

TRAUMA

TALK TO US

OFF
THE RECORD

WHAT IS TRAUMA AND ITS CAUSES?

Sometimes in life we may face very frightening situations which we can find very overwhelming and distressful. It may be a situation where something is directly happening to you or an incident you witness. For example, being physically harmed by someone or seeing a road traffic accident. When the feelings after an event continue to impact our thoughts and sensations, we call it trauma.

Trauma involves re-living an event long after it happened, as though it is still happening and could have a significant impact on your day-to-day life.

Trauma can be caused by a number of incidents including:

- Receiving bad or shocking news
- A near death experience
- A natural disaster such as flooding or fires
- Difficult experiences in early childhood
- Physical or sexual violence
- Witnessing a violent incident or assault
- Seeing someone die

Trauma varies from person to person therefore not everyone who experiences or witnesses these incidents are affected the same way.

I need to talk about my past or I'll go crazy

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM TRAUMATISED?

The feelings of distress may not occur right after the traumatic event. After the incident you may feel absolutely fine and it may take a while before you feel impacted by what you experienced or witnessed. It may take months or even years later before you develop any noticeable emotional and/or physical reactions.

SIGNS OF TRAUMA

- Sleeping difficulties
- Problems in concentration
- Nightmares connected to the trauma
- Intrusive thoughts
- Always being prepared for something negative to happen / feeling a tense and anxious dread (hyper vigilance)
- No longer feeling pleasure doing activities you used to enjoy
- Feeling low of energy and demotivated.
- Feeling that you are to blame for the traumatic incident.

WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

After you've experienced a traumatic situation, you can build coping strategies:

- Talk to a counsellor to help you process your trauma and make sense of the difficult experience.
- Learn some grounding techniques. Tell yourself that you are safe, name the items around you that you can see, hold an object that reminds you that you are present.
- Create your own self-care box which includes items that help you to ground yourself when you're feeling triggered.
- Write down your negative thoughts and feelings then tear it up.
- Listen to music or watch a TV show that puts you in a good mood.
- Try breathing techniques to help you feel calm. Download the Calm app for guided breathing exercises or you can watch a YouTube clip.
- If you're feeling overwhelmed with emotions and need someone to talk to, you can get in touch with 24/7 support services such as Samaritans (116 123) and Childline (0800 1111).