

An Introduction to Lifespan Integration

The Role of Lifespan Integration in Treating Trauma and Repairing Attachment

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CONNECT to NOW to SELF to OTHERS to LIFE



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Lifespan Integration: An Introduction

"Psychotherapy is not a modern invention, but a relationship-based learning environment grounded in the history of our social brains. Thus, the roots of psychotherapy go back to mother-child bonding, attachment to family and friends, and the guidance of wise elders." ~Louis Cozolino

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Today's Learnings

- A Brief History of Lifespan Integration
- Lifespan Integration and Complex Systems Theory
- Lifespan Integration Use and Application
- Additional Theory and Current Research
- Clinician and Client Experiences
- I will not be teaching you how to start using LI



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What is Lifespan Integration?

Lifespan Integration is a modality primarily used to treat trauma and dissociation. It has most recently extended its usage to treat attachment rupture and nervous system dysregulation. It is a bottom up, right brained approach which works with memories in various ways to create new firing patterns and updated emotional and procedural learning.

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Lifespan Integration: A Brief History

Lifespan Integration evolved out of the intersection of several therapeutic modalities and theories that Peggy Pace studied and experienced in the 1980's-early 2000's. These influencing methods are:

- Complex Living Systems
- Jungian Archetypal Psychology
- Family Systems Therapy
- Rational Emotive Therapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Object relations
- Inner Child therapy
- EMDR
- Dream Interpretation to understand the unconscious mind
- Jungian Active Imagination
- Recognition of repetitive unconscious patterns (life 'themes').

Additional Theories as LI has evolved:

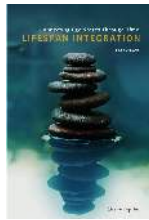
- Attachment Theory
- Memory Reconsolidation



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Lifespan Integration: A Brief History

- Peggy Pace developed Lifespan Integration therapy in 2002 from her work with her clients.
- The first edition of *Lifespan Integration: Connecting Ego States Through Time* was published in 2003.
- In 2004 Peggy Pace gave the first LI training in the United States.
- Today LI therapy is being used by psychotherapists and psychiatrists in the US, Canada, Spain, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Italy, the UK, Belgium, Austria, Germany, and Russia.



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Lifespan Integration Objectives

Connecting with the now, with yourself, with others, and with life

Trauma Resolution. By helping individuals process their past in a safe, structured manner, Lifespan Integration works to heal emotional wounds and strengthen the ability to face present-day challenges. It's a trauma-informed therapy that does not re-traumatize, but instead focuses on integration and growth.

Emotional and ANS Regulation. Clients no longer reach outside of themselves to regulate, but can internally regulate in the face of the daily ups and downs of life.

Self Compassion. Clients internalize love and compassion for self which shifts patterns of shame, guilt and negative beliefs about self. Clients begin to become more spontaneously self-compassionate which results in changes like better boundaries, healthier relationships, changes to employment etc.

Attachment Repair. Core attachment needs are met and integrated, moving clients toward earned secure attachment. Clients will be better able to "self-parent" as they gain wisdom and truly become the age they are. This results in things like embodied dignity, a sense of humor returning, "less triggered", more agency/less helplessness

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Lifespan Integration Rationale

Clients become **INTEGRATED**

You will see your clients changing towards a more coherent and integrated way of being. Daniel Siegel (1999) defines integrated as **FACES**:

Flexible - Clients demonstrate less rigidity in coping skills, more complicated thought emerges (shades of grey), ability to take others' perspectives

Adaptive - Clients can adapt to their current environment rather than responding from a younger ego state

Coherent - Clients integrate traumatic memories, becoming more present in their bodies, more mindful, and aware of their current agency

Energized - Clients experience changes to their arousal state resulting in less anxiety, less depression, joy in living

Stable - Clients experience a stabilization of chaos including less substance use, less aggression, less interpersonal strife

"Integration is not a function of the self. It is what the self is."
Ogawa et al paraphrasing Loevinger from Daniel Siegel's "Developing Mind", p. 314.



