

# Healthy Futures News + Views

An Educational Newsletter Covering Eating Disorder Treatment and Other Mental Health Issues

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## Beyond Boston

# Trauma healing takes center stage again

It may come as a surprise to some, but one does not need to experience an event firsthand to be traumatized by that event.

The detonation of two bombs at the Boston Marathon just weeks ago is proof.

People who only saw the event (or the aftermath) from TV news have reported experiencing physical, mental and even behavioral symptoms associated with trauma. And once again, trauma healing has become a topic of conversation.

Healthy Futures in Scottsdale, Ariz., is a national leader in the treatment of trauma.

Through the form of therapy called Somatic Experiencing (SE), Healthy Futures' mental health professionals help guide clients through trauma, while also giving them the tools to better navigate through future events.

Healthy Futures team member Jeanne Phillips says the first step is helping to soothe the cli-



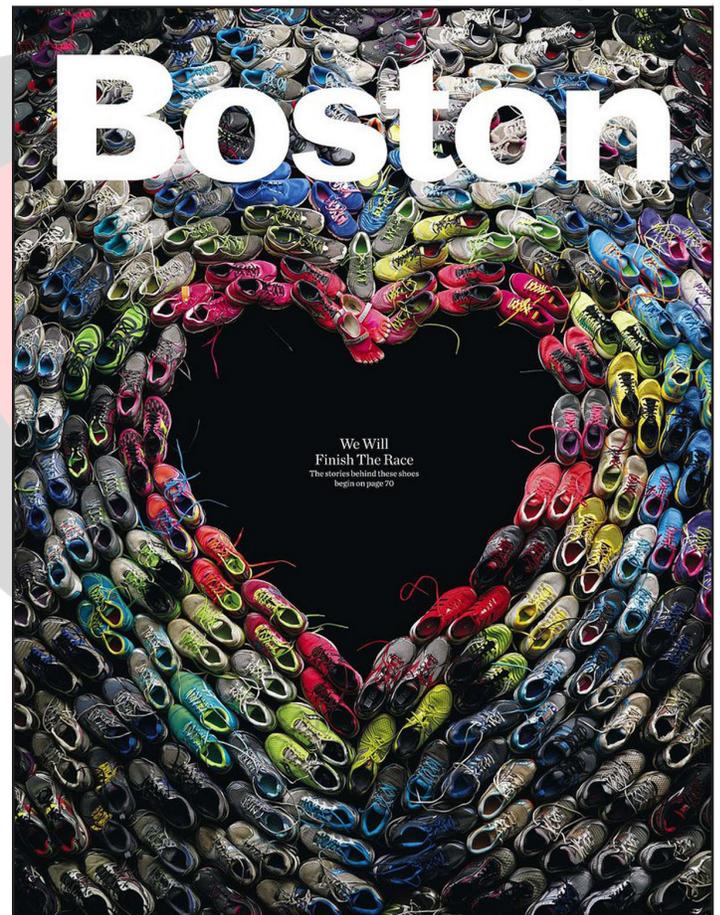
Jeanne Phillips, MA, CPC, CEDS



Mia Elwood, LCSW, SEP

ent. One of the methods available is trying to find out what the client needs most.

"They might not even know that," Phillips says, "but it's important to stabilize – to have them be able to just ingest and know that they're safe. I orient them to the environment, and find things that make them feel safe and feel as though they're



May's cover of Boston Magazine illustrates that healing is needed.

not at risk of being a victim."

### **Why trauma happens**

Healthy Futures Director, Mia Elwood, herself a certified Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP), says trauma can happen to anyone.

"Trauma is anything that affects the nervous system in a negative way," she says.

In all animals, when a threat is perceived, there is an innate response system – fight, flight or freeze. In each instance,

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## Listening to own body can lead to healthy movement

Do you listen to your body? Jessica McCall hopes you do.

As an exercise and movement specialist at Healthy Futures, McCall knows listening to your body is often the most effective path toward feeling better and good health.

“Too often we go from one thing to the other until maybe the end of the day, and sometimes not even then,” she says.

“When we listen to our body, it’s more about tuning into what’s going on. Are there emotions present? Are there stressors in our life that are creating different connections and different messages that our bodies are trying to tell us?”

Getting in tune with the self can often lead to improved emotional well-being, too, McCall says.

“Sometimes it’s about getting the body physically moving, and sometimes it’s about needing



**Jessica McCall, MA, LAC**

to change something,” she says. “There’s a rigidity in our behaviors and in our movements sometimes, so if you’ll notice during the more stressful times in life we are holding still, we are holding our breath literally, we’re stuck.

“Sometimes moving physically can help move that forward, too, emotionally. Think about that mind-body connection,” McCall says.

No matter if you’re new to exercise, or you’re a seasoned pro, McCall highly suggests stretching.

“Stretching every day can help you slow down,

check in with your body and be mindful,” McCall says.

“I encourage stretching just to check in with your body and allow you to listen to it more, and

it’s going to be able to tell you what it needs,” she says. “Then it’s just going to help create that overall health, which is going to be amazing and feel good.”

### *Trauma continued from page 1*

the animal’s system is flooded with natural chemicals needed for the survival tactic chosen, such as adrenalin for running away, or for fighting.

When the animal freezes, more chemicals are released to slow the heart and immobilize the animal. If the animal is lucky enough not to be eaten by the threat, it knows instinctively how to work out those chemicals from its system (through shaking and trembling, for example).

Humans are no different.

The exception being, we have a rational brain and we convince ourselves that we’re perfectly fine, that there’s no reason

to overreact to something – especially if it’s something we’ve only seen on TV.

And when we do that, the trauma can get “stuck” in our system.

Somatic Experiencing is designed to ease the system to work through what it was designed to do.

SE is not about re-experiencing the trauma, Elwood emphasizes, but letting the body discharge the unresolved energy naturally. “SE is a very gentle, natural treatment that helps to release bound up energy,” she says.

To learn more, call Healthy Futures at (480) 451-8500, or go online to [HealthyFuturesAZ.com](http://HealthyFuturesAZ.com).