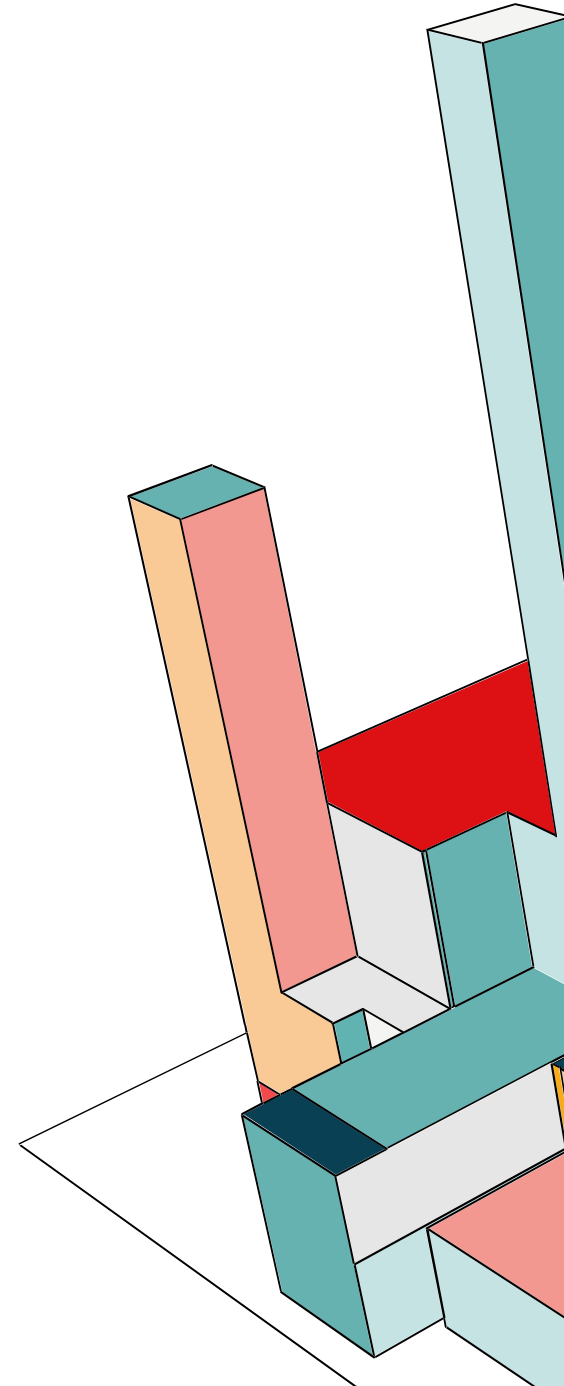
An abstract composition of various 3D rectangular blocks in shades of red, orange, teal, and light blue, arranged in a layered, architectural style on the left side of the image. The blocks have black outlines and are set against a solid light blue background.

COMMON TRAUMA BELIEFS, AVOIDANCE, AND HOW TO TEST WITH IN VIVOS

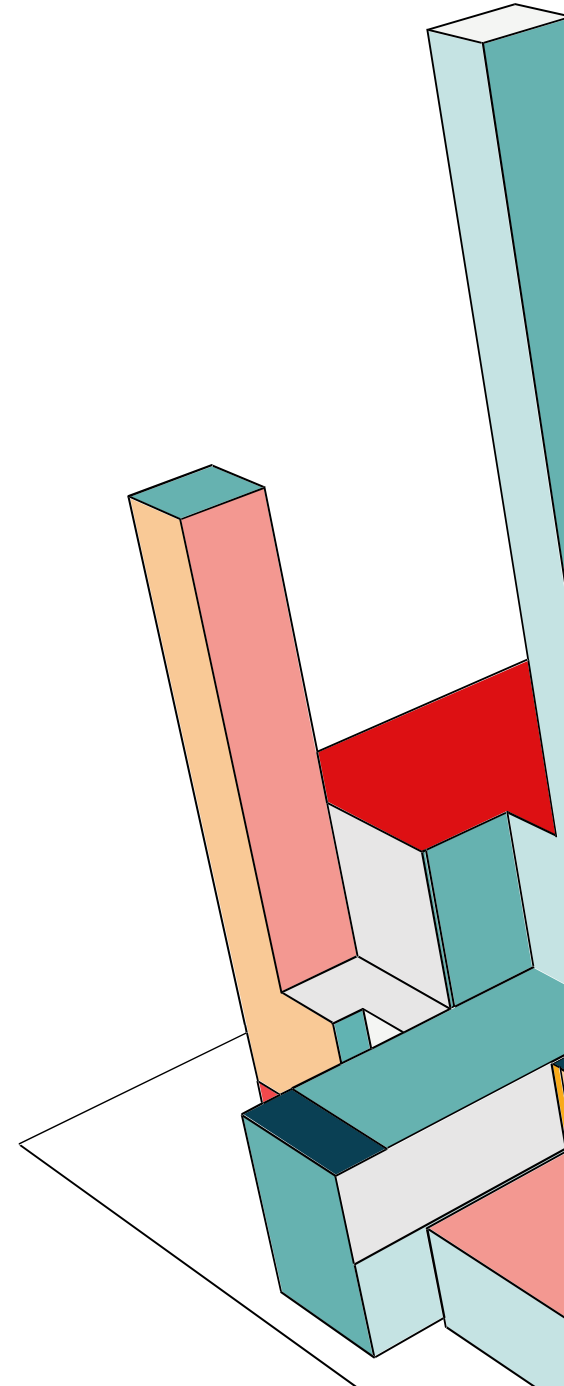
INGREDIENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE IN VIVO