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Lifespan Integration and Complex Systems

Complex Living Systems are **self-healing**

Healing is not about fixing broken parts. It's about restoring flow within a living system where everything is interconnected and in motion.

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Lifespan Integration and Complex Systems (cont.)

Our body-minds are Complex Living Systems

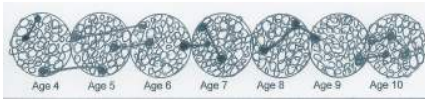
- In Complex Living Systems all parts are interconnected and self-organizing.
- What we call our "Self" is comprised of interacting processes and patterns (self states) which continually interact and influence one another.
- Our Self Systems are constantly taking in new information and reorganizing to increase coherence and maintain homeostasis.
- Most of this activity is out of conscious awareness or control.

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Lifespan Integration and Complex Systems (cont.)

Fragmented Self System:

- Separated neural networks result when a child has insufficient interaction with nurturing care-givers.
- Some self states (ego states) within the client's system are unaware of other self states..



Model used by Peggy PACE in her book, "Lifespan Integration", to represent how repetitions of LI Timelines link memories (self states) through time. Small circles represent isolated neural networks.

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Lifespan Integration and Complex Systems (cont.)

Early neglect and trauma lead to:

- Insecure or disorganized attachment
- A fragmented body-mind system
- Isolated neural networks holding trauma memory
- Difficulties with emotion regulation



A sufficiently safe and nurturing early environment results in:

- Secure attachment
- A Coherent Self system
- An ability to regulate emotion
- A felt sense of safety in most circumstances

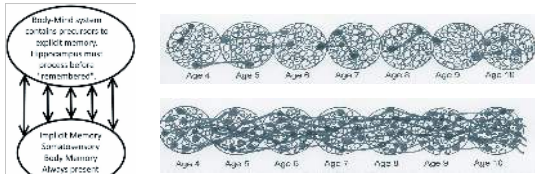


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Lifespan Integration and Complex Systems (cont.)

Repetitions of Timelines connect memories with similar affect across time, bringing about a more coherent and stable Self System.

Fixes the TIME problem



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The Lifespan Integration Timeline

The primary tool used in LI to create integration and healing is

The Timeline

- DO NOT use LI Timelines without training
- Lifespan Integration is not the first to discover timelines but we did discover their potency
- Timelines can cause nervous system dysregulation



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Timeline: Rationale



LI Proposes that working with repetitions of the timeline (safely, with a trained therapist) can:

- Place clients chronologically in time ("turning time back on")
- Integrate body memory of trauma
- Builds a more coherent and regulated self system

"Trauma survivors can have a distorted sense of time. They may know intellectually that time has passed, but often their bodies have held the trauma in isolated networks, causing fractions to present-day triggers, even years after the trauma has occurred. LI proves the passage of time at the cellular level". Peggy Pace

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The Lifespan Integration Timeline



Structure of the Timeline:

- Is a chronologically ordered list of short phrases designed, by the client and therapist often times together at the start of therapy, to elicit recall of specific explicit memories.
- A great way to get to know your client
- **It is not necessary for the therapist to know the specific memory which each cue refers to.**
- The explicit memories triggered by memory cues are usually recollections of events or of people. Recalling them will include associated body memory, emotions, smells, tactile memory, visual memory and more.

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Timeline: Rationale



Outcomes of Timeline Repetitions:

- By leading clients through repetitions of their Timelines, attuned LI therapists replicate the conditions which bring about optimal neural integration.
- Each iteration of the client's Timeline brings up more memories, feelings, and thoughts.
- This process builds an increasingly solid, coherent, and flexible self system.
- ***The client begins to view their life as existing fluidly across time and space, rather than as a series of isolated events.***

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Timeline: Rationale

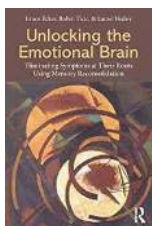


"Linking states across time is an important component of neural integration. Making repeated journeys through the Lifespan Integration Timeline requires the client to continually transition from state to state. These transitions along the continuum of time allow various self states and feeling states to become better organized. As the self system becomes more organized, it also becomes more stable."

