

“Don’t Get Trapped By Trauma” - Part 1 - Introduction

Helping you understand and recover from Post Traumatic Stress

If you’ve ever experienced flashbacks, severe emotional upset, or powerful memories that intrude unwanted when you least expect them, then you may be experiencing some typical after-effects of trauma. You might also find it hard to concentrate; your sleep may be disrupted by disturbing dreams; you jump at the slightest thing, feel overly stressed and even need to take time off work.

It can be a disconcerting, even frightening experience. One minute you’re coping, the next minute you’re not. As someone put it, “Last week I was handling complex situations, firing on all cylinders, making things happen; being effective. This week I can’t make a decision about the simplest thing This isn’t me. What’s happening? Will I ever get back to being me? How do I begin to make sense of it?”

It’s in the words, “How do I begin to make sense of it?” that lies the path to recovery: because if we have lost the ability to make sense of what’s happening, it’s through regaining that ability to understand and take action that we find our way through.

This series of five articles is designed to help you take that first step. It will help you understand more about the effects of trauma, how they might or might not be relevant to the difficulties you are experiencing and what you can do to help yourself get back on track.

It’s going to look at the process of trauma through to recovery in three steps:

1. what is meant by the term trauma, and what makes a traumatic event different from other upsetting events and experiences that we can generally bear, make sense of and move on from
2. what is happening in our brain when we experience trauma and how does it affect our emotions, behaviour and capacity to function
3. what we can do to restore our emotional balance and get back to living life more as we want to live it

The next article will look at the first of these steps and answer the question “What do we mean by trauma?”

The fifth and final article in this series will look at the specific consideration related to treating children and adolescents.