19 now because *I was not protected from risks as a child.*
- Trauma of failing to protect oneself: I believe **I cannot protect myself** from COVID-19 because *I could not protect myself from being abused and bullied as a child.*
- Trauma of risk of death: I believe **I will die** from COVID-19 because *I nearly died when my mother tried to abort me.*
- Trauma of scarcity: I believe **I will not have enough** unless I stockpile because *I did not have enough as a child.*

Survival themes as repeated vulnerability, triggered during the pandemic

Old traumas around survival have been triggered in this crisis, and we are particularly vulnerable to the traumas that we were repeatedly affected by in the past.

Survival themes	Repeated vulnerability in the past and now
Emotional survival	Loss, abandonment, separation, neglect, lack of protection from harm, confinement, lack of autonomy, abuse, unfair treatment
Physical survival	Illness, injury, near-death experience, hospitalisation, medical trauma, oxygenation trauma (e.g. in utero, asthma), hunger, malnourishment
Material survival	Poverty, scarcity, homelessness, unemployment, redundancy, insolvency, lack of available options
Spiritual or existential survival	Existential isolation, debilitating fear of death and non-existence, loss of faith/meaning, divine/karmic punishment, anger at God, lack of belonging within the “Universe”

Empowering immune system health

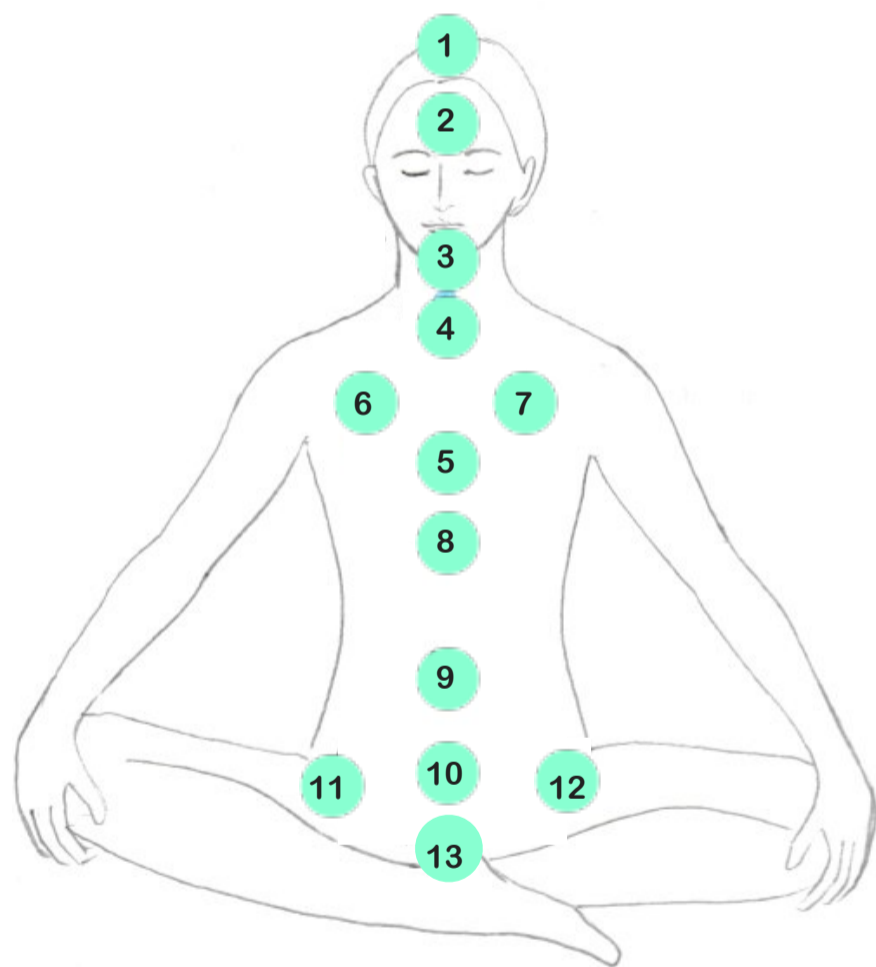
Western medicine has advanced since the Spanish Flu of 1918 which infected 500 million people, and killed tens of millions. However, are our immune systems any stronger now to withstand COVID-19 and any further new pathogens to follow? This pandemic is a wakeup call to develop our constitutional resilience, a well-functioning immune system. How capable is our body in protecting itself?

AIT recognises that our immune system can be weakened by many stressors at the following levels:

- Psychological and behavioural: we are living faster lives with fewer resources e.g. austerity, insufficient sleep, lack of community and safety net, food which is poor in nutrition
- Environmental: pollution, pesticides, synthetic chemicals, EMF (electromagnetic field)
- Spiritual: disconnection from the Divine/the Whole, and from one's calling

In AIT, the body is regarded as a self-healing and self-organising system. When we eliminate the environmental, psychological, behavioural and spiritual stressors, the body knows how best to heal itself, as long as we allow it to do so.