P. Pace, 2003

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The Timeline and Memory Reconsolidation



- The theory of memory reconsolidation centers on the idea that memories and their associated emotions may be altered after they are retrieved from the subconscious mind. Once these memories surface, new emotional learning can be introduced in order to modify undesirable behavioral patterns (Ecker et al., 2012).
- Essentially, we can change the emotional valence, associated beliefs and actions of a memory, permanently. The steps of memory reconsolidation include reactivation, unlocking, juxtaposition and verification. ***Each repetition of the timeline helps the brain reconsolidate its memories.***
- For further reading: Unlocking the Emotional Brain by Ecker, Ticic and Hulley, 2012. And Trauma and Memory by Peter Levine, 1997.

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Timeline: Rationale



The human nervous system is self-organizing

- When we input enough new information and energy into the body-mind, the mind is pushed to spontaneously re-organize.
- The re-organization allows the system to function in a more adaptive way.
- ***Clients who have completed LI therapy are much better able to regulate their emotions and no longer need to self-medicate to self-regulate.***

P. Pace, 2003, p. 20

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Lifespan Integration & An Attuned Therapist

A second tool of LI is the **attuned therapist**.

- LI cannot be done alone. Simply hearing one's own timeline is not sufficient for creating change. A present and attuned therapist is required to experience memory reconsolidation, a safe other, and a shift in perspective.
- In order to be certified, we require our clinicians to receive LI personally, as a client. A very important part of LI is that an LI clinician has done their own work.
- A LI clinician holds a steady presence, pays attention to the client's nervous system changes throughout session and is charting the trajectory of growth.



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Attuned Therapist: Rationale

During normal development:

- Young children don't see themselves as one unified Self. Up until age two every child's "identity" is comprised of multiple self states.
- Between ages two and five these multiple self states become integrated through discussing the events of their lives with people who know their histories. Usually these people are attuned parents and family members.
- This normal process of integration can't happen for children whose parents are absent and for children whose caregivers don't know their history - for example children raised in foster care with multiple moves to different homes.

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Attuned Therapist: Rationale

Neuroscience tells us that integration occurs through:

- The co-creation of a global map of self across space and time.
- The co-construction of the autobiographical narrative.
- Linking self states across space and time within an emotionally supportive interpersonal relationship.

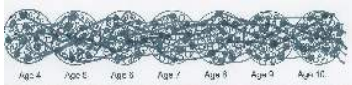
Pace, Peggy 2003. Lifespan Integration (pp 10-11)

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Attuned Therapist: Rationale

An Integrated and coherent Self-System:

- Child has been able to discuss their life story with nurturing caregivers who know them well. This brings about a securely attached child with a solid sense of self and a coherent life narrative.



- **Repetitions of Timelines in the presence of an attuned and coherent LI therapist allow for the "co-construction of the life narrative" bringing about a more stable sense of self.**

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Attuned Therapist: Rationale

From attachment theory and Allan Schore's work on relational trauma and childhood development we know that part of the "magic" of therapy is right brain to right brain communication.



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Schore (2022), in summarizing 30 years of research, reports:

"only a right and not left brain therapeutic approach can change the patient's unconscious self image and unconscious internal working model of attachment". And "the psychotherapist's relational and emotional expertise in working in psychotherapeutic relationships with a wide variety of patients, more than a mastery of techniques, lies at the core of the art of psychotherapy"

Schore, A. Right brain-to-right brain psychotherapy: recent scientific and clinical advances. *Ann Gen Psychiatry* 21, 46 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12991-022-00420-3>

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Lifespan Integration & Active Imagination

- In many protocols in LI we use "active imagination" with different ego states (ages) to facilitate the integration of traumatic memories.
- We focus on identifying specific fragmented memories, often associated with intense emotions like fear, shame, humiliation, anger, or helplessness. Our goal is to help process and integrate these memories, which can lead to a lasting shift in their emotional impact.
- We use the "adult self" to help the "younger self" to:
 - a) complete trauma actions
 - b) turn time back on
 - c) shift perspective
 - d) move from terror/shame/rage to self compassion/dignity/righteous anger



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Active Imagination: Rationale

Favorite studies:

St. Jacques PL, Szpunar KK, Schacter DL. (2017). [Shifting visual perspective during retrieval shapes autobiographical memories](#). *NeuroImage*, 148, 103-114.

