



A LOOK AT TRAUMA

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

- Trauma is a response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event
- It can be caused by a single event (e.g., accident, assault) or ongoing experiences (e.g., abuse, neglect, war).
- Symptoms can be emotional, physical, cognitive, or behavioral.
- Trauma can affect emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral functioning causing symptoms such as:
 - Anxiety, fear, panic
 - Fatigue and exhaustion
 - Sleep issues
 - Pain
 - Flashbacks
 - Difficulty concentration
 - Hypervigilance
 - Withdrawal
 - Self-destructive behavior
 - Appetite changes

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR TRAUMA SURVIVORS

1. Establish Safety

- Find or create a space where you feel physically and emotionally safe.
- Limit exposure to people, places, or media that are triggering.

2. Grounding Techniques

- Use your senses: 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.
- Practice deep breathing or mindfulness exercises.

3. Routine Helps

- Try to keep a regular sleep, meal, and activity schedule.
- Predictability can help reduce anxiety.

4. Gentle Movement

- Activities like walking, yoga, or stretching can help release built-up stress.
- Listen to your body's limits.

5. Limit Substance Use

- Drugs and alcohol may numb pain but often worsen symptoms long-term.

6. Talk to Someone

- Therapy with a trauma-informed professional can help.
- Support groups (in-person or online) may also be beneficial.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING SOMEONE WITH TRAUMA

1. Listen Without Judgment

- Let them share at their pace. Don't push for details.
- Avoid statements like "You should be over this" or "At least it's not worse."

2. Respect Their Triggers

- Ask what helps or harms. Respect boundaries around touch, space, or topics.

3. Be Consistent

- Reliability builds trust. Follow through on promises.

4. Don't Try to "Fix" It

- Healing is not a quick process. Support them rather than trying to solve the trauma.

5. Stay Calm and Grounded

- Your calm presence can help regulate their nervous system.

6. Encourage Professional Help

- Gently suggest therapy if they're open to it, but don't force it.

RESOURCES

- Peel Crisis line
<https://cmhapeeldufferin.ca/programs/24-7-crisis-support-peel/>
- Ontario Structured Psychotherapy
<https://www.ontariohealth.ca/getting-health-care/mental-health-addictions/depression-anxiety-ontario-structured-psychotherapy>
- Family Services of Peel
<https://fspeel.org/trauma-specific-services/>
- Toronto Rape Crisis Center
<https://trccmwar.ca/>
- Victim Services
<https://www.vspeel.org/>