AIT'S ENERGETIC TRAUMA RELEASE



In AIT, while thinking of negative memory/feeling /thoughts, the client places their own hands on two of the 13 key parts of their body in turn, where energetic information can be accessed (energy centres).

When **releasing negative energetic information**, one hand holds the energy centre where the trauma energy is felt strong. Another hand moves from the head downwards in sequence through respective energy centres towards the lowest centre (bottom of the spine/sacrum), as illustrated in the diagram on the left.

When **strengthening positive energetic information**, one hand moves upwards towards the head, in the reverse order.

Thirteen energy centres in AIT energy treatment (taken from The AIT Basics Manual)

<i>Energy Centre</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Main Symbolism</i>
1. Crown	Crown of the head	Divine Masculine, Spirit
2. Forehead	Centre of forehead, just above eyebrows	Thought, intuition
3. Chin	In the crease of the chin	Shame, Humiliation
4. Throat	Soft hollow at the base of the throat	Self expression
5. Centre Heart	Centre of chest above nipples	Love, Fear, Sadness
6. Left Heart	Left of the Heart Centre	Feminine, receptive heart
7. Right Heart	Right of the Heart Centre	Masculine, assertive heart
8. Solar Plexus	Bottom of the sternum where ribcages meet	Power, control, vitality
9. Navel	Bottom rim of the navel	Power of the body
10. Pelvis	Just above the pubic bone	Sexuality, creativity
11. Left Crease	Crease between left thigh and abdomen	Feminine grounding, root
12. Right Crease	Crease between right thigh and abdomen	Masculine grounding, root
13. Root	Between anus and sexual organs	Divine Feminine, survival

AIT trauma release method

This is a simplified version of AIT. (Edited from The AIT Basics Manual by Asha Clinton, with the author's permission). You can see a demonstration video on the [AIT Institute website](#).

1) Identify and make a succinct phrase that captures the traumatic experience/memory/thought/feeling that you want to release. The aim of this treatment is not to dismiss nor emphasise the traumatic event that occurred or the validity of your feeling. The purpose is to complete processing of the traumatic charge that is still lodged within your body, which has not been expressed or released. For that to happen, we first need to 'name' it so that we can connect to and focus on the trauma that we are targeting.

e.g. "All my terror of the pandemic escalating".

"I am going to catch coronavirus and die".

"I lost my business/job and my life is ruined."

2) Sit comfortably with your back straight. Choose one energy centre that you sense to be holding the most traumatic energy within it. (If you can't find such a place, choose your heart centre.) Place one hand there. This hand remains there (stationary position) till the end of this treatment round.

3) Place your other hand, palm down, on the top of your head (**the crown centre -1-**) and say the treatment phrase. Try to connect to the experience being treated, as well as noticing the current thoughts, feelings and sensations in your body. You have now created an energy flow between the two energy centres you are holding. The flow releases the trauma held in both energy centres.

4) While keeping your hand on the stationary position/centre, move your other hand down to **the forehead centre -2-** i.e. centre of the palm or all of your finger tips touching the centre of your forehead. Repeat the treatment phrase, let the thoughts/feelings/memory arise in you, if any.

5) While keeping your hand on the stationary position/centre, move your other hand down to **the chin centre -3-** i.e. your finger tips touching your chin. Repeat the treatment phrase, let the thoughts/feelings/memory arise in you, if any.

6) Repeat the same process, while moving your hand down to the remaining energy centres and repeating the sentence, in turn.

Throat -4- —> **Centre Heart -5-** (centre of your chest)—> **Left chest -6-** (left auxiliary heart centre) —> **Right chest -7-** (right auxiliary heart centre) —> **Solar plexus -8-** (below sternum) —> **Navel -9-** (belly button) —> **Pelvis -10-** —> **Left crease/hip -11-** (left auxiliary root centre)—> **Right crease/hip -12-** (right auxiliary root centre) —> **Root centre -13-**(sit on your hand) —> take a deep breath in and out.

7) Sit with your internal experience, connect to the traumatic energy again and sense whether it has become lighter. Repeat the whole process (rounds) until you feel that the traumatic energy is removed fully. If something that is distressing came up additionally, make a sentence about it and treat the same way.

Frequently asked questions about AIT trauma treatment

Q1: Does saying aloud the negative feelings and thoughts again and again not make it more real or make me feel worse?

As you say the treatment phrase, you are also at the same time creating with your two hands the energy flow that dislodges the traumatic charge that had been stuck in respective energy centres. All you are doing is releasing that trauma load, not worsening it.

