

# How to Manage Trauma

Trauma occurs when a person is overwhelmed by events or circumstances and responds with intense fear, horror, and helplessness. Extreme stress overwhelms the person's capacity to cope. There is a direct correlation between trauma and physical health conditions such as diabetes, COPD, heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure.

## TRAUMA CAN STEM FROM

Childhood abuse or neglect

Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse

War and other forms of violence

Accidents and natural disasters

Grief and loss

Witnessing acts of violence

Medical interventions

Cultural, intergenerational and historical trauma

TRAUMA

## HOW COMMON IS TRAUMA?

70% of adults in the U.S. have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives. That's **223.4 million people.**



In public behavioral health, **over 90%** of clients have experienced trauma.

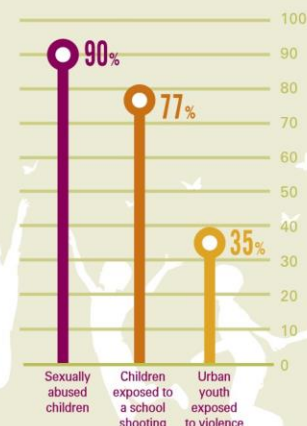
**Trauma is a risk factor** in nearly all behavioral health and substance use disorders.

In the United States, a woman is **beaten every 15 seconds**, a forcible rape occurs every 6 minutes.



More than **33% of youths** exposed to community violence will experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a very severe reaction to traumatic events.

Nearly all children who witness a parental homicide or sexual assault will develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Similarly, 90% of sexually abused children, 77% of children exposed to a school shooting, and 35% of urban youth exposed to violence develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.

*People can and do  
recover from trauma*



## SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA CHECKLIST

- Headaches, backaches, stomachaches, etc.
- Sudden sweating and/or heart palpitations
- Changes in sleep patterns, appetite, interest in sex
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Easily startled by noises or unexpected touch
- More susceptible to colds and illnesses
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs and/or overeating
- Fear, depression, anxiety
- Outbursts of anger or rage
- Emotional swings
- Nightmares and flashbacks — re-experiencing the trauma
- Tendency to isolate oneself or feelings of detachment
- Difficulty trusting and/or feelings of betrayal
- Self-blame, survivor guilt, or shame
- Diminished interest in everyday activities

## HOW TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

- Make your doctor aware that you have experienced trauma, past or recent
- Help them understand what is helpful to you during office visits, i.e., asking permission to do a procedure, staying as clothed as possible, explaining procedures thoroughly, or having a supporter stay in the room with you
- Ask for referrals to therapy and behavioral health support



## HELPFUL COPING STRATEGIES

- Acknowledge that you have been through traumatic events
- Connect with others, especially those who may have shared the stressful event or experienced other trauma
- Exercise — try jogging, aerobics, bicycling, or walking
- Relax — try yoga, stretching, massage, meditation, deep muscle relaxation, etc.
- Take up music, art, or other diversions
- Maintain balanced diet and sleep cycle
- Avoid over-using stimulants like caffeine, sugar, or nicotine
- Commit to something personally meaningful and important every day
- Write about your experience for yourself or to share with others

## ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT TREATMENTS

### TRADITIONAL TREATMENTS

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy  
Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy  
Talk Therapy  
Exposure Therapy  
Group Therapy

### ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

Energy Processing  
Hypnotherapy  
Neuro-Linguistic Programming  
Massage Therapy  
Pet or Equine Therapy  
Trauma and Recovery Peer Support Groups  
Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)



**NATIONAL COUNCIL**  
FOR COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE



For more information, interviews, and research on trauma check out the National Council's magazine edition on the topic

[www.TheNationalCouncil.org](http://www.TheNationalCouncil.org)