Identifying A Targeting Sequence

Presenting problem (issue/concern identified during history-taking or reported later)
“I need to ask you some questions about your ____________________________
(issue/concern), so we can identify the most efficient way to resolve it.”

Symptoms
“What symptoms do you experience when this happens?” (or “are you concerned about experiencing?”)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Duration
“How long has this been a problem?”
________________________________________________________________________

Present triggers
“When have you experienced these symptoms recently?” (identify experiences or typical situations)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Incident
“What picture represents the worst part of that experience?” or “What’s the most upsetting part of it?”
(allow for other sense besides a picture)
________________________________________________________________________

Negative belief  (negative cognition = self-referencing statement that is not true now or not adaptive)
“What thoughts come to mind as you focus on that?”
________________________________________________________________________
(If a behavior is described, e.g., I can’t…. or I shouldn’t….., ask) “What does that say about you?” OR “What does that mean to you?” OR “What kind of person (can’t… or shouldn’t…)?”
________________________________________________________________________

Positive belief  (positive cognition = a self-referencing statement that is along a polar continuum from the negative belief that the client would LIKE to believe about the incident or target, but currently does not)
“As you focus on the most upsetting part, what would you RATHER believe about yourself now?”
________________________________________________________________________

(If a behavior is described, ask) “What does that say about you?”
________________________________________________________________________
Past events/experiences
(Using the floatback/affect scan method to identify related past experiences, including the earliest one. Note the age at which each occurred. List as a “headline” just long enough so you both know what experience it is. Note the age at which each occurred.)

“We need to see if there have been any earlier experiences related to this. Bring up the picture (or other sense) again, and those negative thoughts, ________________________________.”

“Notice what you feel ........... And where you feel it in your body ........... Now let your mind float back to the earliest time you felt this way. Don’t try to look for it, just ask your brain and body to show you and tell me if anything comes to mind.”

_________________________________ age ______

“Notice how that feels. Now let your mind float back and see if there’s anything even earlier.”

_________________________________ age ______

“Again, notice what you feel and let your mind float back to see if there’s anything even earlier.”
(Repeat until nothing new comes up.)

_________________________________ age ______

_________________________________ age ______

(Once the touchstone/earliest/root event has been identified, proceed to identifying a future template.)

Future Template
“When you think of the present difficulties you described earlier, how would you like to see yourself handling them in the future?”

(Repeat until nothing new comes up.)

_________________________________ age ______

_________________________________ age ______

(Repeat until nothing new comes up.)

_________________________________ age ______

(If time allows, target the Touchstone/root event. If not, proceed with closure.)

Container
“We don’t have time to do any reprocessing today, so let everything that still needs to be reviewed go back into your ________________________________ (container) for now.”

(If something doesn’t go in easily, say) “Ask yourself what is keeping it from going in.” _____________________

(Decide together how to handle it, e.g., reinforce the container concept, prioritize what needs to be reviewed.

Safe state
“When it’s all in, say ________________________________ (cue word) to remind your body “ it’s ok to feel safe when I am safe.” Let me know when your body’s returned to feeling relaxed and aware.”

“If any additional experiences come to mind before our next session, jot it down or tell me when you come in, and we’ll integrate them into our plans.”

Strengths/Concerns/Difficulties: ________________________________

Name: ________________________________ Date: ________________________________
Targeting Sequence Plan Summary

Current issue/problem: __________________________________________

Negative cognition (nc): __________________________________________

Positive cognition (pc): __________________________________________

Targeting Sequence Plan:

1. Past experiences
   touchstone event (earliest/root experience, including age):
   ____________________________________________________________

   additional past experiences (in chronological order, from oldest to most recent, including age):
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

2. Present triggers (“reminders”)
   most distressing recent experience:
   _________________________________________________________________

   additional recent experiences:
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

3. Future templates
   a general one may be sufficient or, one for each present experience that may recur and possibly
   several for potential future situations, or a worst case scenario.
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

Note: The targeting sequence needs to be interrupted if the client experiences a significant dream OR a
recent traumatic episode occurs.