If you had been disconnected from feelings around the issue, you may feel them more strongly. It might feel like that trauma is being triggered even more. However, this will pass quickly as you continue the rounds and keep clearing it. You can also make a new treatment sentence about these newly discovered distressing emotions and clear them the same way.

Q2: I feel a bit spaced out after the rounds. Is this wrong and will I experience something strange after this?

When the big traumatic energy has been released, your energetic configuration starts readjusting and you might feel slightly dizzy or unbalanced for a short while. Because the flow of energy and

your connection to the past experience are now restored (now without the trauma charge) you might feel more emotional, have dreams that carry significant meaning, or be aware of some physical sensations or fatigue. This is a normal reaction if it is within the 48 hours following the treatment. If it lasts longer than that, you will need to tune into yourself to find what is still distressing and treat it. Please ensure that you are well hydrated during and after the treatment as an aid to the circulation of energy.

Q3: What shall I do when I find my attention wondering off and cannot concentrate on the sentence and what I am feeling?

If you feel deep down that it is not safe to connect to the experience described in the sentence or that it is impossible to release it for some reason, you may be energetically reversed to proceeding with the treatment, i.e. currents of energy are either blocked or have switched to a reversed flow, manifesting an internal and often unconscious opposition/objection to change. If you would still like to continue with the treatment, there are two things you can do to return to a more balanced and centred state.

- 1) Cook's Hook-up: a posture that corrects a dysregulated flow of energy. Sitting down comfortably, cross your ankles, the left ankle over the right ankle. Then cross your wrists the other way around, the right wrist over the left wrist. Put your right hand on your left thigh, and your left hand on your right thigh. Put the tip of your tongue behind your upper teeth gently. Breathe in a relaxed way and stay in this position for at least 30 seconds, and until you feel your energy is re-balanced.
- 2) Rubbing the 'sore spots' for at least 30 seconds whilst breathing deeply (neural-lymphatic reflex points, 3" to each side of the upper chest from the base of the throat). You can find them by stretching out your arms, parallel to the floor and then bending them inwards so that your hands are placed on your chest. Make circular movements in this area to find any tenderness or soreness – these are the sore spots.

Q4: What do I do if I get overwhelmed with feelings and cannot say the sentence?

Take your time, remembering to breathe deeply, until you are ready to say it. Keep holding the energy centre until feelings are released as needed, and then move on to the next energy centre. If you continue finishing each round and repeating it, the feeling of being overwhelmed should subside.

If you feel too distressed, you can also go through each energy centre quickly rather than holding each for a long time and reflecting. This still clears the trauma charge even though you might not get as much insight as you would doing it more slowly.

Treatment phrase examples for the COVID-19 crisis

- All my fear of catching and dying from COVID-19.
- All my fear of losing my family with COVID-19.
- All the shock and trauma of my father dying.
- Being separated from my family and friends.
- Losing my job and security.
- All my fear that the world is unsafe and something bad will happen.
- All my fear that I cannot protect myself and my family.
- All my anger at the government and irresponsible people.
- I cannot cope with the changes that are happening.
- All my guilt that others are suffering and I am not.
- All my frustration of staying at home and not meeting people.

Treatment phrase examples for frontline care providers

- All my fear/terror of being exposed to COVID-19, catching it and dying from it.
- All my fear/terror of being infected and cross-infecting others.
- All my fear/terror of losing my colleagues.
- All my fear/terror and anxiety of not being able to save lives.
- All my fear/terror of not knowing what this virus does and how we can fight it.
- All my exhaustion, fear, trauma, despair and helplessness.
- All my fear, anger and guilt that I cannot protect myself and my patients/clients.
- All my fear and anger that I am not given enough protective equipment.
- All my fear of leaving vulnerable patients/clients at risk.
- All my sadness and longing that I cannot be with my family.
- All my fear that I cannot do enough.
- All my fear that lack of resources are impacting on my work.

AIT OPENING OF THE HEART MEDITATION

Copyright: Asha Clinton. Reproduced with her permission.

Guided meditations form another important pillar of AIT that goes alongside trauma treatment. AIT Opening of the Heart Meditation follows the same process as the above-mentioned trauma treatment, with the Heart Centre being the stationary position. However, traumas to release will be naturally found in the meditative process and released without articulating and repeating them as sentences.

1. Rub sore spots (3" to each side of the upper chest from the base of the throat) and say:

*“Even though I may have blocks,
which make it hard for me to experience my Heart Centre,
I deeply and completely love and accept myself,
honour and respect myself,
and I forgive myself for having these blocks,
and I forgive whatever or whoever put them there for doing so.”¹*

2. Sit with your spine straight, and your eyes closed. If you are sitting on a chair, place both feet flat on the floor, or sit in lotus, half lotus, or with your legs crossed on the floor, let the muscles in your body soften and relax. Take slow deep breaths all the way down into your belly.

