

The page features abstract decorative elements. In the top right corner, there is a light beige shape with a black circle inside it. At the bottom, there is a large, solid tan-colored shape that curves upwards from the left side.

Ophelia's Place

Our Framework for Healing

Emergence


- Comes from adrienne maree brown, and her work of "Emergent Strategy"
 - what you pay attention to grows; where you put your energy matters (for better and for worse)
 - change is one of the only inevitable truths in life— it's constant, but we can shape and embrace it, rather than fighting against it
 - fractals: the micro mirrors the macro (and vice versa). there is a relationship between small actions and larger patterns. in other words, what happens at the small scale will be mirrored at a larger scale, and what's happening at a larger scale will be reflected in smaller experiences
 - interdependence: we are better together and all connected, we are meant to be in community, to rely on one another
 - pleasure is a necessary part of this work; joy is an act of resistance
 - centering love in all that we do; turning towards each moment with love and looking for ways to transform pain into love and healing
 - though our lived experiences may differ, we all have agency and a role to play when it comes to shaping change for a better world; we can use our talents and skills to be agents of change

Emergence: how it shows up in this work

what you pay attention to grows	mainstream media & diet culture messages manifest as negative body beliefs and shape negative self worth → we can shift this by surrounding ourselves with more inclusive messaging that respects and honors Every Body, and putting in the effort to heal our body image and self worth wounds; over time this will help shift internal beliefs
change is inevitable and constant but we can shape it intentionally	the body is always changing – aging, growing, shifting with time. there is no stopping this, but we can accept and embrace it, finding ways to take care of the body, finding new things to appreciate about ourselves, and growing our relationship with the body to be more in tune with its messages to us about what it needs.
there is a relationship between the small & large	for someone in recovery from an ED, choosing to eat a challenge food may seem like a small step in the grand scheme of things, but over time these small steps create a larger pattern of improved nourishment; one challenge meal, over and over, grows into a more embodied relationship with food
we are interdependent	alone, the work of deconstructing diet culture and the appearance ideal is impossible; we are more powerful in numbers. (for example, already we're seeing small shifts in representation of bodies in the media and small steps away from diet culture). there is power in our interdependence. we also cannot heal in isolation– we learn from each other, we hold each other through hard moments, we heal through validation, empathy, support and belongingness.
pleasure is an act of resistance	capitalism has engrained in us this sense of needing to produce and "do" at all times, and this often leads to burnout, disconnection from ourselves and others, and the feeling of "the grass is always greener" on the other side. This also shows up in diet culture– where we're convinced we constantly need to be pursuing a "better body," and in order to do so we just have to buy into that diet program, exercise regime etc. To prioritize what brings us joy is an act of resistance against all of this, and gives your power back, inviting in more ease, fulfillment and freedom.
look for ways to transform pain into love	there is so much to be learned about ourselves and humanity through our wounds and pain points, if we allow it, the pain can be changed into connection, into inspiration, into becoming who we needed. we see the magic of suffering turning to beauty all around us. the butterfly, seeds, rainbows... redeeming things that have been used oppressive
we all have agency and can be change makers	we know we are healing when we understand how we have contributed to our own suffering. Exercising intentionality and choice is the path to freedom. changing the narrative of victimhood into agency is where we find our power and peace. the more we become conscious to ourselves, our desires, our needs, and not asleep to our behaviors and trauma, the closer we get to who we want to be.

Trauma Resiliency

Definition: "an overwhelming demand placed upon the physiological human system" – Dr. Robert Macy

- You make sense. The root of behavior is biology: meaning we develop patterns of behavior as a way to cope with stress.
 - Brain and nervous system are designed for survival: shifting our perspective from "there is something wrong with you" to understanding there are biological reasons contributing to why we do what we do.
 - Our nervous system is developed the first few years of life
 - Sympathetic nervous system: decreased access to prefrontal cortex
 - Parasympathetic nervous system: rest and digest
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Predictable attributes of repetitive trauma and toxic stress



In order to change we need to be able to have...

- Binary thinking
- Habituated beliefs
- Many negative internal dialogues
- Overly negative memories. Overly focused on finding pain, hurt and disappointment (negativity)
- No tolerance for delayed gratification
- Impulsive, irrational and/or illogical
- Little if any consistent self-reflection
- Little if any consistent self-evaluation
- Struggle to perceive or create discrete/distinct differences from experience
- Decreased ability to inhibit behavior/Impulse control
- The ability to evaluate rewards can be significantly impaired
- Fear of vulnerability
- Restriction in allowing feelings of joy or pleasure

- Self-regulation
- Self-compassion
- Self-awareness
- Moral deciding
- Self-control
- Planning
- Reality checking
- Inhibiting (stopping) oneself
- To grow intentionally
- To be resilient (have a negative experience and not be overwhelmed)
- Problem Solving



