

TRAUMA CARE OVERVIEW:

Many people are struggling with Trauma, which can impact anyone. However the impact is factored in by a number of key factors to consider:

- Duration of exposure
- Frequency of exposure
- Intensity of exposure
- Current versus Accumulative Exposure

Depending on duration, frequency and intensity along with past unprocessed trauma as to the severity of impact. Please use discretion and wisdom and if in doubt always refer.

NOTE: When listen to someone tell their story to you, if there is accumulative trauma (meaning past “unprocessed” trauma that is being re-triggered and causing distress. It is highly recommended they see professional.

TELL THE STORY:

- Ask them to tell the trauma story they experienced
- Explore their experience of it – encourage them to use their senses to describe their story. Expression is healthier than suppression

HISTORY:

Check if they have experience any other trauma:

- Critical Incident Trauma - Sudden
- Process Trauma (abusive relationship) - continues
- Traumatic Bereavement

NOTE: Depending on severity of past unprocessed trauma and their current triggered reactions, if you suspect a person is not coping – ALWAYS refer.

THE FOUR PHASES OF DEBRIEFING

A. THE FACT PHASE - RETELLING THE STORY

Ask them to tell you what happened

- Let them tell story as they remember it
- Following the correct sequence of events
- Including as much detail as possible

Find out who was involved and what they did. Try to establish the time sequence of events

- Include what happened before, during and after the event Ask victim to repeat story, adding as much detail as possible
- Recall sufficient factual information to bring incident into vivid memory
- Also include emotional memories through each stage of incident

Purpose of Retelling the Story

- To allow for emotional catharsis
- The encourage the recall of what happened
- To reduce fear and anger by allowing emotions to surface in a safe environment
- To help victim get in touch with feelings or thought that may have been present at

Time – moving the memories from the reptilian brain to the mammalian brain.

- To allow expression of helplessness and control issues
- To reduce sense of isolation and dislocation
- To show that even the worst images can be tolerated by the counsellor and in this way leave the victim less overwhelmed by these images.

B. EXPLORING THE EMOTION AND THOUGHT PHASE NORMALISING AND REASSURING

Questions about thoughts, impressions and actions lead to answers about feelings. The process of sharing feelings to establish normality of reaction. Focus on decisions & thought processes during the incident

- What were your first thoughts?
- What did you do?
- What do you think made you decide to...?
- Encourage victims to share the feelings they experienced at the time and that they are having now regarding the incident
- Revisit the events, and ask feeling-orientated questions
- How did you feel when that happened?
- How do you feel now?
 - Help victim to verbalise their emotions
 - Listen actively and reflect their emotions

Any traumatic event shatters four fundamental assumptions embraced by most human beings:

- ‘It will never happen to me’
- A belief that people are fundamentally good, harmless and rational
- The world is orderly and predictable
- I am good and worthwhile and I don’t deserve to have bad things happen to me’

The reality of the trauma event exhibits that

- Anything can happen, to anyone, anytime, anywhere.

It is important to rebuild the four assumptions above in order to help the individual find healing and to cope with life again.

- How has your world view lens changed?
- Is there a new story you are telling yourself?

Purpose of Normalising and Reassuring

- To reassure the victim that he/she is experiencing a normal reaction to an abnormal event– you prove it through citing the physiological reactions
- To assist the victim to accept and understand what happened to them
- To assist victim to realise that the symptoms will pass in time
- To show the victim that their reactions are normal and not going crazy

This process could take from 6 weeks to three months in extreme cases. Its important not to normalize the symptoms prematurely as you could block details of the event and leave the Trauma Survivor feeling dismissed.

C. STRUCTURED REACTION PHASE REFRAMING

Focus on and reframe psychological and physical effects that victim has described

- Start attributing symptoms to the specific sequence of events – Link emotions to specific events
- Explore perceived versus the real lapse of time
- Urge victims to discuss symptoms (emotional, cognitive & physical) that they experienced then or are experiencing right now

At the incident, after the incident, at home, at work etc

- Summarise victim's reactions – note similarities and differences
- Be on the look-out for self-blame.
- Explore ways of reframing the experience so as to
- Acknowledge difficult feelings (guilt, self-blame)
- Re-affirm coping mechanisms

Purpose of Reframing

- To reassure the victim that he/she responded as best they could under the circumstances

Work through the alternatives and explore consequences thereof

- To restore self-esteem through affirmation

Even though victim survived, there is still a legitimate reason to feel traumatised

- To address concerns about the effects on others involved in the incident
- If victim is feeling genuinely guilty...
- Do not attempt to take it away or minimise it – be prepared to listen
- Your acceptance & acknowledgment will help victim to deal with guilt

D. RE-ENTRY PHASE

Encouraging Mastery

- Allows for the discussion of future planning and coping
- Family and peer group support
- Get in touch with external support network
- Explore coping strategies, such as relaxation, deep breathing exercises, distraction techniques, and anger management
- Explore the meaning the victim attaches to the incident
- Clarify what they think they can do to overcome the situation
- Help them to re-interpret their behaviour and re-evaluate themselves
- Tough love is not appropriate for trauma incidents

Dealing with guilt –

- What was your intention?
-
-
- What was the actual result?
- If it was successful, it worked!
- Is your guilt still rational?

