

Overcoming Traumatic Stress: Strategies for Coping and Healing

Predrag Putnik*

Department of Psychiatry, University of De Montfort, Leicester, UK

ABSTRACT:

Traumatic stress is a psychological response to a highly distressing or life-threatening event. It is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation and can have a significant impact on an individual's mental and physical health. Traumatic stress can be caused by a variety of events, including natural disasters, accidents, physical or sexual assault, war, or witnessing violence.

Keywords: Traumatic stress, Addiction behaviors, Crisis intervention, Emergency services, Forensic mental health

INTRODUCTION

The symptoms of traumatic stress can vary in severity and can last for a few days or weeks, or even months or years. Some of the most common symptoms of traumatic stress include:

1. Intrusive thoughts or memories of the event that cause distress or anxiety.
2. Nightmares or flashbacks of the traumatic event.
3. Avoidance of people, places, or things that remind the individual of the traumatic event.
4. Hyperarousal, which can include irritability, difficulty sleeping, and being easily startled.
5. Negative changes in mood, such as depression or anxiety.
6. Feeling detached or numb.

Traumatic stress can have a significant impact on an individual's mental and physical health. It can cause changes in brain function, which can lead to memory problems, difficulty concentrating, and emotional instability. Traumatic stress can also lead to physical health problems, including cardiovascular disease, digestive disorders, and chronic pain (Bremner et al. 1996).

Treatment for traumatic stress can include psychotherapy, medication, or a combination of both. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is one of the most effective forms of therapy for traumatic stress. CBT helps individuals identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors that are

causing distress. It also helps individuals develop coping skills to manage symptoms of traumatic stress.

Medications such as antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs can also be helpful in treating symptoms of traumatic stress. These medications can help manage symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and insomnia. However, medication should always be prescribed and monitored by a qualified healthcare professional (Dell 2006).

There are also several self-care strategies that individuals can use to manage symptoms of traumatic stress. These strategies include getting regular exercise, eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and avoiding drugs and alcohol.

Traumatic stress is a normal response to a highly distressing or life-threatening event. It can have a significant impact on an individual's mental and physical health, but there are effective treatments available. If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of traumatic stress, it is important to seek help from a qualified healthcare professional. With proper treatment and support, individuals can learn to manage their symptoms and lead a fulfilling life (Dube et al. 2003).

Traumatic stress can have a profound impact on an individual's daily life, making it difficult to work, socialize, and maintain relationships. However, there are several strategies that individuals can use to manage symptoms of traumatic stress and begin the healing process (Franklin & Zimmerman 2001).

1. **Seek Professional Help:** One of the most effective strategies for managing traumatic stress is to seek professional help from a qualified healthcare professional. A mental health professional can help individuals develop coping skills to manage symptoms of traumatic stress and provide psychotherapy or medication as needed.
2. **Connect with Supportive People:** It can be helpful to talk with supportive people, such as family members,

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*Correspondence regarding this article should be directed to:
Predragputnik613@dmu.ac.uk

friends, or a support group. Talking about the traumatic event can help individuals process their emotions and feel less alone in their experience.

3. Practice Relaxation Techniques: Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga can help reduce stress and anxiety and improve mood.
4. Engage in Physical Activity: Regular exercise can help improve mood and reduce symptoms of traumatic stress. Exercise also helps individuals feel more in control of their bodies and can improve self-esteem.
5. Engage in Self-Care: Taking care of oneself can help reduce stress and improve mood. This can include getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, and avoiding drugs and alcohol.
6. Practice Mindfulness: Mindfulness involves being present in the moment and accepting one's thoughts and feelings without judgment. Practicing mindfulness can help individuals manage symptoms of traumatic stress and improve overall well-being.

It is important to note that healing from traumatic stress takes time, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. It is important to work with a qualified healthcare professional to develop an individualized treatment plan that meets one's needs (Prigerson et al. 2001).

CONCLUSION

Traumatic stress can be a challenging experience, but

there are several strategies that individuals can use to manage symptoms and begin the healing process. Seeking professional help, connecting with supportive people, practicing relaxation techniques, engaging in physical activity, practicing self-care, and practicing mindfulness are all effective strategies for managing traumatic stress. With time and support, individuals can learn to manage their symptoms and begin to heal.

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