Healing Trauma Retreats

Private Monastery Umbria, Italy

Deep, thoughtful therapy held within a 7-day residential retreat

Small-group trauma retreat for women · Maximum five guests

Why a 7-Day Residential Retreat Works

In ordinary life, therapy happens in fragments — an hour here and there, between work and responsibility.

This is different.

A residential week creates the time and conditions for the nervous system to settle, for patterns to become clear, and for work to move forward without interruption. There is nothing to return to. No emails to check between sessions. No ordinary life pulling at the edges of the work.

Most women who come are not in crisis. They are functioning, capable, and used to managing — but aware they are carrying more than they want to hold alone. Many have already tried other forms of support. They are ready for something that goes further.

The structure of the week matters. Sessions are paced and integrated, with space between for rest, reflection, and walking. Nothing is rushed. Nothing is forced. The setting — a restored monastery in the Umbrian hills — holds the work quietly.

By the end of the week, most women notice something has shifted. Not through intensity. Through steadiness, time, and careful support.

"I got more from this retreat in six days than I had from years of previous therapy."
— Lauren, New Zealand

How the Week Unfolds

The retreat is carefully structured so that therapeutic work can deepen across the week, without urgency or pressure.

Individual sessions are woven into a broader framework that includes small group teaching, guided practices, and time for reflection. This allows the work to build coherently, rather than in isolated conversations.

The week is intensive, but not rigid. There is rhythm rather than timetable. Some days are quieter; others allow for more focused exploration.

The process is not confined to scheduled sessions. It unfolds across the week — through conversations, shared meals, and the steady relational presence that holds the environment.

Each person is met at an appropriate pace, with space for reflection, integration, and rest between sessions.

Meals are prepared. The surroundings are calm. Practical details are taken care of. This allows attention to turn inward in a way rarely possible in ordinary life.

By the end of the week, most women notice greater clarity and emotional steadiness — not through intensity, but through consistency, safety, and time.

Who This Retreat Is For

This retreat is for women who are functioning in their lives but carrying more than they want to hold alone. Many are professionally capable and responsible — yet internally tired, or aware that certain experiences have not fully settled. Often, they reach a point where what has been managed for years no longer feels sustainable. Some come after a period of strain, loss, or transition; others arrive simply knowing they need time, space, and proper therapeutic support.

You do not need to be in crisis to attend, but you do need to be willing to engage in a week of focused work within a contained and supportive environment. The group is intentionally small and the atmosphere calm and respectful. Each woman is met individually, and the work unfolds at a pace that is right for her — with space for conversation, rest, and integration across the week.

"I felt completely overwhelmed — and left with a sense I could move forward again."
— J, UK

Why There Is No Group Sharing

No Group Sharing

There is no expectation to share your personal history in front of the group.

Therapeutic work takes place in individual sessions, where experiences can be explored privately and at your own pace. This allows the work to go further — without pressure, performance, or the need to explain yourself.

How the Week Is Held

You are alongside a small number of women — but without the demand to disclose.

Shared time is used for workshops with Tess, somatic therapy with Eszter, trauma-informed yoga with Viktoria, and time for walks, meals, and rest.

These moments create orientation, understanding, and a quiet sense of connection — without requiring you to share what is personal or intimate.

By keeping therapeutic work private and shared time structured, the week remains focused, contained, and carefully held.

You are not expected to tell your story to the group. You are given the conditions to work through it properly, with care and professional guidance.

"Tess made me feel like I could completely bare my soul without feeling exposed. I felt secure and protected."
— Daiva, UK

Life at the monestary

This 15th-century monastery in the Umbrian hills is Tess's home — and it is from this that everything else follows. You are not checking into a retreat centre. You are being welcomed into a place that is lived in, cared for, and quietly held.
The monastery sits high above the valley, with long views across the hills and evening light that moves slowly over old stone. It is quiet here in the way that only somewhere truly private can be. Many guests notice the shift on arrival — a sense of space, steadiness, and perspective.

