

## **Creating a Memory Cue List for Lifespan Integration**

To prepare the memory cue list, begin with your earliest memory. For most people the earliest memory will be of age 2 or 3. Try to remember at least one memory for each year of your life. For each cue, write down the calendar year, the age you were at the time of the memory, and a word or phrase that will remind you of the memory when your therapist reads the word or phrase to you. Your therapist doesn't have to understand what the cues stand for, however it is important for the therapist to be aware of any cues which will remind you of traumatic events. You will need only one cue for each year, however for variation it is helpful to have 2 or 3 cues for each year. Be sure to separate your cues with a \* or / mark.

Your therapist will read only one cue per year, but he may alternate cues used on different repetitions. The dates and ages will help you to organize the cues chronologically, but during LI your therapist will read only the cues. Try to think of one memory for each year of your life, from your earliest memory all the way to the present. Cues which can evoke the memory of smells, tastes, sounds, and tactile sensations work best to promote integration. For example the cue: "learning to swim" could bring back the smell of the water or chlorine, the feel of the water, the sounds of splashing, etc. Memories used for cues should be specific to one year only. For example, "working at Microsoft" would be a confusing memory cue for someone who worked there for several years. In this case the cue would need to be more specific, as: "fender bender in Microsoft parking lot".

Record your memory cues chronologically. Write legibly or type your memory cues on your computer. The cues should be events that you actually remember as opposed to a scene which you have seen in a photograph but when you look at the photo you don't recall having been in the scene. The cues can also be the name of a friend you spent time with at a certain age, or a place from the past which you remember.

The memories do not need to be significant in any way. Even remembering what a house or school building looked like is enough detail if that is all you remember. Be sure to include significant events which impacted your life such as deaths of people important to you, other traumatic events which affected you, marriages, divorces, births, etc. The memory cues should cover your entire life, from your earliest memory all the way to the present year.

Sample cues for ages 10 – 13.

1989 Age 10 – best friend Gus

1990 Age 11 – moved to Chicago / started middle school

1991 Age 12 – summer camp with Will

1992 Age 13 – skiing with Jen / brother died (Traumatic)

If creating your cue list is extremely upsetting you can complete it with your therapist.