

Trauma Symptoms - Information sheet T1

What are trauma symptoms?

1. **Hyperarousal/anxiety.** When someone experiences a traumatic event their system is on hyperalert; constantly watching out for danger and further threats. This can result in feeling manic and jumpy.
2. **Avoidance.** Often people want to avoid where the trauma took place or other reminders of the event. These reminders can be: sounds, smells, places and events.
3. **Intrusive thoughts.** One of the most disturbing symptoms of trauma is intrusive thoughts leading to flashbacks of the event. These flashbacks can feel out of your control and can appear when you may be least expecting them.
4. **Lack of concentration/impaired memory.** The brain is severely impacted when we experience trauma. A simple way of describing what takes place in the brain is that it becomes so overwhelmed that it blows a fuse, resulting in information getting stuck in the amygdala. As the information is not processed fully into the Hippocampus, it creates difficulty concentrating and interferes with our memory storage. Certain trauma therapy techniques can help process the information so it can be filed in the appropriate parts of the brain.
5. **Headaches/migraines.** As mentioned above traumatic events take a toll on the brain and the body. The brain becomes overloaded with information. This can result in constant pressure on the head causing headaches and migraines.
6. **Digestive problems.** When we feel threatened our digestive system shuts down. We do not need to digest food when we are in a survival situation. This can result in many digestive problems, stomach aches and IBS.
7. **Difficulty sleeping.** It can be really difficult sleeping when you are experiencing intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, and high level of emotional disturbance. If this becomes unbearable visit your GP.
8. **Emotional outbursts.** Trauma events can create a rollercoaster of emotions from feeling: isolated, sad, scared, angry and irritated. We are flooded with hormones of adrenalin, nor-adrenalin and cortisol impacting our mood levels.
9. **Feeling detached/not really there.** Shock tends to last up to three days after a traumatic event. During this time people describe feeling detached from the world around them; as if life is going on in a TV screen and they are just watching it being played out. This detached feeling can come and go over a period of time.
10. **Exhaustion.** All the above symptoms take their toll on the body leaving you feeling exhausted. If much of your time is spent feeling hyperaroused and anxious then the body will need to balance itself out. The only way it can do this is to go from a high energy state to a low energy state. Trauma makes the body swing between feeling manic and on edge to feeling exhausted.

It can feel like you are going crazy experiencing all the above symptoms, you are not. The important thing to remember is that all the above symptoms are a NORMAL response to an ABNORMAL event. If you want to find out how to help yourself view my website and download the 'Trauma Support –Information sheet T2'.