Bedrooms are individual and thoughtfully prepared: simple rather than ornate, solid-walled and restful, with windows opening onto hills, gardens, or stone. The intention is not hotel luxury, but comfort and privacy — a home that holds people well.

Meals are shared around a long table, often with the valley stretching beyond the arches. The food is generous and rooted in Italian home cooking — seasonal vegetables, fresh bread, olive oil, fruit, espresso, and chocolate. A small team supports the rhythm of the house with quiet competence.

Guests do not need to organise or host. They can arrive, be looked after, and turn their attention inward.

"The interiors of the monastery hold centuries of quiet. You feel it immediately."
— Hamari, Japan

The monastery draws its water from a natural mountain spring directly below — cold, clear, and alive. It is one of those details guests tend to notice and remember, part of what makes the week feel grounded rather than manufactured.

There is time to sit in the garden, walk the surrounding paths, read, rest, and watch the light move across the hills. Nothing is hurried. Nothing is demanded. Many guests describe the week as having a particular quality of time — as though every day is Sunday.

It is a home that holds both depth and gentleness — and the particular gift of spending a week within it.

Tess Hunneybell

Retreat Lead · Trauma Psychotherapist

"But it is Tess that you really go for. Her one-to-one sessions are hard to describe but brilliantly, inexplicably powerful. You sort of become more empathetic towards yourself."
— Ellie, USA

I lead the therapeutic work of Healing Trauma Retreats and hold responsibility for the clinical frame, pacing, and psychological safety of each week.

I developed these retreats because there was a need for them. My understanding of trauma does not come only from clinical training, but from the life I lead — working with children on the streets of Senegal, running workshops across Europe, and years of being alongside people where trauma actually lives. That experience shapes the work and what I bring into the room each week.

Now in the fifteenth year of retreats at San Flaviano, I work with women who are often managing more than is visible. To meet that properly — with clarity, structure, and care — is what the work requires.

This is my home. Opening it to the women who come feels like the right use of it.

The week is long and the commitment is real. What we receive in return is the privilege of working alongside women who are willing to engage with what they are carrying.

It does not feel like a small thing. It never has.

Further information about my work can be found at
tesshunneybell.com

Therapeutic Team

Eszter Balázs

Somatic Therapist · Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) Practitioner, Levels 1 & 2 · Matrix Reimprinting Practitioner · Yoga Teacher · Reflexologist

Eszter supports the body to release patterns of tension, protection, and long-held fatigue at a pace that remains tolerable and safe. Her work is rooted in nervous-system awareness rather than performance or intensity, allowing regulation to emerge gradually rather than being forced.

Through breath-led movement, somatic attention, and reflexology, she helps guests reconnect with bodily signals that may have been muted or overridden. Her approach invites listening instead of pushing, building steadiness and renewed trust in the body.

Her presence is calm and attentive. Sessions are responsive and carefully adapted to individual need, often creating the physiological stability that allows deeper therapeutic work to unfold without overwhelm.

Viktoria Varga

Senior Yoga Teacher · Holistic Massage Therapist

Viktoria supports the body's natural capacity to soften and restore. Her sessions are invitational and carefully adapted, meeting each guest exactly where she is rather than requiring physical effort or intensity.

Earlier in her career, Viktoria worked in the circus, developing a refined understanding of balance, alignment, and the body in motion. Today, that embodied knowledge expresses itself not through performance, but through steadiness, precision, and attuned support.

Through therapeutic yoga and holistic massage, she works gently with breath and alignment to reduce chronic holding and support nervous-system regulation. Her warmth, kindness, and quiet vitality bring lightness to the week — offering balance when many guests arrive carrying sadness or fatigue.

