

# Books & Therapies for Chronic Illness

Healing Nervous System  
Perceptions of Threat

by Veronique Mead, MD, MA

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## MY FAVORITE BOOK

[Kitchen Table Wisdom](#), by Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen. A book for inspiration. Rachel shares stories of healing, including her own experience as a pediatrician with inflammatory bowel disease. My favorite book of all time.

## MY FAVORITE PRACTICE

Exercises for working on your own: by Andrew Cook: [Positive Body Awareness](#) with [podcast options](#) for more support

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## BOOKS

These are my favorite books from 20 years of learning about trauma. Some are older yet still among the best I've found on each particular topic.

### MY FREE EBOOKS

[My downloadables](#) include The Chronic Illness & Trauma Connection (Book 1) and books on specific chronic illnesses ( see sidebar p 3).

### BOOKS FOR LEARNING ABOUT TRAUMA

[The Deepest Well](#): Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity (2018) by Nadine Burke Harris, MD. A pediatrician and leader in the ACEs movement, also California's first surgeon general.

[In an Unspoken Voice](#), How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness and [Waking the Tiger](#), by Peter Levine, Ph.D., Founder of Somatic Experiencing (SE).

[The Trauma Spectrum](#): Hidden Wounds and Human Resiliency, by Robert Scaer, MD., a neurologist (slightly more technical).

[When the Body Says No](#): Understanding the Stress-Disease Connection, by family physician Dr. Gabor Mate, who grew up in the shadow of the Holocaust.

### BOOKS FOR WORKING ON YOUR OWN

[Healing Trauma](#): by Peter Levine Ph.D.

[The Complex PTSD Workbook](#): A Mind-Body Approach to Regaining Emotional Control and Becoming Whole and [A Practical Guide to Complex PTSD](#) by somatic trauma therapist Arielle Schwartz, Ph.D.

[It Didn't Start with You](#): How Inherited Family Trauma Shapes Who We Are and How to End the Cycle, by Mark Wolynn.

[Feeding Your Demons](#), by Buddhist leader Tsultrim Allione.

[How to Be Sick](#): A Buddhist Inspired Guide for the Chronically Ill and Their Caregivers, by Toni Bernhard, a former law professor living with chronic fatigue (ME/CFS).

[CFS Unravalled](#) (Rewiring the Nervous System), by Dan Neuffer. Not trauma based but working with the nervous system to support healing in chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). Relevant for other illnesses.

### BOOKS FOR INSPIRATION & TOOLS

[The Brain's Way of Healing](#), by Norman Doidge, MD surprising, inspiring stories of improvement, stabilization and / or full recovery.

[The Handbook for Her Mysterious Illness](#), by Sarah Ramey. Far more than a memoir with references to the role of ACEs and onset triggers.

[Childhood Disrupted](#) by Donna Jackson Nakazawa. A journalist's story of chronic illness and the role of ACEs and toxic stress .

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## MY FAVORITE APPROACH

Everyone will find the approach that works best for them and that appeals the most.

My favorite has been somatic experiencing (SE) and the work of Steve Hoskinson, now founder of [Organic Intelligence](#).

This is because SE is designed to start where you are. It's not about fixing. It's about supporting your nervous system to shift in its own way.

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## 10 THERAPIES

The following therapies help heal effects of trauma and nervous system perceptions of threat. They are somatically based, which means they work by helping you listen to your body and its signals. I recommend these types of approaches to healing because we cannot access information needed for resolving trauma by talking, logic or conscious awareness alone.