3. See how your body feels now. See what your emotions are doing now. See what your spirit is doing now. See how you feel in general.

4. Locate the Heart Centre in the centre of your chest. Breathe into and out of the Heart Centre until it feels open.

5. Once it feels open, hold your left hand on your Heart Centre. Ask your heart what is troubling it now.

6. With your left hand still on the Heart Centre, sit with what is troubling your heart now. See the situation, memory, or person. Experience the related feelings and sensations.

7. Continue to breathe through the Heart Centre. At the same time, continue to hold the left hand on the Heart Centre, and move the right hand slowly through the Energy Centres, staying focused on the issue. Continue until there are no disturbing feelings left in the Heart Centre or in any other Energy Centre.

8. If there is more troubling your heart, move to the next issue and focus the meditation on it in the same way, and then the next issue.

¹ This meditation phrase is from EFT, developed by Gary Craig.

STRENGTHENING POSITIVE QUALITIES AND BELIEFS WITH AIT ENERGY TREATMENT

When trauma is removed, energetic space is freed up. AIT helps to fill that space with positive qualities, feelings and beliefs. Positive sentences/beliefs are repeated at each energy centre from the root centre up to the crown centre, skipping the hip joints (auxiliary roots).

One hand moves up in the following order (while another hand remains at an energy centre that holds most energetic blockage): Root centre (sit on your hand) —> Pelvis —> Navel (belly button) —> Solar plexus (below sternum) —> Centre Heart (centre of your chest)—> Left chest (left auxiliary heart centre) —> Right chest (right auxiliary heart centre) —>Throat —>Chin—> Forehead—> Crown —-> take a deep breath in and out. Repeat the same process until you feel you have instilled the feelings/beliefs fully.

Below I will give examples of life-affirming sentences you can instil. Unlike affirmations used in positive psychology, in AIT positive beliefs are instilled only after the negative opposites of such beliefs have been released fully. Efforts to strengthen the positive beliefs and intentions are not so effective without treating the trauma that blocks them first.

Therefore, if you feel you are not fully aligned with the positive beliefs and you would like to strengthen them, you should first treat top-down, the negative version of the sentence. e.g. “My body **does not** know how to heal.” Then you will instil the positive version bottom-up, until you feel you are fully and strongly resonating with it.

Treatment phrases for grounding in the COVID-19 pandemic

- My body knows how to heal.
- My immune system knows how to protect me.
- My body knows how to take in and use oxygen optimally.
- It is safe for me to breathe.
- It is safe for me to live.
- I belong to life.
- I belong to Earth.
- I am supported by the web of life and love.
- I am not alone.
- I am connected to the greater wisdom of All.

Healing and empowering ourselves

This too shall pass. Indeed. However, is that enough? We still need to develop our resilience, our ability to care, love and empower ourselves for when the next crisis arises.

We might not have enough resources to do the best we can, or not have control over or protection from the situation. What is in our control and therefore within our responsibility is **how we relate to ourselves**.

Here are some suggestions for foundational beliefs to instil:

- I give permission for myself to be healed fully:
 - In my body
 - In my conscious and unconscious mind
 - In my heart and all my feelings
 - In my soul, spirit and connection to all.
- I give myself permission to choose to connect to all that supports my life and choose to not connect to all that weakens my life.
- I stand in my power with humility, compassion and purpose for the whole.

Letting go of self-limiting patterns

In AIT, repeated patterns of negativity are cleared with phrases starting with “**All the times and ways**”, to include all the manner and instances that you are affected by this negative pattern. You can check in with yourself and clear the traumatic pattern such as the following, as you see fit.

1. All the times and ways I do not love and accept myself fully.
2. All the times and ways I do not honour and respect myself fully.
3. All the times and ways I do not forgive my mistakes.
4. All the times and ways I do not own and celebrate my achievements.
5. All the times and ways I do not express my true self and feelings.
6. All the times and ways I abandon myself and neglect my real needs.
7. All the times and ways I doubt my capabilities and stop to dream.
8. All the times and ways I cannot do my best because of lack in my protection, resources, control and energy.

Strengthening oneself with AIT positive belief protocol

Having cleared negative patterns above, you can instil the following beliefs and intentions from the root energy centre upwards to the crown energy centre, to nurture and strengthen your wholeness:

1. I love and accept myself fully.
2. I respect and honour myself fully.
3. I forgive my mistakes.
4. I own and celebrate my achievements.
5. I give myself permission to express my true self and feelings.
6. I stay present in myself and nurture my real needs.
7. I believe in my capabilities and fulfil my dreams.
8. I do and be my best as reasonably possible with the protection, resources, control and energy available to me.