The Healing Trauma Workbook

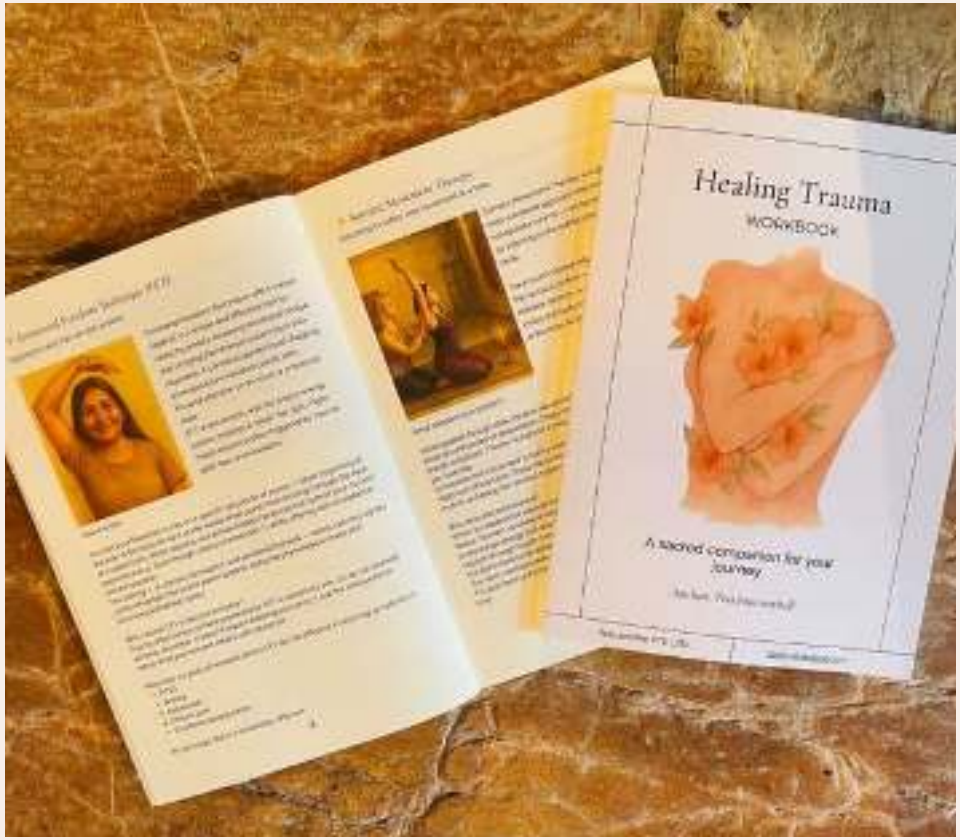
Each participant receives a 97-page Healing Trauma e-Workbook, created by Tess Hunneybell to accompany the retreat.

The workbook is designed to be used selectively. There is no expectation to complete it in full and no pressure to “keep up.” Guests are invited to dip in and out of sections that feel relevant at different moments during the week.

It offers structure, reflection prompts, and gentle guidance between sessions. There is no need to remember everything or take notes; the framework is already held for you. We do not work through the entire book together. Instead, there is space for private reading and for returning to particular sections as they become meaningful.

For many women, the workbook becomes a quiet companion in the weeks and months that follow. Guests often revisit certain pages when life brings new challenges or moments of clarity. In this way, it creates continuity between the week at San Flaviano and everyday life — offering orientation without pressure.

What you write remains entirely private and your own.



Rest, Regulation & Restoration

Deep therapeutic work requires a regulated nervous system. Alongside psychotherapy, the retreat includes carefully chosen restorative experiences that support the body's capacity to settle.

Triponzo Thermal Spa

Guests visit the historic Triponzo Thermal Baths in the Valnerina. Built over ancient Roman foundations, the spa sits where river water meets natural sulphur springs, surrounded by woodland and mountain air. Warm mineral immersion supports parasympathetic activation — the physiological shift from vigilance to repair. Time at the spa is not an indulgence added onto the retreat. It is part of the work of regulation. For bodies held in long-term tension, this softening can be significant.

Bodywork & Reflexology

Trauma is carried not only in memory, but in muscle tone, breath, and reflexive contraction. Optional sessions during the week include a 75-minute full-body massage (€100) or 60-minute reflexology (€76). The bodywork uses steady pressure, assisted stretching, rhythmic compression, and breath-led movement to increase grounding, reduce chronic guarding, and support nervous-system regulation.

