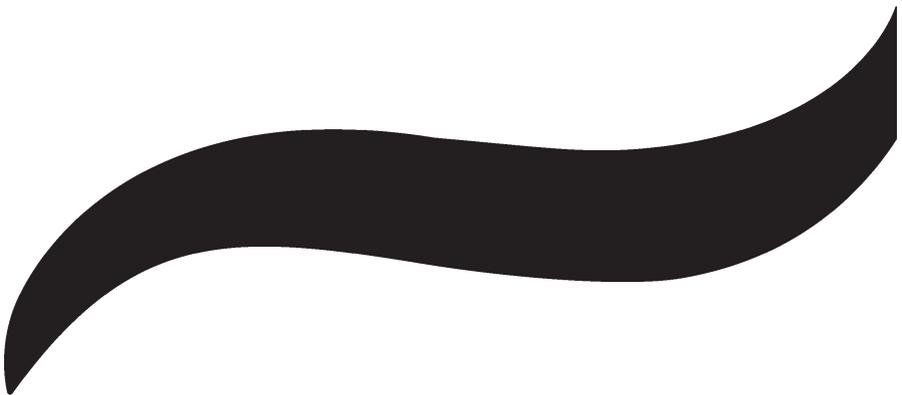


Trauma

Information for clients



WHAT IS A TRAUMATIC EVENT?

A traumatic event is one that is unusual and unexpected and that causes deep distress to a person. It could be fire, an accident, a robbery or burglary, an attack, or being a witness to a death. It could be large-scale, such as a major disaster involving many people. It could be a personal event involving you, your friends or family.

It is not the size of the traumatic event that affects a person; it is what they think about what happened and what it means to them. This is a very personal thing; people react to traumatic events in different ways.

HOW DO PEOPLE REACT AFTER A TRAUMATIC EVENT?

There are two main ways that people can react to trauma:

- ❖ Re-experiencing the trauma in your mind
- ❖ Avoiding things associated with or related to the trauma

Re-experiencing the trauma in your mind

- ❖ Having unwanted pictures or images of the trauma (often called flashbacks) coming into your mind
- ❖ Having upsetting dreams about the trauma or about other things that frighten you
- ❖ Feeling that the trauma is happening again - strong sensations of re-living it
- ❖ Feeling very distressed when you come across situations or feelings that remind you of the trauma
- ❖ Experiencing upsetting physical reactions, like a faster heartbeat or dizziness, when you are faced with memories of the trauma or situations that remind you of it

Feeling more tense, irritable and alert

- ❖ Feeling angry or irritable
- ❖ Not being able to concentrate
- ❖ Finding it difficult to fall asleep
- ❖ Feeling more alert than usual all the time
- ❖ Being easily startled

REACTIONS TO TRAUMA CAN AFFECT PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT WAYS

- ❖ How we feel
- ❖ The way the body works
- ❖ The way we behave
- ❖ The way we think

How we feel (not necessarily all of these)

- ❖ Anxious, nervous, worried, frightened
- ❖ Feeling something dreadful is going to happen
- ❖ Tense, uptight, on edge, unsettled
- ❖ Unreal, strange, woozy, detached
- ❖ Worrying constantly
- ❖ Unable to concentrate
- ❖ Dizzy, light-headed
- ❖ Panicky
- ❖ Depressed, low, at a loss
- ❖ Angry

The way the body works (not necessarily all of these)

- ❖ Heart races and pounds
- ❖ Chest feels tight
- ❖ Muscles are tense or stiff
- ❖ Feeling tired or exhausted
- ❖ Body aches

The way we behave (not necessarily all of these)

- ❖ Pace up and down
- ❖ Avoid things that remind you of the trauma
- ❖ Not able to sit and relax
- ❖ Avoid people
- ❖ Avoid being alone

The way we think (not necessarily all of these)

- ❖ “It was my fault”
- ❖ “I’m cracking up”
- ❖ “Why did it have to happen?”
- ❖ “I can’t see the point any more”

WHY DO PEOPLE REACT SO STRONGLY TO TRAUMA?

There are many reasons why trauma has such a strong emotional impact on us. It often shatters the basic beliefs we hold about life. Normally for us life is fairly safe and secure. It has a particular form, meaning and purpose. Trauma can destroy this safe feeling. It might be that the image we have of ourselves is shattered; we might have responded to the trauma in a different way from how we expected or wanted to behave.

We get no warning of a traumatic event. There is no time to adjust to this new experience. It will usually be outside our normal range of experience and we are faced with not knowing what to do or how to behave. You might have felt you or the people around you were going to die, and you were shocked. In the face of this danger our minds keep a strong hold on the memory of the trauma. This is probably a way our minds try to ensure that the same kind of danger never occurs again.

Coping with traumatic events

There is no right or wrong way to feel after experiencing a traumatic event. This booklet describes many different feelings and emotions that might be felt after a tragedy or major personal crisis. This does not mean you must feel them.

Try to express your feelings. You won't 'lose control'. If you try and hold on to your feelings, this could lead to more emotional and physical problems.

