



A gifted writer, speaker, and wisdom teacher, Susan Pease Banitt has taught and presented at **Omega Institute**, **NASW Oregon**, and **The Infinite Mind Healing Together Conference**. Her published work includes **The Trauma Toolkit**, articles for **elephantjournal.com**, the **Oreganian**, and her **Trauma Toolkit Blog**. An accredited yoga teacher, Susan served as a board chair for **Street Yoga**. In 2010 she was invited to speak at the **House of Commons** in England on rehabilitation of young women released from prison.

## Susan Pease Banitt, LCSW

Susan Pease Banitt, LCSW is a Harvard-trained psychotherapist with over thirty years experience in mental health work. She has worked in a variety of settings with hundreds of diverse clients over the years, including: residential childcare, child abuse prevention, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, outpatient clinics, medical hospitals and private practice. Her clients have included individuals, couples and groups, including children as young as 3 years and adults into their 80s.

Since a very young age, Susan has been aware of her spiritual nature. After a Catholic upbringing, she spent her late twenties studying yoga and meditation and obtained her certification as a teacher of hatha yoga in her thirties. Over the years, Susan has come to see that traumatic stress and experiences are behind the vast majority of suffering in the mind and body.

Her gifts of empathy and intuition became fully engaged when she began formal work with a shaman in 2000. At the same time, she delved deeper into yogic philosophy through intensive study of Vedanta, ancient Indian spiritual wisdom. As a healed survivor who has taken a deep journey into early traumatic abuse, Susan acts as a compassionate guide for those struggling to free themselves from the effects of traumatic stress.

Because Susan has worked with so many gifted psychiatric and alternative practitioners, she has collected a large toolbox of interventions to offer clients and colleagues. Susan is currently treasurer for the Board of Directors of the National Association of Social Workers, Oregon chapter and is past co-chair of Street Yoga, an organization that brings yoga techniques to disadvantaged youth in a variety of settings.



**Susan Pease Banitt LCSW**  
AUTHOR TRAUMA EXPERT WISDOM TEACHER



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## Advance Praise for *The Trauma Toolkit*

"In *The Trauma Tool Kit* Susan Pease Banitt concentrates on the physical, spiritual and esoteric dimensions of trauma usually ignored by our mainstream culture and healing practices. She presents universal dimensions of traumatic injury and recovery as they have been modeled in spiritual and holistic traditions for millennia as well as integrative methods practiced by holistic healers today. *The Trauma Tool Kit* is a readable, accessible, comprehensive, 'user-friendly' smorgasbord of healing ideas, information and practices that can help guide trauma survivors to wholeness. Susan Pease Banitt is consistently positive, encouraging and helpful as she guides readers in restoring healing and hope."

--Edward Tick, Ph.D., author, *War and the Soul* and *The Practice of Dream Healing*, Director, Soldier's Heart

"*The Trauma Tool Kit* is an extremely important book in a very young field --the discipline of helping people heal from trauma using yoga therapeutics. Not only will it serve as the seminal work in this practice, it will remain an example of the highest quality, and at the same time, a profoundly useful guide for front line therapists, case workers and trauma specialists. Tapping into deep clinical experience while at the same time bringing to contemporary audiences the profound details from the science of yoga, Susan Pease Banitt's *The Trauma Tool Kit* is professional, thorough, easy to read and totally practical. It will not live on people's shelves, but will be well read (and re-read) for many years to come."

--Mark Lilly, founder of Street Yoga ([www.streetyoga.org](http://www.streetyoga.org))



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*"The Trauma Tool Kit* has the potential to unlock lifelong trauma and buried feelings, to empower both men and women to access the routemaps to their authentic selves. It's a blueprint for recovery, plain speaking but esoteric. Her style and own journey embody all that is good in east and west. An important book for our times."

-- Farah Damji, author of *Try Me*

*"The Trauma Tool Kit* is a truly excellent book. Susan Pease Banitt combines her practical experience as a clinical social worker with her extensive knowledge of ancient and modern spirituality to create a fascinating guide to healing the often unrecognized symptoms of stress. Open this book at any page and you'll find something to draw you in and keep you reading. It truly is a toolkit, packed full of useful information not just for those suffering from PTSD, but for anyone interested in personal and spiritual growth."

--Ainslie MacLeod, author of *The Instruction and The Transformation*



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## *The Trauma Toolkit* - Excerpt from the Introduction

Over the years I worked with adults and children both in inpatient and outpatient settings, in crisis and over the long term, in groups and individually. I thought I was compassionate and had a good understanding of traumatic stress. I kept up to date on the latest emerging information, which, in the Boston Longwood medical area, was a fairly easy thing to do. I purchased the best supervision money could buy (supervision is usually a weekly meeting with a more experienced clinician who guides one through the complex tasks of being a therapist) and completed my own therapy. I thought I understood PTSD and traumatic stress. I was wrong.

In my forties, I was shaken to the core with an eruption of PTSD from the bowels of my being. Nothing could have prepared me for it. The details are unimportant and possibly triggering to readers so suffice it to say that family abuse issues were, in my case, the root cause. What I did not know; what I had not been trained for and what I could not know until I experienced it was how all encompassing, how physical the experience of PTSD is, and how long it takes to heal from it. The healing of one moment of realization took several years of intensive work on body, mind and spirit. I now understood what the terms "nervous exhaustion," "mental breakdown," and "meltdown" actually meant in a visceral way.

I was blessed with the presence of amazing healers in my life. I was willing to do anything and everything to heal. Not only did I survive this PTSD volcano, but I have healed and thrived. I tentatively started recommending that some of my patients get acupuncture and naturopathic treatment and was surprised at how this smoothed out their therapy (this being Portland, OR they were all too willing to give it a go!). I smudged, soaked, chanted and sweated and then shared my knowledge about these modalities with clients. Like-minded patients started to seek me out. Together we laughed, cried and moved them out of their PTSD with surprising speed. It was obvious that this hidden knowledge needed to be shared, now, more than ever. One hour per week just doesn't cut it when you are in the middle of massive trauma! With



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the tools to use between sessions, people were healing faster than I had thought possible.

When I began this book, my mission was to provide a framework that allowed for the introduction of techniques and treatments that are outside the comfort zone of the Western mind, but nonetheless are potent and effective modalities to treat traumatic stress. I started to understand that we didn't have enough intellectual "hooks to hang our hats on". In other words, we had no framework with which to understand, for example, energy medicines or wisdom practices as medicine because our view of the human vehicle was too restricted, too materialistically focused on the body. Mind, for most of us is a vague notion of thinking, one that we have not examined very deeply because we are all too busy. In our culture we are encouraged to use our minds for production, outward looking, but to heal in therapy we need to turn our minds inward, a task we are little equipped for, in part due to Western educational methods that teach us to look outwards for answers instead of inside of ourselves. Even our spiritual traditions have been suspicious of too much contemplation, as evidenced by that saying, "Idleness is the devil's workshop" or referring to meditators as "navel gazers". We, as a culture are often suspicious of stillness, of peacefulness, yet our frantic lives are stressing us out. Over time, as I delved into methods to heal myself and my clients, it became obvious that we needed a more complete multidimensional description of the human being. Little did I know that it had already been done, hundreds, if not thousands of years ago.



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AUTHOR TRAUMA EXPERT WISDOM TEACHER



# Contact Information

For Media Inquiries and Bookings:

Susan Pease Banitt, LCSW  
[info@suepeasebanitt.com](mailto:info@suepeasebanitt.com)



**Susan Pease Banitt LCSW**  
AUTHOR TRAUMA EXPERT WISDOM TEACHER