Releasing traumatic pattern in your relationships

After you have treated the sentences (negative and positive) for you above, the trauma charge in your relationships with others e.g. family members, can be released first with the negative form of the sentences below as needed. Then positive intentions can be instilled as below.

1. I love and accept [person's name] fully.
2. I respect and honour [person's name] fully.
3. I forgive [person's name]'s mistakes.
4. I honour and celebrate [person's name]'s achievements.
5. I give [person's name] permission to express his/her true self and feelings.
6. I stay present with [person's name] and nurture [person's name]'s real needs.
7. I believe in [person's name]'s capabilities and dreams.
8. I do and be my best with [person's name] as reasonably possible with the protection, resource, control and energy available to me.

AIT CENTERING MEDITATION

In AIT, the wisest and highest self within is termed the Centre. When we are connected to it fully and act from this part of ourselves, we are most at peace, whole, compassionate and aligned to our health and healing. An audio recording of this meditation is available as a free resource for dealing with the COVID-19 crisis from the AIT institute website.

<https://ait.institute/news/ait-crisis/>

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM BURNOUT

PRESERVING OUR ENERGY WHILE THE WORLD IS ENCROACHED BY DEATH

When our energy gets very low due to unrelenting stress, limitations or excessive responsibility, energetic reversal happens in us, and we can unconsciously start to lose our will to live. Then our fundamental core belief of normal times - “I want to live” - becomes weak subconsciously. Burnout needs to be recognised and corrected early. When it worsens without being redressed, it leads to our holding a subconscious belief - “I don’t want to live”. Eventually, the subconscious belief - “I want to die” - develops, and becomes a conscious death wish when despair takes full hold.

The ‘healers’ who stand too close to the death of others can fall into the other side themselves. As I write, there have already been reports of several Italian nurses who have committed suicide amidst their efforts to care for COVID-19 patients. As psychotherapeutic practitioners, we are not exposed to death in the way ICU nurses are. However we need to keep in mind that all of us are trying to cope with our own death anxiety. At “normal times” we tend to concentrate on living, not dwelling on the truth that living means living towards death. The pandemic has brought to the fore our sense of physical fragility and the greatest uncertainty, that is, when and how our own death will happen. It is my view that whether we are conscious of it or not, all of us are energetically fighting to keep at bay our heightened sense of mortality.

Unlike hospital-based doctors and nurses, who have a strong team structure of camaraderie and mutual support, many psychotherapeutic practitioners work alone in their private practice. We are also more isolated from our usual support network in the lockdown, social distancing or self-isolation. If you work with clients who suffer from a very fragile grounding in life, you might exert yourself holding their deep fear with or for them. It is time to reevaluate how we are keeping ourselves filled with energy and power.

Useful questions to ask are:

- How much of your energy do you reserve just for your use and for sharing with others? Is it balanced to your needs and aspirations?
- Where is your energy unnecessarily used? Have you been trying to remove a blockage that is actually not in your control?
- Are you giving your energy away to a parasitic person who does not grow or learn to be responsible?

If you feel that you have not been keeping enough energy for yourself, you can treat this with the AIT trauma release method: **“All the times and ways I give my energy away to others (or specific person).”**

If you feel that you have been affected by the sheer weight of death in the collective environment or if you are now mourning for the loss of someone, you can treat yourself with the AIT trauma release method: **“All the times and ways I give my energy away to death.”**

Treating fragile connection to life and self

Denial of existence reflects deep wounding to the most fundamental safety in being alive. For such an existential blackhole, terror and dissociation from self, the following treatment sentences may be useful.

- I do not deserve to exist/ I deserve to be completely destroyed to oblivion.
- It is not safe to be on Earth.
- There is nowhere safe for me in this world.
- I am nothing, I have nothing, and have nowhere and no reason to be.
- It is not safe to be me.
- It is not safe to be in my body.

Reaffirmation of existence

It is safe for me to exist fully as I am, in this body, in this life, on this Earth, with a reason to be here as my true and complete self.

Reaffirmation of of your own life and death

This may be important if you are working with the terminally ill or you know someone critically ill now, so that you are grounded in life enough and are centred when assisting their process:

I commit to life as it is in each moment, until my last breath when death visits me and I let go.

