

Trauma may occur from a single experience or repeated or multiple experiences. Traumatic experiences are generally those that you are unprepared for, are unexpected, and out of your control. They are often frightening and physically and mentally threatening. They overwhelm your ability to cope and can have a profound impact on your identity, mind, and body.

Trauma is the experience you have of an event and the meaning you make of it, not the event itself. The trigger event for trauma may be childhood abuse or neglect, family or partner violence, an accident, a serious illness or medical procedure, a difficult childbirth, an act of violence, natural disasters, war, or displacement from home or culture.

What causes trauma?

A dangerous or stressful event triggers your flight, fight or freeze response, your normal, natural response to danger and stress. Your body floods with stress hormones and prepares to fight, run away or “play dead”, to keep itself safe.

With lower degrees of stress or danger your body can quickly resolve itself to its normal hormonal and physical functioning after the stress or danger has

Don't isolate yourself. Following a traumatic experience, you may want to withdraw from others, but this can make it harder to heal. You may not want to talk about the trauma but try to see people face to face, share how you are feeling, and engage in "normal" social activity. Being engaged and connected to others can help you better process the traumatic experience.

Soothe yourself. Relaxation and calming techniques can help relieve the physical, cognitive, and emotional symptoms of trauma. Find which techniques work best for you and practice them regularly. Try mindful breathing – counting your breaths as you focus your attention on them. Try a progressive relaxation technique. Use sensations such as specific sights, smells, and tastes to help you feel calm. You may find listening to music, having a nice bath, or playing with your pet relaxes you. Be present, notice five things around you that you can see, hear and smell – bringing your attention away from your thoughts even momentarily relieves your mind and body.

Acknowledge your feelings. Allow yourself to feel your emotions, and accept them as important for the healing process. Allow your feelings to be present without

