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**PROGRAM MATERIALS**

**Program #36160**

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## **Communication, Trust, and Repair: Navigating Challenges in the Lawyer- Client Relationship**

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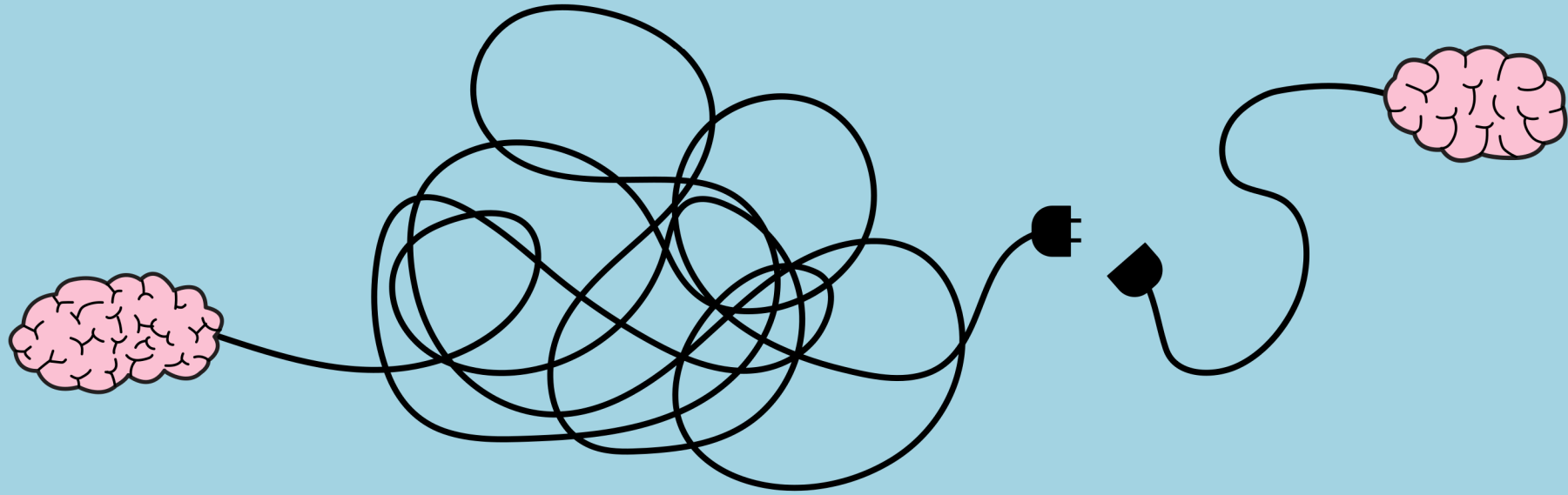
# Communication, Trust & Repair: Navigating challenges in the lawyer-client relationship

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Part I:  
We will explore  
how distrust,  
anger, frustration,  
and trauma show  
up in the  
attorney-client  
relationship





Why Lawyer-  
Client  
Relationships  
become strained

Most conflict is not about the legal issue.



# Common Client Experiences

- Fear
- Helplessness
- Shame
- Loss of control
- Betrayal
- Grief
- Financial stress