### SOMATIC TRAUMA THERAPIES

1. Somatic Experiencing (SE) SE [website](#) & [list of SE therapists](#). More on SE on [wikipedia](#) and in Peter Levine's book [In an Unspoken Voice](#).
2. Sensorimotor Psychotherapy [website](#) & [list of therapists](#). Their book is called [Trauma and the Body](#).
3. EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) Basics on [wikipedia](#). Therapist Lists with the [EMDR Institute](#) & [EMDR International Association](#).
4. Brain Spotting (BSP) [website](#). List to [find a BSP therapist](#).
5. Internal Family Systems (IFS) [website](#) & a [list of therapists](#).
6. Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy [website](#) and [list of practitioners](#). Teacher Franklyn Sills [detailed website](#).
7. Interpersonal Neurobiology [IPNB](#) developed by leaders in the field [Daniel Siegel](#), [Allan Schore](#), and [Louis Cozolino](#). [Therapist directory](#) (this is the one approach I have not tried personally. I recommend it because of the caliber of the founders). Learn more [here](#).
8. Healing Pregnancy & Birth Events: The Association for Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health ([APPPAH](#)) holds regular conferences. See list of practitioners in their drop down menu. Healing work also done in [small group](#) formats. See also [Tony Madrid's work](#).
9. Healing Multigenerational Trauma\*\* Stephan Hausner book & [documentaries](#) (free 9 minute trailer) using [Family Constellations work](#). Includes case studies & examples of healing different chronic illnesses and other health conditions.
10. Tapping - also known as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). [Wikipedia](#) and [how to tap](#).

### ONLINE COURSES

Steve Hoskinson, [Organic Intelligence](#): Basics and more. Includes in person trainings; Former senior faculty at Somatic Experiencing (SE) with in depth information, practice and an orientation to underlying health.

Jessica Schaffer at [Nervous System Reset](#), online courses and videos

Irene Lyon, [online courses](#) & [free videos](#) (Somatic Experiencing Therapist)

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## MY CHRONIC ILLNESS EBOOKS

My downloadable ebooks on the role of trauma are available on my [free ebooks page](#):

**CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome):** polyvagal perspectives on freeze (Bk 1), ABEs, ACEs (Bk 2)

**Rheumatoid Arthritis:** ABEs, ACEs & Triggers

**Type 1 Diabetes:** ABEs, ACEs and more

**Type 2 Diabetes:** 8 categories of adversity

**Asthma :** ABEs and Tony Madrid's stories

**My Personal Stories:** CFS (8 categories of adversity), PreDiabetes, Food Intolerances and healing complex PTSD

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## GENERAL TRAUMA & ADVERSE EVENTS

Use these resources for healing General Trauma at any age, includes accidents, loss, abuse, assault, the trauma of having a chronic illness or diagnosis of life-threatening disease, etc.

### BOOKS & DOCUMENTARIES

[Waking the Tiger](#)

[In An Unspoken Voice](#)

[The Trauma Spectrum](#)

Documentaries: [Heal](#) & [Dog Doc](#) (General Principles for Healing)

### THERAPIES

Therapies #1-6 & 10 (See list on the Therapies Page)

### BLOG POSTS & FREE EBOOKS

[Ebook 1](#): An Overview of Chronic Illness & Trauma

## ACES & OTHER CHILDHOOD EVENTS

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include 10 types of adversity such as the loss of a parent, abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic violence and more. My free ebooks talk about additional types of traumas in childhood that also affect risk for chronic illness & more..

### BOOKS & DOCUMENTARIES

[The Deepest Well](#) by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris about ACEs

[Childhood Disrupted](#) by Donna Jackson Nakazawa about ACEs

[Things Fell Apart but the Center Held](#), by Diane Darr Coutts ("titrated" memoir with insights on endometriosis links from sexual abuse)

Documentary: [Resilience](#)

### THERAPIES

Therapies #1-7 & 10 (See the list on the Therapies Page)

### BLOG POSTS & FREE EBOOKS

[Blog Post on ACEs](#) (ACE Fact Sheets and Calculate Your ACE Score)

## ACRES (COMPLEX PTSD)

Adverse Childhood Relationship Experiences (ACREs) are also known as Developmental or Complex Trauma. ACREs involve growing up with parents who are often less nurturing, emotionally unavailable, physically absent, shaming, judgemental (due to their own trauma).

### BOOKS & DOCUMENTARIES

[Complex PTSD Workbook](#) & [A Practical Guide](#), by Arielle Schwartz, Ph.D.

