

GETTING BACK OUT THERE

SELF-CARE WORKBOOK





When you're putting yourself out there after a burn injury, it's important to take care of your mental health. Re-connecting with your community is a crucial step in your recovery, and you don't have to do it alone.

This workbook is one tool in your toolbox. The exercises and reflections will help you build a personalized plan for thriving in social situations. You'll explore how it feels to interact with others, learn techniques to prepare for social situations, and identify ways to practice self-care.

For more support in your journey of recovery, connect with Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors. Our services include peer support, burn community events, an online resource center, and more.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS	3
INCREASING POSITIVE SELF-TALK	7
GETTING READY TO GET BACK OUT THERE	11
PRACTICING SELF-CARE	15



UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF

IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS



SECTION 1. UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Taking care of yourself before, during, and after social situations starts with understanding how interactions with other people make you feel.

The following reflections will help you understand where you're thriving and where you might need some extra support.



Are there certain social situations or interactions you dread?

Which social situations or interactions do you look forward to?

SECTION 1. UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS



THINGS THAT MAKE ME **WANT TO HIDE**



THINGS THAT HELP ME **FEEL FRIENDLY**

SECTION 1. UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Certain comments and questions can trigger traumatic memories or negative emotions. Reflect on the things people say that really hurt you and list them below. Later, we'll return to these triggers and make a plan for responding in the moment.



MY TRIGGERS



SECTION 2

INCREASING **POSITIVE** **SELF-TALK**



SECTION 2. INCREASING POSITIVE SELF-TALK

How we talk to ourselves has a big impact on the way we feel. Sometimes we don't even notice how our self-talk is building us up or tearing us down. These exercises will help you notice how you talk to yourself when you're upset and find positive ways to support yourself with self-talk and affirmations.

Write down a situation that upset you.



How did you talk to yourself afterward?

SECTION 2. INCREASING POSITIVE SELF-TALK



Now, imagine the situation happened to a person you love.
What would you say to them?



SECTION 2. INCREASING POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Using your words of support to a loved one as inspiration, choose some affirmations for yourself. You can turn to these positive messages after a difficult social situation or when you are feeling down. (Examples: “I am brave,” “I am more than my scars,” “I am worth getting to know.”)

 **MY AFFIRMATIONS** 



GETTING READY TO **GET BACK OUT THERE**



SECTION 3. GETTING READY TO GET BACK OUT THERE

Knowing your boundaries can help you feel prepared for social interactions and get back out there with confidence. Take some time to reflect on how you feel comfortable talking about your burn injury.

Are you willing to answer questions about your burn injury?

Yes No Sometimes

Why, or why not?

What are you willing to share?

Who are you willing to talk to about your burn injury?

Acquaintances	Strangers	Co-workers
Friends	Family	Romantic partner
Adults	Children	Other burn survivors
The media	No one	

How long are you willing to talk about your injury?

It can help to have a prepared response for questions about your burn injury. You can memorize and rehearse this response for situations when you'd prefer to keep the exchange short.

This response consists of 3 sentences:

- 1. What happened*
- 2. How you are doing now*
- 3. End the conversation*

Example: "I was burned as a child. I'm doing great now. Thanks for asking."

□•□•□•□ MY 3-SENTENCE STORY □•□•□•□

What happened:

How I'm doing now:

End the conversation:

□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•□•

SECTION 3. GETTING READY TO GET BACK OUT THERE

Look back at your triggers listed on page 5. For each triggering question or comment, write a response that you can use the next time you encounter that remark.

***Tip:** Practice these responses in the mirror or with someone you trust. This will help you feel prepared to use them in the moment.*



TRIGGER

RESPONSE

TRIGGER

RESPONSE

TRIGGER

RESPONSE

TRIGGER

RESPONSE

SECTION 4

PRACTICING **SELF CARE**



When we feel bad, we often turn to familiar ways to cope—not all of them healthy. Think of some positive things you can do to recharge before, during, and after difficult social situations.

(Examples: exercise, journaling, making art, prayer or meditation, etc)

WHAT HELPS ME FEEL BETTER



You are not alone. Make a list of individuals and groups you can turn to when you need support. Your list might include loved ones, trained peer supporters, mental health professionals, support groups, etc.



WHERE I CAN FIND SUPPORT





MORE RESOURCES



PHOENIX SOCIETY FOR BURN SURVIVORS

Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors is the leading national non-profit supporting and empowering anyone impacted by a burn injury. We offer support at each stage of the healing process to help survivors and their loved ones thrive.

RESOURCE CENTER

Explore resources on social, emotional, and physical recovery after a burn injury. Find courses, e-books, articles, fact sheets, and survivor stories, at www.phoenix-society.org/resources.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Find the latest information about in-person and online events for anyone in the burn community. In addition to Phoenix Society events, explore offerings from local and regional organizations: www.phoenix-society.org/community-calendar.

PEER SUPPORT

Phoenix SOAR (Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery) provides connection with others who have experienced a similar trauma. Join our weekly Peer Support Chat or our Virtual Support Groups to get support wherever you are. Learn more: www.phoenix-society.org/what-we-do/peer-support.

BURN SUPPORT MAGAZINE

This free burn community publication delivers informative articles and empowering stories three times a year. Subscribe for free: www.phoenix-society.org/burn-support-magazine.

PHOENIX WORLD BURN CONGRESS

Join the world's largest gathering of the burn community for connection, inspiration, and support. Learn more about the conference: www.phoenix-society.org/phoenix-wbc.

NAMI: NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

NAMI works to educate, advocate, listen and lead to improve the lives of people with mental illness and their loved ones. Find resources and support: www.nami.org.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE

Help is available, 24/7. (800) 273-8255.