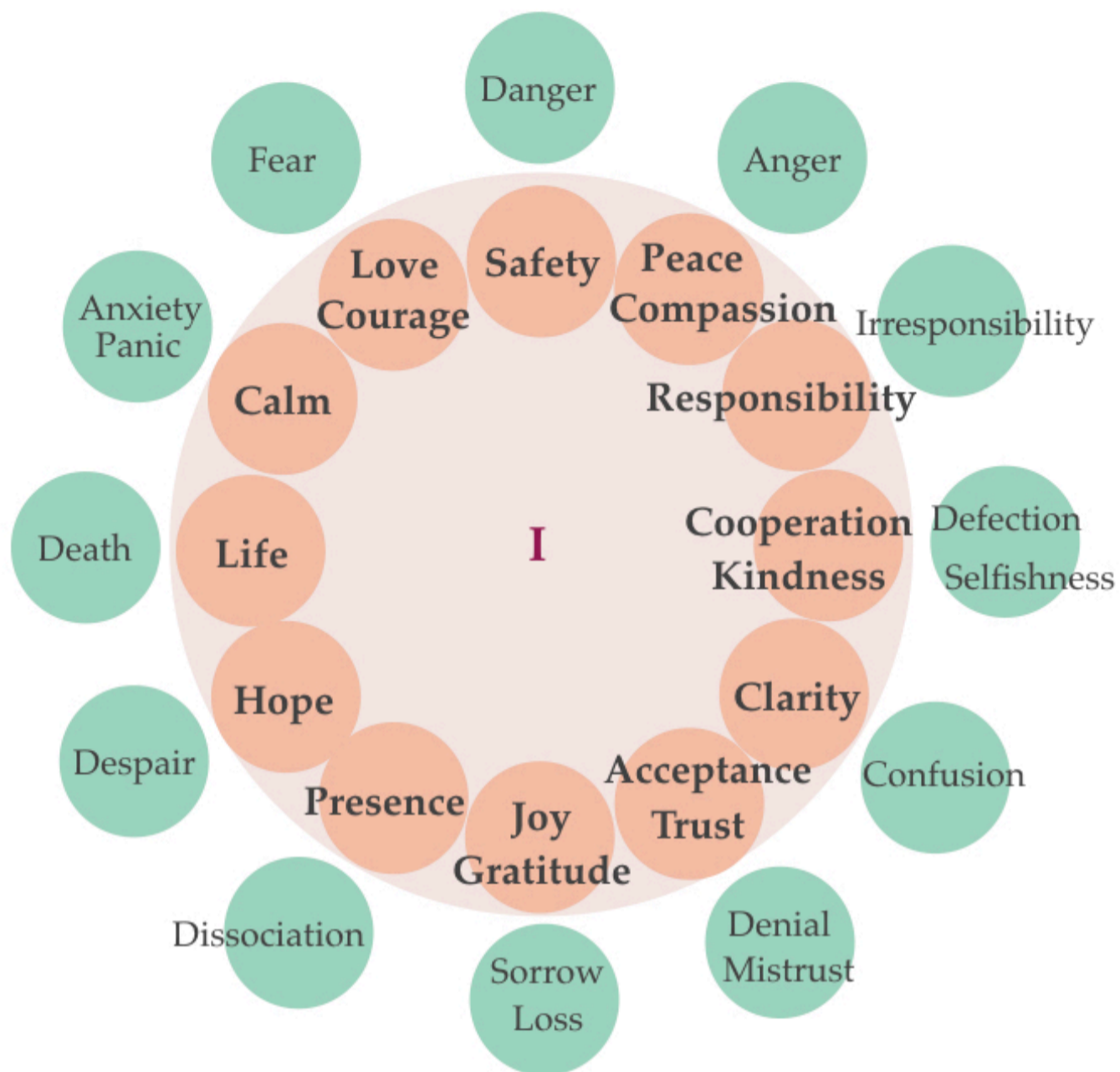
FILLING OURSELVES WITH HEALING AND REGENERATIVE EMOTIONAL FREQUENCIES

On February 3rd every year, in Japan children throw soybeans out of their homes shouting “Evil out, Fortune in!”. Then they eat the amount of beans corresponding to their age. It is a ceremony of “*Setsubun*”, a traditional rite of driving out evil spirits at the end of the Winter, one day before the Spring begins. As a child, the meaningfulness of this event for me was about being allowed to throw a lot of beans and make a big mess, rather than the symbolic act of hitting back and ejecting the imaginary evil spirits. As an adult, and a psychologist living in the UK, I feel deep gratitude that I was given such an embodied opportunity to act out detoxifying one’s home and oneself and of empowering oneself with the very ammunition that wards off the evil.

In a crisis at the societal and global levels, we are surrounded by a cacophony of negative emotions and the traumatic frequencies that are enmeshed and interlocked. It is almost as if they create a sheath around us that immobilise, weaken and suffocate us. Once we resonate with them and they take hold within us, our orientation towards life can become reversed. The image below is one example of visualising such coalescence of negative energies during this pandemic crisis. (I extend my gratitude to Daan van Kampenhout for his teaching in Systemic Ritual in which a constellation of different parts of the self was created like a cellular organism).