Dr. St. Jacques's research helps us understand that when we shift perspectives within a memory (for instance, viewing a memory from your adult self perspective versus "from your own eyes"), you recruit totally different neural circuits and in fact increase integration and coherence. The results appear to be long lasting.



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Active Imagination: Rationale

"Trauma is not what happened to us, but what we hold inside in the absence of compassionate witness" - Peter Levine

Through active imagination using the "adult self" we can complete trauma reactions, provide the validation, empathy and support that was not present at the time of the event, and assist the younger ego state to understand this event is over.

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Impact of Lifespan Integration

- Decrease anxiety and depressive symptoms
- Improves emotional and ANS regulation
- Reduces symptoms of PTSD
- Heals the mind and body from trauma
- Helps to establish a core sense of self love and compassion
- Potential to develop earned secure attachment



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Difference Between LI and Talk Therapy

- LI therapy operates systemically
- Traditional methods of therapy help clients to understand their dysfunctional patterns and reactions but do little to change clients' behaviors and unconscious programming.
- Talk therapies are ineffective when implicit memory is disconnected from explicit memory (i.e., a fragmented ego state exists)
- Talk therapies help clients gain insight into behavior, but they are unable to change behaviors coming from a fragmented ego state residing in implicit memory with unmet needs.
- LI activates the fragmented ego state, meets its needs, and integrates it with repetitions of timeline.
- Thus, LI successfully eliminates "triggers" causing unwanted thoughts/behaviors in the present.

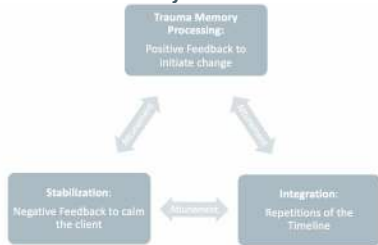
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Current trauma therapies are based on a 3 Phase *sequential* model



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LI Therapy accomplishes all 3 phases *all at once* every session



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Lifespan Integration Inclusion

LI has always honored the diversity of each client, thus facilitating clinical interactions that are inclusive and anti-oppressive, through the following components:

- LI as a modality is open and inclusive of both therapists and clients regardless of culture, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, neurodiversity, disability status, nationality, or any other aspect which makes them unique.
- The main "material" used in all LI protocols is the Timeline which is a list of memory cues unique to each client.
- LI is naturally "client centered" due to the strong emphasis on attunement. LI honors each client's own emerging Wisdom without pressure to become or let go of anything the client is not ready or willing to do.

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Lifespan Integration Inclusion

- LI is a bottom up modality. The client's system is the agent of change
- LI honors client autonomy, which means that the client chooses how much they share. A skilled LI therapist does not ask for more than what is needed.
- LI requires all certified LI therapists to do their own LI therapy which minimizes biases that therapists may be unaware of and increases the capacity to be vulnerable which is conducive to having competence in all areas of diversity. A therapist who has a growing competence in all areas of diversity is willing to constantly learn about each client, and able to admit mistakes and seek to repair them.

Lastly, LI trainings are only available for Master Level Counselors who by definition should have ongoing training on the meaning and practice of competence in diversity, equity and inclusion.

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WHO is Lifespan Integration Therapy for?