Body Wisdom

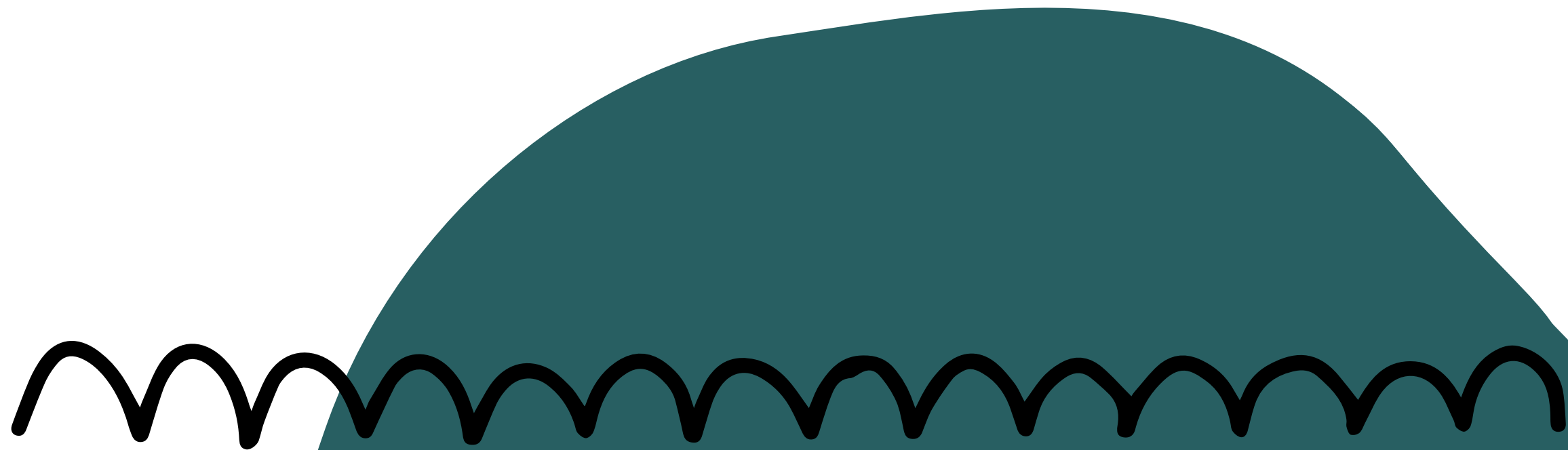
Core tenants:

- You already have everything that you need to heal inside of you
- You came by your coping skills honestly; your ED, substance use, self harm, addiction [insert any unsustainable coping skills here] are a deeply human response to the pain and trauma you've endured in your life. We believe that it's important to give yourself grace and understanding for how those coping skills have served you, and kept you alive through that pain. Reaching for coping skills is a natural survival response triggered by messages from our nervous system to find safety and to regulate. Now that we know this, we can work to regulate our nervous systems from past pain, and through future discomfort. We can be curious about which coping skills we want to reach for in a given moment.
- The body remembers, even if your conscious mind doesn't. Unprocessed trauma lives in our nervous systems, and influences everything we do and think, even if we don't consciously remember the traumatic event... This is why, sometimes, we may not actually need to fully understand our wounds at an intellectual level, and instead we can tune into the body and our feelings at a somatic level in order to process that trauma.
- When we're able to get out of our heads and into our bodies, we are able to receive messages from the body about what we need, what feels good, what doesn't feel good, and from there we can make decisions about how to best support ourselves

Body Wisdom

Core tenants continued...

- Our cultural norms and familial experiences often teach us to ignore the body's wisdom– numbing, dissociating and "pushing through." We're young we're taught to not be so sensitive, to stop crying, to keep our big feelings locked up, to be brave, to just listen to authority figures even when our bodies and feelings are telling us different.
- We may need support as we navigate this re-integration, as processing can be painful and sometimes overwhelming. It can also help to have support in deciphering whether we're acting out of pain and fear, or acting out of a sense of empowered embodiment.



Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a framework typically used in substance use spaces, but more and more there is growing cause to apply this lens to eating disorder treatment - Gloria Lucas is credited with spearheading much of this movement

Overview:

- Treats ppl with dignity and respect using a social justice and health equity lens
- Meets ppl where they are at; if a person with an ED isn't ready to go into treatment, their lack of readiness doesn't make them less deserving of care and support
- Asks, "how can we best help you to stay safe, healthy and alive?"
- Acts as a bridge between the eating disorder and recovery
- Does not rely on the "abstinence" approach to recovery; abstinence from ED behaviors may work for some but it doesn't work for everyone. Our old wounds ask the nervous system to meet them with matching "extreme" coping skills; abstaining from the ED(a coping skill) doesn't offer sustainable long term solutions for healing those wounds, without an alternative coping skill in place
- Supports people in defining their own goals and decisions about treatment
- "Because Harm Reduction demands that interventions and policies are designed to serve people who are using (behaviors), and reflect specific community and individual needs, there is no universal definition of Harm Reduction" - *from harmreduction.org

Harm Reduction

Key Principles:

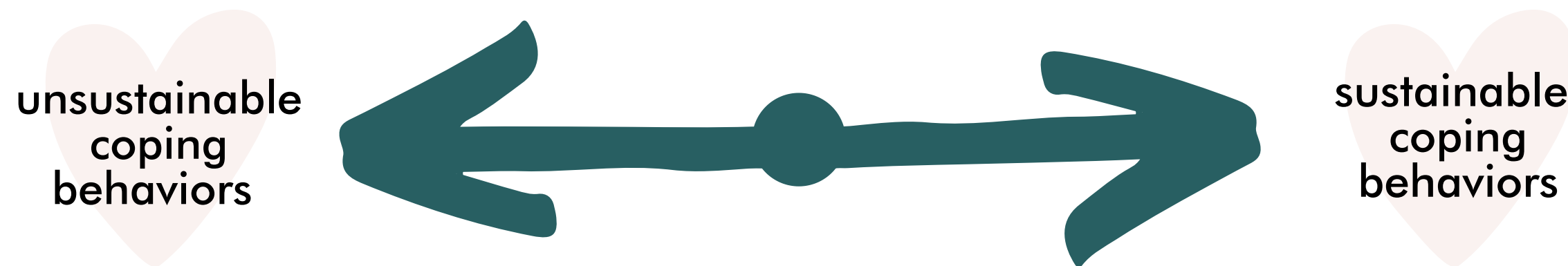
- 1.** Accepts that eating disorders are a coping skill, and are part of our how many of us have learned to navigate and survive our current world. Harm reduction chooses to minimize harmful effects of eating disorder, versus ignoring or condemning them, or automatically shuffling those impacted into institutionalized/ medicalized care that prioritizes people over profit, and abstinence over individualized care.
- 2.** Understands that eating disorder behaviors exist on a continuum from severely harmful/ risky → to sustainable and supportive (which may or may not involve abstinence); acknowledges that there are some eating disorder behaviors that are safer than others.
- 3.** Prioritizes quality of individual and communal life over the stopping of eating disorder behaviors
- 4.** Calls for nonjudgemental, non-coercive care services in order to assist in the reduction of harm to the individual
- 5.** Ensures that those w/ lived experience with eating disorders routinely have a real voice in the creation of programs designed to serve them
- 6.** Affirms individuals w/ eating disorders as primary agents of reducing harms of their symptom use, and seeks to empower them to share info and support each other in strategies which meet their needs and goals.
- 7.** Recognizes the realities of our inequitable culture, and the structures in place that perpetuate inequalities and marginalization; recognizes that these structures affect people's vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with eating disorder related harms.
- 8.** Does not try to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harms of ED use

Harm Reduction

Spectrum of coping:

As you're taking steps on your journey, remember that your ED has shown up as a form of coping and soothing— in the short term, it has been a way for you to find a sense of ease or safety through difficult times. It is understandable that you might want to speed through this process, or find yourself wanting to "fix" all the ways your ED shows up.


What if instead of trying to quit your ED coping skills cold turkey, you thought of them on a spectrum?



On one end of the spectrum, there are "unsustainable" coping skills (like ED behaviors, self harm or substance use, for example), that have shown up as you've had to navigate extreme stress or trauma. On the other end are more "sustainable" coping skills— these are highly individual and are the tools that help you feel your best, and that are sustainable for you to access regularly. But instead of trying to jump from one end of the spectrum to the other, or feeling shame for using your ED behaviors as a way to cope, what if you focused on gently moving along the spectrum, finding the "next right thing" and taking small steps to choose skills that are more sustainable, less extreme, and in alignment with your longer-term life goals? And what if you gave yourself permission to move in both directions along the spectrum, being curious about what you need in order to move through a difficult day or moment while still working towards your larger life goals?

Community

Community is a critical part of our individual and collective prosperity

- Interdependence cannot be denied
 - Belongingness = basic human need
 - Giving support can be just as much a gift as receiving support; when we let others support us it is a mutual gift
 - Fractals: the small reflects the large + vice versa (If we can put in the work to care for our communities, we will benefit at the individual level too)
 - Ants coming together to survive a flood
 - Attachment
 - Boundaries
 - Accountability
 - Forgiveness
 - We can all play a role – using our strengths, talents, gifts and connections
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Connection

What's your "Why"?

This work is HARD! Putting in the work to transform our core beliefs, heal our past wounds, disrupt the ways our culture normalizes diet culture and perpetuates body oppression, and forging a new path forward takes a lot of commitment, time, energy and willingness to be with our grief. We believe it also requires a connection something bigger and deeper than ourselves.

WHY are we investing in this work? Why does it matter?

What will keep us anchored into our values and beliefs that the culture NEEDS to change, when things get hard?

Maybe it's Faith, Maybe it's Spirit, God, the Universe. Maybe it's Community.

Whatever you call it, what is it that's going to help you stay connected to the deep knowing that healing our culture, and ourselves, is possible and important?