Once we know what negative feelings/qualities we want to ward off from ourselves, we can then configure positive opposites of these energies, the qualities that are healing, regenerative and supportive of life. The end result we would want is that we take in these positive qualities so fully that they replace the negative frequencies. The positively transformed state may be visualised as in the diagram below.



Exercise for yourself

1. I would like to invite you to tune into yourself and find which negative emotional frequencies you have taken into yourself from the pandemic situation e.g. fear, anxiety, sadness, anger.
2. Draw a big circle on a piece of paper as representing the energetic boundary/field of yourself. Then write all the negative emotions inside the circle close to the rim, and circle each of the feelings so the small circles each represent different feelings respectively.
3. Connect to yourself again and find feelings/qualities that are the positive opposite of each of the negative feelings you have written down.
4. Write the positive opposite just inside each negative quality. Now you have a circle of positive qualities that you would want to strengthen in yourself. Re-draw a circle of your self-boundary separating positive qualities inside and negative qualities outside.
5. You can use AIT trauma release and positive quality installation as below:
 - Trauma release sentence e.g. “All my fear, anxiety, sadness and anger”: say it at each energy centre as you move one hand from the crown centre down to the root centre, while resting another hand on one energy centre that holds the most traumatic energy. Repeat rounds as needed.

- Positive quality installation e.g. “Love, calm, joy and peace”. Say it at each energy centre with deep breathing in and out, as you move one hand from the root centre upwards to the crown centre. Repeat rounds as needed.

BEING FILLED WITH LOVE AND PEACE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

Filling ourselves with love for ourselves and others brings peacefulness, and dispels and pushes out from us the fear that abounds in the pandemic crisis. But **what is love, for you?**

Let’s think of someone who makes you feel in the following way:

- I feel well, happy and safe with this person.
- I feel seen, heard and accepted by this person.
- I trust this person cares for me and will not willingly harm me.
- I feel peaceful with this person.

Now, how would you feel if you put “me” or “myself” in these sentences instead of the other person?

- I feel well, happy and safe with myself.
- I feel seen, heard and accepted by myself.
- I trust that I care for myself and will not willingly harm myself.
- I feel peaceful with myself.

We learned to love ourselves through the love we received. First we received it from our early caregivers, and when they were too stressed or vulnerable to cope with their own lives, we may have sought love from other care providers.

Let us take a moment to connect to that feeling of being cared for and loved, remember it and really feel it in our body - the warmth, strength, and hope that was planted in us to thrive in life.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HEALING AND GROWTH

“What u think post-corona world will look like?
Closed borders, govts with more power but more
functions outsourced to companies?
Or realisation we all the same, all in it together, need
basic income & don't f* *k with Gaia?”
Tweets by Riz Ahmed, 19th March 2020

“when the pandemic subsides, a new legitimate
authority will emerge - - -. Political power will belong
to those who can show the most empathy for others.
The dominant economic sectors will also be related to
empathy: health, hospitality, food, education and the
environment.” [Jacques Attali](#), 19th March 2020

OUR SHARED PRIORITIES IN RE-ORIENTATION THROUGH THE CRISIS

Which way are we turning?

The origin of the word ‘crisis’ is a Greek verb *krino*, which means “to decide, judge and separate”. From the Ancient Greek times, “God’s crisis” meant the final judgment, when God will decide on the destination of the soul of the deceased, whether it goes to Heaven or Hell. It has since become a medical term, the critical moment when the patient will either go towards death or towards life and recovery.

The word crisis in this pandemic has come to be associated with our decision about how our society will continue to exist. We are at a critical juncture where our action now will influence the future outcome. The challenge cannot be dealt with in the way that society has been operating up to now, and there needs to be an alternative means and resourcefulness in order to get passed this junction for a better outcome.

In the last few years, what occupied the collective consciousness in the UK was the drama of separation and search for independence, from the Brexit referendum to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex leaving their royal duties. Demanding one’s fair share in belonging to a community bigger than who we are, and leaving the community for one’s better future could be a healthy assertion of

who we are. It is clear now however, that such focus had hidden the more urgent issue that needed much more consideration - the security of the whole community. As the pandemic disrupts all modes of circulations in society, we finally noticed that the vital policies and organisation to ensure fundamental security of the nation, such as food security, income security, environmental security and in particular, biological security against epidemics, had been relegated to the bottom of the priorities for too long.

From the dissociative fascination with the rich, the famous and the powerful, the pandemic has shifted our focus to essential roles people play for the welfare of society, not only doctors and nurses but also other occupations such as the supermarket shelf stackers, fruit pickers, bus drivers and refuse collectors. What counts as significant societal contribution is no longer measured by how much income and employment it generates. No body would be healthy without a well-functioning immune system, yet the immune system of the country, the health care system, had been underfunded and fragmented for many years. And as you know, the price we pay for this now is becoming more apparent every day.