LI is typically appropriate/effective for the following:

- Burnout or compassion fatigue for clients in helping professions
- Clients who have been in long term therapy but still haven't been able to see the growth/changes they want

In addition:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Depression | • Isolated traumatic events | • ADHD |
| • Anxiety | • Bipolar disorder | • Life adjustments |
| • PTSD/ CPTSD | • Loss/grief | • Attachment deficits |
| • OCD | • Relationship stressors | • Perfectionism |
| • DID | • Work stressors | • Workaholism |
| • In-utero trauma | • Existential issues | • Process addictions |
| • Birth trauma | • Spiritual issues | • Minor substance use issues |
| • Codependency | • Identity issues | • Personality disorders |
| • Self esteem/self worth issues | • challenges with healthy boundaries | |

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WHO is Lifespan Integration Therapy NOT for?

LI is typically not appropriate/effective for the following types of clients

Clients working through:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Active psychosis | • Heavy use of benzodiazepines |
| • Schizophrenia | • Active suicidal/homicidal risk |
| • Severe active addiction | • Alzheimer's/Dementia |
| • Heavy use of THC | |

Special considerations (LI may be effective but may require some adaptations)

Clients working through:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • ECT | • High Risk Pregnancy |
| • Neurodivergence | • TBI |
| • Physical limitations | • Surgery |
| • Terminal illness | • TMS |
| • Medication changes | |

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Lifespan Integration Safety Parameters

Always essential to first assess...

- Suicidality
- Substance Abuse
- Untreated medical issues
- Psychosis
- Safety concerns

Use of coordinated care.
Sometimes referral is necessary for higher level of care before beginning LI

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Research

LI is currently considered emerging evidenced based and research supported, as more RCT's are needed.

A summation of research can be found on the LI US and LI Institute website but some examples include:

- Lifespan Integration Effectiveness in Traumatized Women By Bethany Balkus
- Psychotherapy for Trauma and Dissociative Disorders Using Lifespan Integration: Theoretical Assumptions and Clinical Applications. Joanna Smith Psychologist, Supervisor, and LI Trainer
- Research Paper Psychotherapy through Lifespan Integration: How do therapists describe the feeling of integration? Sami Rejil a, Joanna Smith b, Manon Dubourg b, Aurelie Untas a, *
- Lifespan Integration Efficacy research study. Author: Monica Hu



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Lifespan Integration Levels of Treatment and Protocols

Level 1: Baseline, Timeline from Explicit Memory, PTSD, Relationship Protocol


Level 2: Baseline Plus, Standard

Level 3: Attunement, Birth Protocol, Baseline Plus

Level 4: Preverbal Attachment Repair, Cell-Being, Deepening Baseline Plus

More about what is taught at each Level of the LI training program can be found here: <https://www.lifespanintegration.us/trainings-overview/>

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Come learn more...

Level 1-2: Complex Systems, Types of Memory (Explicit and Implicit), Subcortical Regulation, Dissociation and Memory Gaps, Ways trauma impacts memory, How dissociation compromises the Self, Neural Integration, Attunement to your client, Memory Reconsolidation, Ego state work

Level 3-4: Deeper Attunement to your client, Attachment Repair, working with Implicit Memory

After completing Levels 1 and 2 of the Lifespan Integration training program, therapists will have learned the basic LI protocols and will be eligible to be listed in the LI website directories.

Therapists who work with complex trauma will want to complete all four levels of LI training.

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10 Potential Benefits for Clinicians

1. Burnout decreases.
2. Vicarious trauma and countertransference are reduced.
3. Time management and structure for client sessions are increased.
4. Clinical bias is prevented.
5. Healing is promoted, enabling clients to conclude counseling.
6. A standard structure applicable to various client types and disorders is provided. Personalization is further allowed due to the attunement aspect, making it standardized yet individualized.
7. Science and therapeutic artistry are combined.
8. Participation in LI Community.
9. LI is emerging evidence based and research supported
10. Clients can be quickly onboarded to the treatment plan, which may result in higher client retention in some cases.

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Clinician Experience

"Lifespan Integration has become my primary modality because I have seen the benefits both personally and in the lives of my clients. I appreciate the adaptability and variability LI offers. It gives me confidence to know I will be able to meet my clients, whatever their issue or need, with truly competent care. I am grateful for the protocols and tools LI offers to help me spend my time supporting clients in finding the deepest possible healing. I've had the privilege of bearing witness to seismic positive shifts in the lives of my clients and LI provided the roadmap to transformation." - D.H.