WAYS TO COPE

Be Active - keep up your usual routines as much as possible, keeping some time for yourself.

Thinking and talking - talking about your experience will help. Allow yourself to dwell on your experience if you feel you need to.

Accepting Support - accept and look for other people's support.

Taking care of yourself - remember to take time to sleep, eat, rest and relax.

Humour - humour can be a good way of releasing stress after a traumatic event. You could try watching a funny film.

Coming to terms with tragedy - you won't forget what has happened, but you will come to terms with it in time and probably find personal strengths you didn't even know you had.

There is no right or wrong way to react to a traumatic event or tragic loss. Everyone reacts in their own way and can be helped and supported through it.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT:

Useful Contacts

For information on mental services, supports, opportunities or self-help information call:

- ❖ North Lanarkshire: Well Informed 0800 073 0918
- ❖ South Lanarkshire: Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health Information Line: 0330 3000 133

For further information on mental health and well-being, visit Lanarkshire's Elament website: www.elament.org.uk

Remember, should your problems persist or you feel you need help urgently please contact your GP. The following organisations can also prove useful in and out of hours.

- ❖ **Breathing Space** - 0800 83 85 87
(Mon - Thu, 6pm - 2am; Fri 6pm - Mon 6am)
www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk
- ❖ **Samaritans** - 116 123 (24hrs) www.samaritans.org
- ❖ **NHS24** - 111 (Out of hours) www.nhs24.com
- ❖ **Healthy Working Lives** - 08452 300 323 (Local),
0800 019 2211 (National),
www.healthyworkinglives.com
- ❖ **Childline** - 0800 11 11 (24hrs) www.childline.org.uk
- ❖ **NHS Inform** - 0800 22 44 88 www.nhsinform.co.uk
- ❖ **Parentline Scotland** - 0808 800 22 22
www.children1st.org.uk/parentline
- ❖ **National Debt Line Scotland** - 0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/scotland
- ❖ **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** - 0800 027 1234

WHAT IS WELL CONNECTED?

Well Connected is a new programme in Lanarkshire, sometimes referred to as social prescribing or community referral. It makes it easier for us and people we know to take part in and benefit from activities and services that we know improve our well-being which means how we feel about ourselves and our lives. There are a number of Well Connected areas available to us and we can benefit from more than one:

- ❖ Physical activity and leisure opportunities
- ❖ Volunteering
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Arts and culture
- ❖ Benefits, welfare and debt advice
- ❖ Learning opportunities
- ❖ Stress Control Classes in communities
- ❖ Health Walks
- ❖ Mindfulness Classes.

For information on any of the above call:

- ❖ North Lanarkshire: Well Informed 0800 073 0918
- ❖ South Lanarkshire: Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health Information Line: 0330 3000 133
- ❖ Visit: www.elament.org.uk/self-help-resources/well-connected-programme.aspx

HEALTHY READING

All public libraries have a healthy reading section making it easier to access mental health and well-being leaflets, books, CDs, DVDs and web-based support. All libraries across Lanarkshire have resources to help us get the most from life such as living life to the full, sleeping better and becoming more confident or overcoming and coping with mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, stress, dementia and panic. There are also resources for all ages including supporting young people, adults and older people as well as items on positive parenting. Simply pop into your local library.

GUIDED SUPPORT:

Stress Control Classes

Stress Control classes will help develop skills and techniques to manage common issues caused by modern day living such as stress, anxiety or low confidence.

The classes are delivered in local community facilities and consist of six sessions lasting 90 minutes each. We will not need to speak about our issues during the class. Just sit back and listen about helpful stress control techniques. Feel free to bring someone along with you for support. To find your nearest class and book a place, call **0300 303 0447**.

Living Life to the Full - Online Course

Living Life to The Full is a free web-based life skills course that aims to help us tackle and respond to issues/demands which we all meet in our everyday lives. It will explore issues such as understanding why we feel the way we do, problem solving, noticing and challenging unhelpful thoughts and behaviours and anxiety control. You can register for the course at **www.lltff.com** and complete as many or as few modules as you wish.

If you feel you need additional help, the Living Life to The Full course is also available with support from self help coaches (via Action on Depression Scotland). To find out more visit **www.aod.lltffionline.co.uk**

Living Life: Guided Self Help and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy - Telephone Support

Living Life is a free telephone support service for people suffering from low mood, mild to moderate depression, symptoms of anxiety or a combination of both. Trained Self-help coaches and therapists will guide us through a range of workbooks over a series of telephone sessions. For more information or to make a telephone appointment, call **0800 328 9655** (Mon–Fri 1–9pm).

NHS Lanarkshire - for local services and the latest health news visit www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk
NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line: 0300 3030 243

NHS inform - The national health information service for Scotland. www.nhsinform.co.uk
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line on 0300 3030 243 or e-mail info2@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk



www.patientopinion.org.uk

Adapted with permission from information produced by NHS Borders

Pub. date:	September 2015
Review date:	September 2017
Issue No:	01
Produced by:	MMMHP

PIL.TRAUMA.13447.P