

TRAUMA & PTSD · NORMAL REACTIONS, REAL RECOVERY

Trauma & PTSD

A normal response to an abnormal event — and a path back from it.



Reliving

Memories, nightmares, flashbacks



Avoiding

Places, people, reminders



On guard

Jumpy, tense, easily startled

01 After a traumatic event

Distress after a frightening or overwhelming event is a normal reaction, not a weakness. For most people it eases over the following weeks. When it doesn't — when the memory keeps intruding and the body stays on alert — it may be post-traumatic stress.

02 Staying in your window

Trauma pushes the nervous system out of its “window of tolerance” — into overwhelm, or into numb shutdown. Recovery rebuilds the ability to stay calm and present, so the memory can be processed rather than relived.

03 What genuinely helps

- ✓ Trauma-focused CBT to process the memory safely
- ✓ EMDR — eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing
- ✓ Skills to steady arousal and reconnect with the present
- ✓ Going at your pace — safety comes first, always

THE MODEL

The window of tolerance

Hyperarousal — panic, anger

Window of tolerance — calm, coping

Hypoarousal — numb, shut down

Trauma tips us into overwhelm or shutdown. Therapy widens the middle band — calm, present, able to cope.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

Grounding: 5-4-3-2-1

- ✓ 5 things you can see, 4 you can feel
- ✓ 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell
- ✓ 1 you can taste

Brings you back to the present.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If symptoms last more than a month, or disrupt work, sleep or relationships, a psychologist trained in trauma can help. In crisis, call Lifeline 13 11 14 or 000.

IN CRISIS — 24/7

Lifeline 13 11 14 · Emergency 000
mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help

THE TAKEAWAY

Recovery isn't forgetting. It's the memory losing its grip on the present.

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

Parramatta & online, Australia-wide · mindhealth.com.au

1300 084 200