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Clinician Experience

"The best part about using Lifespan Integration is witnessing clients reunite with their authentic selves and deeply heal from the past. As a clinician, I find using LI helps prevent burnout and vicarious trauma while also limiting clinician's bias."

- K.M.

"I have seen so many powerful things happen in my sessions with clients both during and afterwards, even those clients who have been through horrific events. Hearing my clients testify how they see themselves and their lives in a new and positive light encourages me to keep going."

- K.M.A.

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Client Experience

"LI transformed the way I perceive my life, myself and others. It has profoundly impacted my whole being, allowing for deep healing in my mind, body and soul. LI provided me access and clarity about my true self and supported my journey in living an authentic life where I feel my feelings, speak my truths and care for myself in meaningful ways."

- K.M.D.

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Client Experience

"There isn't enough time or even the right words to describe the impact of LI on my life. I say "no" to people now. I can laugh at and give myself grace for my mistakes. I actually experience my full range of emotions now which also means that I am unpleasant to be around sometimes but I don't panic about people leaving me over it. I have more energy now at 37 than I did in my teens and 20's because I don't have my depression and anxiety dragging me down anymore."

I think most importantly it is the self love I have found through LI. Now, I know and believe that I am delightful because of LI and I am forever grateful to the modality and the clinicians who worked with me for that."

- N.G.

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Level 1 in Nashville, TN



Instructor: Stephanie Davis, LPC
Time: 9:00am-5:30pm both days

Continuing Education:
14.5 Clock hours through NBCC

Date: August 28th & 29th, 2026
Venue: The Refuge Center for Counseling
OR
Date: September 25th & 26th, 2026
Venue: Nashville Central Hotel

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What to expect from Lifespan Integration Level One Training

The Level 1 LI training introduces participants to the Lifespan Integration Timeline and to four basic LI protocols:

- The LI Baseline protocol,
- The LI PTSD protocol,
- The LI Relationship protocol, and
- A simple trauma clearing protocol called "Timeline from Explicit Memory"

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What to expect from Lifespan Integration Level One Training (cont'd)

At the Level 1 LI training, participating therapists will learn:

- how to stay attuned to their clients while leading them through repetitions of their Timelines
- to vary the number of cues read and the speed at which they are read depending on the needs of each individual client
- to introduce specific brief interventions between repetitions of the Timeline in order to move dysregulated clients back toward their WOT's (windows of tolerance).

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What to expect from Lifespan Integration Level One Training (cont'd)

At the Level 1 LI training, participating therapists will learn:

- how their ability to remain attuned during Timeline repetitions is essential to the clearing and integration of bodily memory of past trauma.
- how the therapist's attunement to the client, combined with repetitions of the LI Timeline, helps to build a more solid self-structure in clients, including in those clients who are fragmented and unstable.

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Who can attend Lifespan Integration Training

- The Lifespan Integration training workshops are for mental health professionals. To qualify to attend, a therapist must have a graduate degree in the field of mental health. Trainings are open to clinicians with MA, MS, MC, MSW, PsyD, and PhD degrees in Psychology, and to MD Psychiatrists. Any exceptions must be approved prior to registration.
- Psychology graduate students nearing completion of their programs are eligible to attend the Lifespan Integration training at a reduced rate. To qualify to attend, students should be in the final year of their training programs, and must be participating in a supervised counseling internship.

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Level 2 in location

November 6th & 7th, 2026

After attending the Level 1 Lifespan Integration Training, therapists are equipped with the skills to begin using LI with many of their clients. Newly trained LI therapists are encouraged to begin using LI with their stable clients immediately after the Level 1 training. If possible, therapists should take Level 2 fairly soon after taking Level 1. After completing Levels 1 and 2, therapists will have the skills they need to utilize LI with most clients.

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Questions?

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Please do not attempt without training!



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Contact SE Region Instructor



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