Aerial Thai Massage

Supported in a suspended silk hammock, the body is guided through gentle stretches and subtle rocking. Freed from gravity, tension can release in ways rarely possible on a treatment table. Optional 75-minute sessions (€100) are available during the week.

For women accustomed to holding everything together, the experience of full support can be unexpectedly settling.

Food & Nourishment

The Kitchen at San Flaviano

The kitchen at San Flaviano is known for its food.
Meals are generous, colourful, and deeply satisfying — rooted in Mediterranean cooking and prepared with care. Seasonal vegetables, vibrant salads, grains, fish, legumes, handmade pasta, fresh bread, olive oil, fruit, espresso, and yes, chocolate all find their place at the table.

Seasonal produce is sourced locally wherever possible, and dietary requirements are welcomed with ease.

The Shared Table

Breakfast, lunch, and supper are shared each day. There is always something fresh, something warm, and something sweet.

Meals are unhurried. The long table fills with colour and conversation — sometimes laughter, sometimes quiet reflection. No one needs to organise. Guests sit, eat, enjoy their espresso, share chocolate, and allow themselves to be cared for.

Food here is joy.

The monastery sits above a natural mountain spring, which supplies water throughout the house — fresh, clear and naturally cold, straight from the source.

What Your Retreat Includes

The Therapeutic Week & Nourishment

- 6 nights in the Monastery
- Private room (or shared option if selected)
- Individual therapeutic work woven throughout the week
- One-to-one sessions integrated within the retreat structure
- Small group teaching and guided practices
- Somatic therapy and gentle yoga
- Guided meditation and regulation practices
- The 97-page Healing Trauma e-Workbook
- All meals, refreshments, fruit, tea, coffee, and snacks
- Complimentary Triponzo Thermal Spa visit (for direct bookings)
- Optional guided walks

This is a fully held, all-inclusive residential retreat. From the moment you arrive, the practicalities of daily life are taken care of, allowing your attention to turn toward the work of the week.

Practical Arrangements

- Italian toiletries in each room
- Fresh towels and linens
- Hairdryers provided
- Laundry available if needed
- Chauffeur collection from Spoleto Station on arrival
- Return transfer on departure

Everything essential for the retreat is included in the cost. Optional massage, reflexology, and Aerial Thai Massage treatments are available at an additional cost.
Everything required for the week is here. You do not need to organise, prepare, or manage beyond your journey. Once you arrive, you are held within a carefully designed environment that supports depth, steadiness, and rest.
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Rooms, Fees & Dates

Private Room in the Monastery

A quiet, private bedroom within the monastery walls — a calm and personal space to rest, withdraw, and return to yourself between sessions. Each room has its own bathroom and offers a restful atmosphere throughout the stay, supporting depth and integration between sessions.

€2,795 · early booking · all-inclusive

Deposit: €600 Refundable up to 30 days prior to retreat

Shared Room — Church Mezzanine

A generous twin room set within the restored 15th-century church mezzanine. Spacious and characterful, with exposed stonework and beams, this room offers privacy within a shared setting. Beds are arranged for comfort and separation, with access to two bathrooms.

€2,595 per person · early booking · all-inclusive

Deposit: €500 Refundable up to 30 days prior to retreat

2027 Retreat Dates
May–September 2027

Wednesday arrival — Tuesday departure · Maximum 5 guests per retreat

Please visit the healingtraumaretreat.com for current retreat dates and availability for the 2027 season.

Taking the Next Step

If something in this brochure is speaking to you, get in touch. Ask whatever you need — you'll quickly know whether this is the right retreat for you.

Making contact can feel significant.

For many women, the decision to attend is not made lightly. It can bring questions, hesitation, even a quiet voice wondering whether this is really the right thing to do. If you recognise yourself in that uncertainty, you are not alone.

“When I first arrived in Italy, I was so nervous that I even thought: what if this retreat doesn’t exist? I felt relieved when the car showed up. But then, sitting in the car with three women I didn’t know, I couldn’t help but think: what have I done…
Looking back now, I smile at that moment, because what awaited me was one of the most meaningful and life-changing experiences I’ve ever had.”

— Mirelle, Switzerland

Contact Tess

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