

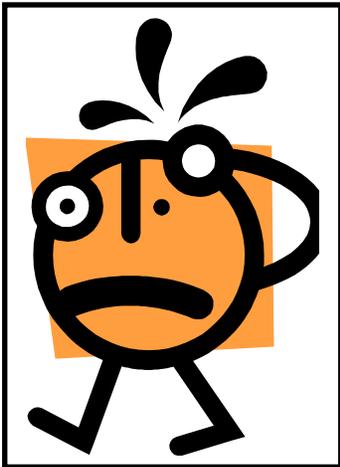
Treating Trauma and PTSD

There are several ways to treat trauma and PTSD. Therapy is very important, and several types are available:

- Exposure therapy
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)
- Trauma-focused therapy (part of CBT)
- Family therapy
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Stress-inoculation therapy
- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)

Medications can also be helpful in reducing the symptoms connected with PTSD and trauma, such as antidepressants.

Nicoletti-Flater Associates provides treatment for PTSD and other trauma related needs.



For More Information, Call: Nicoletti-Flater Associates

303-989-1617

References:

Emotional and Psychological Trauma. (2014). Help Guide.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. (2011). The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). (2014). Help Guide.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. (n.d.). National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

Understanding and managing psychological trauma. (n.d.) Australian Psychological Society.

Additional Reading:

Emptying the Bucket, by Evan Axelrod

Traumatic Stress, by Bessel van der Kolk & Alexander McFarlane

The Body Keeps the Score, by Bessel van der Kolk

Trauma and Recovery, by Judith Herman

Trauma Recovery Handbook: A recovery Guide for Yourself, Your Colleagues & Those you Love, by Debra Tasci and Charlene Slover

Trauma

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Too Much, Too Ugly, Too Soon

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Understanding Trauma

Trauma, both emotional and psychological, occurs after dealing with an event that causes a great deal of distress. These events are often seen as life-threatening such as a natural disaster, or if the event could threaten the safety and security of the person both physically and mentally. A threat to personal safety and security could be seen as a robbery or a sexual assault.

An event that many people experience may be seen differently by each person. One person may perceive the event as traumatic while another may not. Traumatic events can happen especially if the event is unexpected, is repeated, or if the person is unprepared for the event. Trauma can happen with one event, or many events over time.

How a person reacts to trauma is complex. Some people, as stated previously, may never see the event they experienced as traumatic, while others do. There are also certain risk factors that can increase adverse responses to risk. A lack of support from others, like family and friends can be a risk. Previous stress during the event, such as stress from a job or other event can increase the chance that trauma occurs. Previous trauma, both in childhood and adulthood, can increase the risk that the individual will have trauma. Every reaction to trauma is normal, and going through the trauma slowly is also normal.

In children, symptoms of trauma can be different, especially as younger children may have trouble expressing their worries. Other risk factors, like a lack of parental support can influence the presence of trauma.

Symptoms of Trauma

There are several symptoms that can denote that someone is dealing with a traumatic event:

Physical symptoms:

- Being over-alert
- Fatigue
- Exhaustion
- Trouble sleeping
- Physical pain
- Being startled easily

Cognitive symptoms:

- Thoughts about the event that won't go away, and happen without warning
- Trouble with memory and concentration
- Nightmares
- Confusion and disorientation

Behavioral symptoms:

- Avoiding places or things that remind the person of the event
- Losing interest in activities once liked
- Avoiding social interactions, or isolating

Emotional symptoms:

- Fear
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Guilt
- Detachment or feeling numb

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is considered a stressor and trauma-related disorder

in the DSM-5. PTSD is something that should be treated as soon as possible for healthier living. Symptoms to look for include:

- Being exposed to an event, or knowing about an event happening to a loved one
- Memories, dreams, or flashbacks about the event, and feelings of distress about things that remind the person of the event
- Avoiding things that remind the person about the event
- Often feeling negative emotions and trouble remembering or concentrating
- Being startled easily, hypervigilance, and reckless behavior are also seen

Officers and PTSD

Most law enforcement officers, even if they experience a traumatic event, will not meet criteria for PTSD. Instead, they may meet partial criteria, which we call Partial PTSD. Officers can experience some disturbing events, and this can take a toll on daily functioning. Discussing these events and dealing with the symptoms is an important goal for healthier living.

If you are experiencing full PTSD symptoms, or some PTSD symptoms, contacting your EAP or another psychotherapist is essential in mitigating the symptoms.