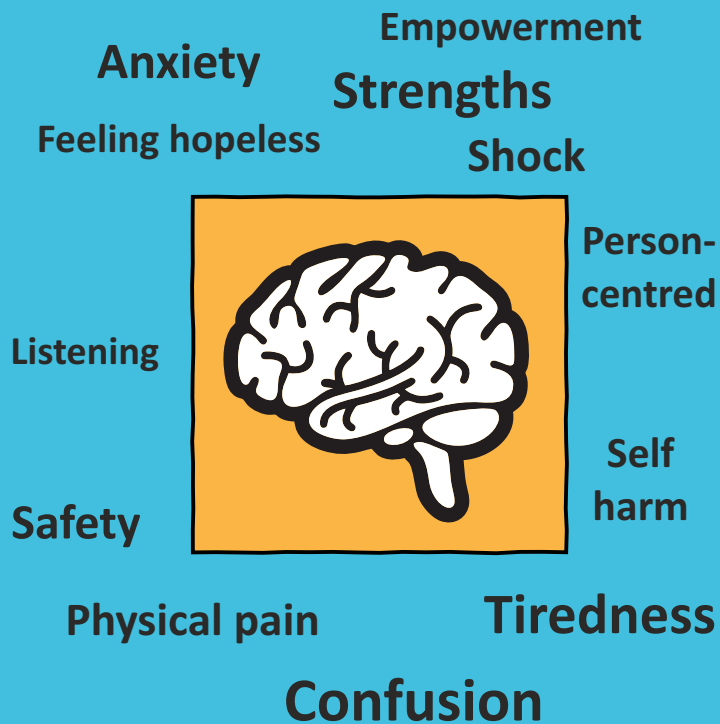


TRAUMA

Dealing with trauma and trauma informed care



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What is trauma?

- Trauma is distress triggered by either one or multiple traumatic events or frightening experiences
- There are several experiences which could be described as 'trauma' but the most common ones are neglect, abuse, ill health and bereavement
- It can also be caused by on-going stresses such as mental health issues, poverty and homelessness
- If you experienced trauma as a child, this is called 'adverse childhood experiences'



How to recognise trauma?

- It can be difficult to know if you have experienced trauma but there can be emotional/psychological and physical symptoms (see below)
- Some people will experience none of these symptoms and some will experience many. Everyone is different and no experience of trauma is the same

Emotional and psychological symptoms:

- Shock, denial, or disbelief
- Confusion, difficulty concentrating
- Anger, irritability, mood swings



- Suicidal thoughts and/or self-harm

- Anxiety and fear
- Guilt, shame, self-blame

- Withdrawing from others
- Feeling sad or hopeless
- Feeling disconnected or numb



- Paranoia
- Difficulty trusting other people

Physical symptoms:

- Insomnia or nightmares
- Fatigue
- Being startled easily
- Racing heartbeat
- Edginess and agitation
- Aches and pains



Triggers

- The symptoms of trauma can be created by 'triggering factors'
- Triggers can be obvious things like seeing abuse on the TV. Triggers can also be more subtle, for example, being around certain smells, sounds, people, places or tastes

It can be difficult to know how to cope with trauma but here are some ideas of how to manage it. Remember everyone is different so not all of these will necessarily be right for you:

- Give yourself time
- Engage with other people affected by trauma
- Ask for support
- Talk it over with someone you trust
- Get into a routine centred around healthy food, exercise and sleep – we realise that this may not be easy
- Do something that helps you to express your feelings like poetry, art, dance or exercise
- Volunteering and/or helping other people
- Keep your mind active
- Notice how you feel and what your triggers might be (see above)

Ask your GP for support if:

- You feel you have no one to share your feelings with or others are not understanding what you are trying to tell them
- You can't handle your feelings and feel overwhelmed by sadness, anxiety, or nervousness
- You have nightmares and cannot sleep
- You are getting on badly with those close to you
- You stay away from other people more and more
- Those around you suggest you seek help
- You have accidents
- You are drinking or smoking too much, or using drugs to cope with your feelings
- You are having feelings of self-harm or suicidal ideation
- You can not manage the physical symptoms



Information adapted from www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/coping-with-emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm

Other places to get support:

Mind

charity giving mental health advice and support

<https://www.mind.org.uk/> and 0300 123 3393



Samaritans

to speak to someone for free

on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org



Traumatic Stress Service

for assessment and treatment

call 020 3228 2969 or 020 3228 2514



ASSIST

(Assistance Support and Self Help in Surviving Trauma)

<http://assisttraumacare.org.uk/> - fill online form to get email support



What is a 'trauma informed approach'?

- A trauma-informed approach is a way of supporting people that some services use to help people who are currently experiencing trauma or who have experienced trauma in the past
- Not all services use this approach but it is becoming an increasingly popular and respected way of providing care

What does 'trauma informed care' look like?

There are different ways of providing this, however there are five key principles that services may adopt:

1) Recognise and respond to trauma

- To better support you and make sure services do not re-traumatise you, trauma-informed services will try to understand the trauma you have faced and the impact it might have on you

2) Provide safe places

- Creating a supportive environment that does not add your trauma

3) Take a strengths-based view

- Providing support based on your strengths. Instead of asking 'what is wrong with you?'. Trauma-informed services should ask 'what happened to you?'. In this way, you are not to blame for the experiences that have happened to you
- Trauma informed services understand how trauma can affect relationships, communication and the way people behave

4) Building empowering relationships

- Many traumatic experiences involve situations where the abuser has 'power over' you therefore, you may find it difficult to get support where the 'professional' has all the power
- Trauma-informed services should try to give you a say in the support you receive – this can help to heal trauma and give you back control

5) Ensuring everyone has equal access to support

- Providing support that is tailored to you. No experience of trauma is the same and neither are the people who have experienced trauma
- You should not be excluded from support because of things that have happened to you