

Trauma

Trauma refers to one's response to a highly distressing, disturbing and/or stressful event. Some people who have experienced trauma may also suffer from post-traumatic stress or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). While there are different names, all traumatic stress includes both an emotional and body (physiological) reaction.

Trauma can impact people in different ways. A specific event may cause a trauma response in one person but not in another person (e.g. two people could be involved in a car accident, with only one of them experiencing psychological trauma symptoms afterwards).

There are also different types. Some trauma can happen in response to a single event (e.g. plane crash, physical or sexual assault, etc.) or an ongoing series of event (e.g. bullying, domestic violence, neglect or abuse). People can even develop trauma symptoms vicariously, meaning frequent, high-stress interactions with others who have experienced trauma (e.g. law enforcement, emergency room personnel, etc.).

Many symptoms can show up differently for different people, but can include unwanted memories, nightmares or recurrent thoughts; avoidance of triggers that may remind someone of the event, negative thoughts and feelings about self and others; increased reactivity or sensitivity (e.g. startled more easily) after the event.

No matter what happened that caused trauma, or when it happened, you don't have to be alone or suffer. Trauma, in all its forms, can be effectively treated by qualified mental health professionals. There are many resources and support available to those who have experienced trauma. If you would like support in dealing with trauma, make an appointment with Student Care or ask for our referral page to find more resources.