[Parenting from Inside Out](#), by Daniel Siegel, M.D

Documentary: [Wrestling Ghosts](#)

### THERAPIES

Therapies #2 & 7 in particular; 1-8 & 10 can also be very helpful (See the list on the Therapies Page)

### BLOG POSTS & FREE EBOOKS

ACREs: [Invisible ACEs](#)

My Stories of Healing [Food Intolerances](#) and [Weight and PreDiabetes](#)



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## CHRONIC ILLNESS STORIES

Links to adversity, improvement and recovery

**Autoimmune blindness:** "It Didn't Start With You (AMEs p. 4)

**Asthma & Bonding:** Tony Madrid (ABEs p. 4)

**Complex PTSD, food intolerances, CFS:** my stories (ACREs p. 3)

**CFS** in Dan Neuffer's book p. 1

**Chronic pain, MS, Parkinson's, Blindness** and more: Doidge's book for Inspiration p. 1

**Endometriosis:** Darr Coutts (ACEs p. 3)

**Guillain Barre +:** Childhood Disrupted ( ACEs)

**Lupus, diabetes, asthma, Crohn's, cancer, CFS, fibromyalgia, allergies, MS, Lyme, lifelong nightmare:** Even if It Costs Me My Life (AMEs)

**Mysterious illness, chronic pain & infection and more:** Sarah Ramey's memoir (AIEs, p. 4)

## ABES (BABYHOOD EVENTS)

Adverse Babyhood Experiences (ABEs) involve 10 categories of adversity from conception to a child's 3rd birthday. Examples include prematures birth, postpartum depression, cesarean, incubator care, high or low birth weight, not breastfeeding and more.

### BOOKS & DOCUMENTARIES

[Mother Child Reunion](#), by Tony Madrid (\*research & stories curing asthma)

[Parent Infant Bonding](#), by Klaus and Kennell (old but brilliant)

Documentary: [The American Dream](#), example of trauma-informed support in Jennie Josephs' midwifery practice with women at high risk

### THERAPIES

Therapies # 8 & 10 (See the list on the Therapies Page)

### BLOG POSTS & FREE EBOOKS

[Guide to ABEs](#); [Type 1 Diabetes](#), [Type 2 Diabetes](#), [Asthma](#), & [RA Ebook 4](#): ABEs Posts and fact sheets

## AMES (MULTIGENERATIONAL TRAUMA)

Multigenerational Trauma involves adverse events that happened in your parents', grandparents' and other ancestors' lives such as The Depression, war, bankruptcy, mental illness, suicide, chronic illness...

### BOOKS & DOCUMENTARIES

[Even if it Costs Me My Life](#), by Stephan Hausner (great cases & stories)

[It Didn't Start with You](#), by Mark Wolynn (has exercises & case examples)

[The Ancestor Syndrome](#), by Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger (case examples)

[Documentaries](#) of Stephan Hausner working with individuals

### THERAPIES

Therapies #9 in particular (See the list on the Therapies Page)

### BLOG POSTS & FREE EBOOKS

Blog Post: My story and example of [Family Constellation Work](#)

Blog Post: [A shocking discovery](#) about suicide in my family history

## AIES (INSTITUTIONAL TRAUMA)

Adverse Institutional Experiences (AIEs) involve discrimination such as for gender, race, and in your lineage and ancestry...hospitalizations \_+

### BOOKS & DOCUMENTARIES

[Discrimination Can Make You Physically Sick](#), by David Williams

[How Community Networks Stem Childhood Traumas](#), New York Times

[My Grandmother's Hands](#) by Resmaa Menakem (exercises; racism)

Memoir by Sarah Ramey, [The Handbook for Her Mysterious Illness](#) (sexism)

### THERAPIES

All therapies listed can be helpful (see the list on the Therapies Page).

### BLOG POSTS & FREE EBOOKS

[Section 6](#) in Guide to Chronic Illness, Trauma, & the Nervous System

[Chapter 8](#) in Trauma and Type 2 Diabetes

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## LEARN MORE

### THIS NEW PARADIGM IS BIG

These books, therapies and other resources have all helped me gradually recover from my [own chronic illness](#) over the past 20 years. I never knew about this work as a family doctor and assistant professor and I write so you don't have to wait for your health care professional to learn about it either (or maybe you can educate them).

I specialize in the science validating how adverse life experiences are risk factors for chronic diseases of all kinds, including autoimmune diseases, and why it's not in your head.

It's a new paradigm and the amount of research supporting it is staggering.

The beauty of understanding trauma? It provides a context for making sense of symptoms and pathways for healing. And you don't have to wait for your doctor to learn about before you can start.

If you haven't already, you can subscribe to my blog [here](#).

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Reach out to me at [veronique@chronicillnesstraumastudies.com](mailto:veronique@chronicillnesstraumastudies.com) with any questions!

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