- Identify the situation/behavior we want to change
- Identify current avoidance
- Identify specific beliefs fueling avoidance
- Design exposure to approach that situation testing the specific fear
 - *Often forgotten but most important*



WHY IDENTIFY BELIEFS WE ARE TESTING?

- Helps us plan more **specific, effective** in vivos
 - Ex) Grocery store: safe in a crowd vs. rejected if ask for help?
- Helps us **get creative and think broadly** in planning in vivos
 - Ex) Perfectionism at work >> test in emails to PHP
- Helps us **process, challenge, and shift** trauma beliefs
 - Breaks cycle of PTSD (avoidance and distress go down)
 - Improves self-esteem, relationships, and flexible living



IF I AM NOT PERFECT, I AM WORTHLESS

Common Avoidance Behaviors

- Avoid tasks with potential mistakes completely
- Perfectionism – spend excessive time on tasks, leave no tasks undone
- Self-punishment (e.g., self-harm, deprive self of fun, excessive self-criticism and rumination)

Potential In Vivos

- Approach tasks with potential for mistakes (e.g., answering work emails, do a crossword)
- Purposely make a mistake, leave things undone
- Be late or messy
- Purposely do enjoyable, unproductive, purely “self-care” activities

IF I AM VULNERABLE, PEOPLE WILL HURT ME

Common Avoidance Behaviors

- Avoid contact with others, either in public spaces, socially, or both
 - Do not share personal/emotional information even with people you trust; wear a “mask”
 - Keep social and/or sexual contact to people you don’t know well
 - Irritability/anger/control in relationships to keep people “at arm’s length” and stay safe
-

Potential In Vivos

- Spend time in a public space (e.g., store, park)
 - Exchange pleasantries with a stranger
 - Reach out to a loved one
 - Make plans to see a loved one
 - Share neutral information about yourself
 - Share more personal information about yourself
 - Make eye contact, take off sunglasses, hood, etc.
 - Emotional or physical intimacy with trusted person (e.g., hug, cuddling, holding hands)
 - Gradually approach values-consistent social or sexual intimacy with trusted others
 - Allow other person to pick conversation topic
 - Use skills to manage irritability
-

I DO NOT DESERVE GOOD THINGS

Common Avoidance Behaviors

- Do not ask for help or assert your needs, opinions, preferences
- Avoid pleasurable or self-care activities
- Deflect compliments, make jokes at own expense
- "Self-sabotage" (e.g., pick a fight with a loved one, don't turn in HW when things are going well)

Potential In Vivos

- Ask for help
 - Focus on your PLEASE skills intentionally
 - Treat yourself to something pleasurable, fun, or comforting
 - Engage with healthcare (e.g., make dentist appt, take medicine)
 - Accept and even seek out compliments
 - Rephrase/redirect negative self-talk, judgments
 - Purposely engage with values-based activities and relationships
 - Use skills to ride out avoidance urges while doing activities that bring up urges
-

I AM DISGUSTING, DIRTY, DAMAGED

Common Avoidance Behaviors

- Avoid, use substances, or dissociate during sexual intimacy
 - Avoid seeing body
 - Excessive washing/showering
 - Body-punishing behaviors (e.g., self-harm, over/under eating, substances, poor hygiene)
-

Potential In Vivos

- Books, movies, TV shows with sexual intimacy
 - Gradually approach sexual intimacy with self and others in values-consistent way
 - Use skills to interrupt/limit safety behaviors
 - Look in mirror
 - Wear varying levels of values-consistent clothing that may expose body
 - Use skills to ride out urges to clean after activities that bring up urge (e.g., sexual activity, using the toilet)
 - Purposely avoid showering, get physically dirty
 - Purposely engage in PLEASE skills
 - Use skills to ride out urges while engaging in activities that trigger the urges
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OTHER BELIEFS WE ARE TESTING?

Common Avoidance Behaviors

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Potential In Vivos

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If unsure, please bring to 1:1 to discuss!