## Understanding Distrust



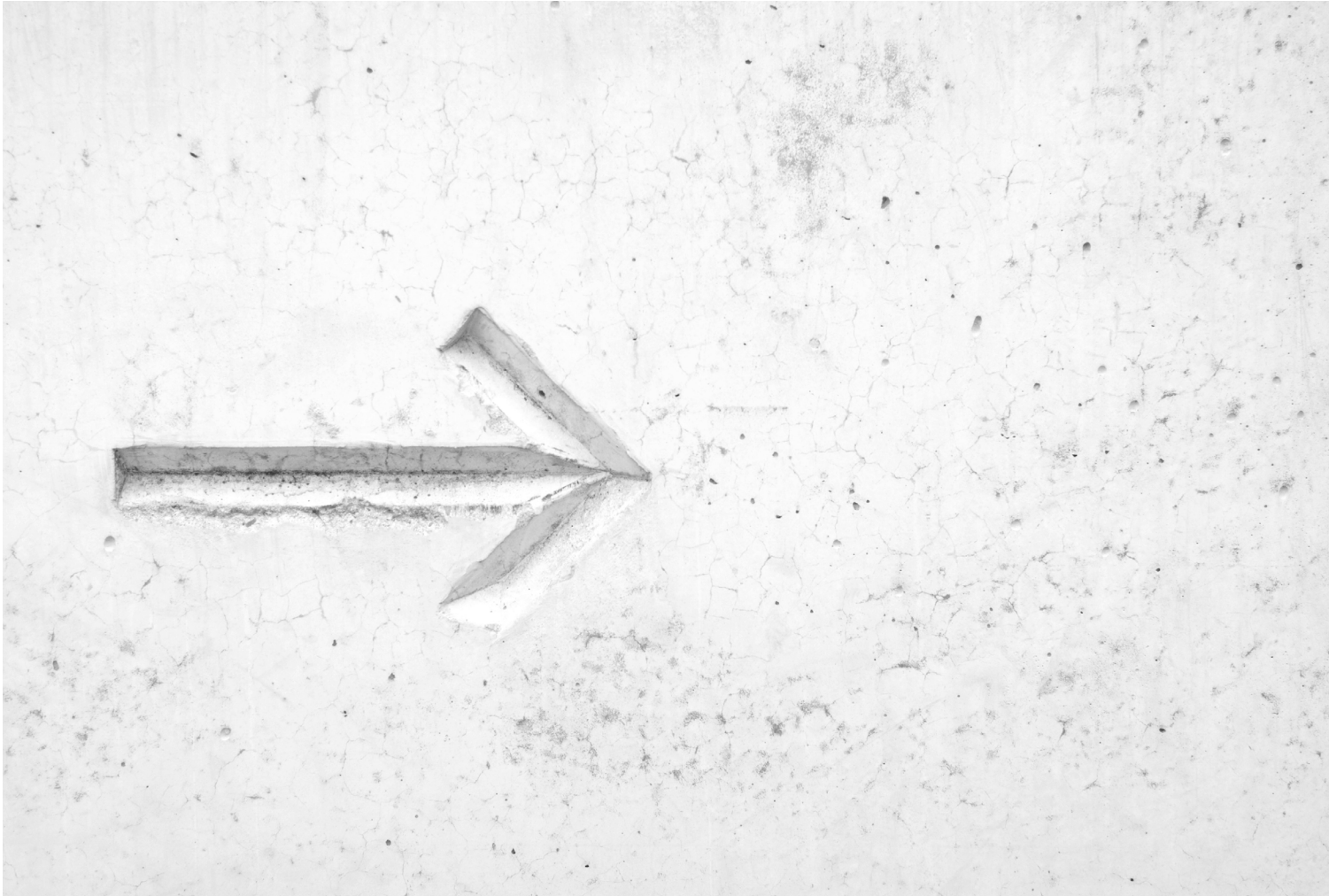


# Client frustration/anger: common issues.



Trauma and  
Trauma  
responses:  
What  
Trauma Does





Trauma can  
impact:

Memory  
Concentration  
Trust  
Emotional regulation  
Communication



# Repair, restore.

Part II: Conflict is not to be avoided at all costs, what matters is the steps taken when conflict arises that determines the state of the attorney-client relationship moving forward.





# Repairing Ruptures in the A-C Relationship

First, let's define rupture.





Repair  
framework:  
PLVCC





# Pause:

Remember: a client's emotion is not necessarily a personal attack

—



Listen: Avoid interrupting.





Validate:  
Acknowledge  
and  
demonstrate



VALIDATE

Clarify:  
Confirm  
what you are  
hearing.





Collaboration



# The Ethics of Communication

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Communication,  
competence and  
diligence.

Human Side  
of Advocacy.





# Thank you!

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# ROARING GRACE

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## CLE: Communication, Trust & Repair: Navigating challenges in the lawyer-client relationship

### Five steps for repairing difficult Lawyer-Client interactions

#### 1. Pause before reacting

When faced with frustration, criticism, or conflict, resist the urge to become defensive.  
Take a breath before responding.  
Focus on understanding rather than defending.

#### 2. Listen to understand

Allow clients to fully express their concerns.

#### 3. Validate the client's experience

Validation helps clients feel heard and respected.  
Example: I can understand why this situation feels frustrating.

#### 4. Clarify and reset expectations

Misunderstandings often occur when expectations are unclear. Try to be clear when talking to clients and ask if they understand in a way that is responsive and caring.

#### 5. Collaborate on next steps

Shift the conversation from to what is next for the client.

### Practical Communication tips

- ✓ Respond promptly, when possible, even brief updates matter.
- ✓ Avoid legal jargon when plain language will do.
- ✓ Be transparent about risks, delays, and uncertainties.
- ✓ Set realistic expectations early and often.
- ✓ Separate client emotions from your professional identity.
- ✓ Remember that trust is built through consistency, and honesty.