This virus affecting the most vulnerable, physically or financially, has brought to light the lack of support that society afforded them, as well as our shared duty to ensure everyone's wellbeing. We are learning that there is no independence without interdependence: we are connected by our need for each other, and for the framework that ensures that we are supported when we are at the most vulnerable. Nothing in modern history has highlighted our universal need for security - the condition that enables life - as has COVID-19. This is the turning point where the discourse of "but what about what I want?" could be replaced by "what do we all need to do for all of us to be secure?" Because in this pandemic, we are only as strong as our weakest link.

In myths and fairytales heroes and heroines are forced to enter into a strange land and go through ordeals before finally succeeding in returning home, having fulfilled their potential and gained strength of character. When we return to 'normal life' after passing through the challenges of the strange world that COVID-19 has created, it is to be hoped that we shall have gained greater wisdom, resilience, empathy and harmony.

Therefore, the existential question for those who are not facing acute risks now is brainstorming and imagining how the "post-corona world" will transpire. While what was our common-sense reality is now fast shifting dramatically, we need to connect to our own internal compass to guide our actions towards our own visions.

To start with, for those who are staying at home, the time we separate ourselves from the outside world can be used positively for finding greater attunement to the self.

- **Inward reflection and focus:** This is the time to be grounded in ourselves, in our home, looking within the space and landscape within us that was previously crowded by inputs from and interaction with the external world.
- **Organisation and integration of unprocessed experience:** Of all the stimuli and information that we were over-exposed to, now is the time to sift through them and decide what to discard and what to keep and build upon further.

- **Discernment of others' influence:** Social distancing, self-isolation, and working from home are opportunities to notice and understand the positive and negative impact that others directly had on us.

The wartime rhetoric of “the fight against” the virus, as if we are under attack or siege, has limited effect for the psyche of many, as it heightens the sense of danger and puts us in a fight and flight mode, which in turn compromises our immune system. We can set and share priorities instead, focusing on capability and trust in our growth and healing through this shared adversity.

- I commit to finding and receiving positive learning from this situation.
- I commit to using this situation as an opportunity to align myself with health, purpose and fully lived life.
- I discern and prioritise what is good for my health and healing, over what is bad for my health and healing.
- I honour the process of aligning to health and healing as much as I honour its outcome.
- I fully accept and commit to my responsibility to modify my behaviour in order to protect the ones who are most at risk.

Achieving alignment to health and unity

At individual level

- **Compassion** in the times of fear, uncertainty, separation, lack and loss
- **Introspection:** break from dependence on (or addiction to) external distraction i.e. collective dissociation
- **Re-evaluation** of what matters most, what fundamentally supports life of all
- **Resourcing Support:** Learn to ask and receive support, and to ask and give support
- **Unity in oneself:** Showing up for oneself to integrate one's shadow (which comes out in the vulnerability and scarcity scenarios)
- **Resilience** to adapt to uncertain and changing situations, letting go of the need for rigid control and predictability
- **Self-care:** Embrace healthier habits and lifestyle
- **Humility** in accepting human's lack of control over 'reality' and the nature

As a community and humanity:

- **Unity** and solidarity, of the community and of humanity

- **Tribal energy** as a healing force rather than a destructive force
- **Re-distribution of resource** to safeguard essential services and vulnerable sections of the society; safety of the whole before the economic gain of the few.

REAFFIRMATION OF HOPE, DREAMS, JOY, PEACE AND LOVE

May we all be protected in this adversity.

May we be together in finding our new way and creatively building better future for all, out of this crisis.

May we all remain connected to our own Centre and to All.

May we stand in our power and responsibility with peace and trust, in the eye of the storm.

APPENDIX: FURTHER RESOURCES ON AIT AND ITS SEMINARS

AIT trainings are open to those registered mental healthcare professionals with graduate-level qualification (In the UK, membership of BACP, UKCP, BPC, or a qualification in Clinical Psychology, Counselling Psychology, Psychiatry or Psychiatric Nursing).

AIT training seminars are typically offered in 3-day seminars combining theory and practice (or online). AIT Basics is the foundational seminar which is a pre-requisite for other advanced and thematic seminars such as: Mastering AIT Practice (MAP); Presence and Dissociation; Attachment; the Depth (Archetypes); PTSD Treatment; Multi-causal Illness Treatment; Historical Trauma; the AIT Dream Works and many more.

Further information on all of the AIT seminars can be found on the AIT Institute website.

AIT Institute <https://ait.institute>

AIT UK Europe <https://www.ait-uk-europe.com>

Qi-congruence <https://qi-congruence.com>