- Encourage them to talk about their experiences
- Explain the expected symptoms and what to look out for in future
- Suggest activities to help manage these symptoms
- Tell them who to call for assistance

Purpose of Mastery

- To restore the coping capacity of the victim
- To encourage connection with support systems, such as family, friends, church etc
- Determine if there was anything that victim has learnt about himself/herself from the experience that they didn't know before
- Reinforce all the positive aspects
- Religion is the most significant coping mechanism

THE IMPACT PHASE (24 to 36 Hours)

This phase is characterized by general chaos. It can last from a few seconds to 3 days. In this phase the victim appears emotionally numb, disorientated, confused, irrational and disorganized. The victim is in a state of shock and may not be entirely aware of the reality of what has happened to them. Some people show a lot of emotion and may scream or cry. Others may be completely calm and behave as though nothing has happened. The victim may seek assurance and direction. The victim is temporarily helpless in this phase and their low level of functioning can be compared to that of a young child.

Indicators:

- Actual event
- Physical reactions
- Survival instinct
- Fight or Flight
- Numbness (physical and emotional)
- Shock
- Adrenaline

How to help

- The intervention needs to be 'parental' – calming and reassuring.
- The Trauma Survivor needs to be in a safe environment with structure and support.
- Due to temporary helplessness the Trauma Survivor may need practical assistance.

What should you do?

- Allow the victim to tell their story, if they want to, but don't force them if they don't want to.
- Avoid all artificial stimulants and drugs; no smoking, drinking, alcohol or artificial chemicals – the body is still poisoned by adrenaline and must resume its natural processes.
- Options: Rescue remedy, Birol and / or Vitamin B injection.
- Discourage 'unorthodox' behaviour and responses.
- Encourage 'do-it-yourself' in order to claim back the power. b.

THE RECOIL PHASE (36 hours to 3 Months)

This is the best time for debriefing. It is much less chaotic and more controlled. In this phase the victim begins to realise the traumatic nature of their experience and will express some emotion (anger, sadness, guilt, etc). Most of the post-traumatic stress symptoms begin to develop during this phase and most victims want to talk about their experience. Referring to a counselling agency may be necessary. As the victim experiences intrusive ideas and very often relives the event, they may recall information that has been omitted from the police statement.

Indicators

- Shock
- Easing of impact reactions
- Emotional
- Less heightened than the actual event

How to help

- Nurture and comfort and support the victim
- Encourage the victim to resume daily activities to tolerable degrees
- Support with active listening (remember the victim's need to tell the story)
- Problem solving
- Coping mechanism

NB: SYMPTOMS SHOULD NOT CONTINUE BEYOND 90 DAYS OTHERWISE REFERRAL IS IMPERATIVE.

COMMON EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS POST TRAUMA INCLUDE:

- Shock
- Denial
- Anger
- Rage
- Anxiety
- Moodiness
- Sadness
- Sorrow
- Grief
- Depression
- Confusion
- Blame
- Shame
- Humiliation
- Guilt
- Grief
- Frustration
- Fear
- Terror
- Hyper-vigilance
- Paranoia
- Phobia
- Suicidal ideation
- Homicidal ideation
- Spontaneous crying
- Despair
- Hopelessness
- Panic Attacks
- Feeling out of control
- Emotionally Numb
- Feeling permanently damage
- Hostile

COMMON PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS POST TRAUMA INCLUDE:

- Restlessness
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating disturbances
- Muscle tremors
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Profuse sweating
- Heart palpitations
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea – expulsion of adrenaline
- Low Sex Drive
- Low energy levels
- Chronic unexplained pain

COMMON COGNITIVE & BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS

- Memory lapses, especially about the trauma
- Difficulty making decisions
- Decreased ability to concentrate
- Feeling distracted
- ADHD symptoms
- Withdrawal from normal routine & relationships
- Intrusive thoughts
- Flashback nightmares
- Amnesia
- Avoidance of places or people that remind you of the trauma
- Detachment from other
- Feeling on guard – jumpy
- Substance abuse
- Self-destructive or impulsive behaviour
- A loss of previously sustained beliefs
- Compulsive behaviour
- Feeling argumentative

HOW TO RESPOND IN A CHRIST LIKE WAY TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH TRAUMA AND OR ABUSE

LEARN FROM THE LORD: WALKING WITH VICTIMS

1. They must first **leave glory**.

Leaving must be chosen before entering can happen. Jesus left behind his position to enter into our space – he put on humanity. Leave what is comfortable – be willing to hear what is painful and hard.

2. They must “**become little**.”

Jesus became unlike himself – he reduced himself in size, power and words – for our sakes. He allowed himself to be taught by us to human. When you swoop in and take over you will add damage. Enter in to listen, observe, learn in small doses.

3. They must **enter darkness**.

Jesus entered into a dark space for us.. don't drag others into what you see – allow yourself to enter into what they see first. Go in and get them in order to get them out. You can't call them out. Listen till they are understood.

4. They must bear the **character of the Father**

Be full of Grace and Truth. Jesus brought truth with Him, he was full of grace and truth. Who he was explained who the father is. Those suffering need the character of God in flesh demonstrated in you. Sit with, greet them with the evidence of goodness. They need the goodness of God in you. They need to experience it in you in the flesh.

5. They must **not abandon** those in need.

Jesus felt overwhelmed but he never abandoned us – he stayed and waits. You may feel overwhelmed by your client and you will get weary and tired of the never ending crisis. Don't give up. (Remember victims cant abandon their suffering)

6. They must not **lose perspective** and allow their thinking to be distorted.

Jesus did not sin nor allowed it to affect him – he stayed light despite the darkness. If we get lost in the darkness how do we show them a way out. We need to learn persevere.

We need to learn to drink deeply from God to have what they need. There is HOPE. It takes courage, hard work as there is NO quick fix.