

# Understanding psychological trauma: symptoms, treatment and impact

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## ABSTRACT:

*Psychological trauma is a complex and often misunderstood concept that refers to the emotional and psychological distress that results from experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Traumatic events can vary in nature and severity, from a car accident or natural disaster to physical or sexual abuse. The effects of psychological trauma can be long lasting and can impact a person's mental health, relationships and overall well-being.*

**Keywords:** Psychological trauma, Disaster psychology, Traumatic stress, Addiction behaviors, Crisis intervention, Emergency services.

## INTRODUCTION

### SYMPTOMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

The symptoms of psychological trauma can manifest in a variety of ways and can vary depending on the individual's experiences and coping mechanisms (Sareen, 2014). Some common symptoms include:

#### **FLASHBACKS AND INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS:**

Trauma survivors may experience vivid memories of the traumatic event, which can be triggered by similar situations or objects.

**AVOIDANCE:** Trauma survivors may try to avoid anything that reminds them of the traumatic event, including people, places and activities they used to enjoy.

**HYPERVIGILANCE:** Trauma survivors may become extremely alert and sensitive to potential danger, which can make it difficult to relax or feel safe.

**ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION:** Trauma survivors may experience intense feelings of anxiety, depression and other mood disorders, which can affect their ability to function day to day.

**PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS:** Trauma survivors may experience physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches and fatigue, which can be related to their trauma.

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## DESCRIPTION

### TREATMENT FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

Treatment for psychological trauma can vary depending on the individual's needs and the severity of their symptoms. Some common treatment options include:

**THERAPY:** Therapy can help individuals process and cope with their traumatic experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Different types of therapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), can be effective in treating psychological trauma.

**MEDICATION:** Medication can be prescribed to treat symptoms such as anxiety, depression and sleep disturbances that are often associated with psychological trauma.

**SUPPORT GROUPS:** Support groups can provide a sense of community and understanding for trauma survivors, allowing them to share their experiences and find support from others who have gone through similar experiences.

**SELF-CARE:** Self-care activities such as exercise, meditation and spending time with loved ones can help trauma survivors manage their symptoms and improve their overall well-being.

### IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

Psychological trauma can have a profound impact on a person's life, affecting their mental health, relationships and overall quality of life. Some common impacts of psychological trauma include:

#### **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD):**

PTSD is a type of anxiety disorder that can develop after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Symptoms can include flashbacks, nightmares and hypervigilance.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE:** Trauma survivors may turn to drugs or alcohol as a way to cope with their symptoms, which can lead to addiction and other related problems.

**RELATIONSHIP DIFFICULTIES:** Trauma survivors may struggle with building and maintaining healthy relationships, as the emotional and psychological toll of their trauma can make it difficult to trust others or feel emotionally close.

**JOB LOSS AND FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES:** Trauma survivors may struggle to maintain employment or experience financial difficulties as a result of their symptoms, which can impact their ability to meet their basic needs (Pai et al, 2017).

**PHYSICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS:** Trauma survivors may be at an increased risk of developing physical health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure and chronic pain.

### PREVENTING PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

While it may not be possible to prevent all forms of psychological trauma, there are steps that individuals can take to reduce their risk of experiencing trauma and to minimize the impact of traumatic events (Iribarren et al, 2005). Some prevention strategies include:

**BUILDING A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM:** Having a network of supportive friends and family members can help individuals cope with difficult situations and reduce the risk of experiencing trauma.

**PRACTICING SELF-CARE:** Engaging in activities that promote physical and emotional well-being, such as exercise, meditation and therapy, can help individuals build resilience and cope with stress.

**LEARNING COPING STRATEGIES:** Developing healthy coping strategies, such as deep breathing, journaling or talking to a trusted friend, can help individuals manage stress and anxiety before it turns into trauma.

**SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP:** If an individual has experienced trauma in the past, seeking professional help can be an effective way to prevent future trauma and manage the impact of past trauma.

**TAKING CARE OF PHYSICAL HEALTH:** Practicing healthy habits such as getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet and exercising regularly, can help individuals build resilience and reduce the impact of stress on the body (Kapfhammer, 2014).

Psychological trauma is a complex and often debilitating condition that can have a profound impact on a person's life. While the effects of trauma can be long lasting, there are effective treatments available to help individuals manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life (Korte et al, 2016). It is important for trauma survivors to seek support from trained professionals and loved ones and to practice self-care activities that can help promote healing.

### CONCLUSION

Psychological trauma is a complex and often misunderstood condition that can have a profound impact on a person's life. Understanding the symptoms, treatment options, and impact of psychological trauma is essential for individuals who have experienced trauma or who work with trauma survivors. By taking steps to prevent trauma and to seek help when needed, individuals can reduce the impact of trauma on their lives and promote healing and recovery.

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