mindhealth FACT SHEET

TRAUMA & PTSD · NORMAL REACTIONS, REAL RECOVERY

Trauma & PTSD

A normal response to an abnormal event, and a path back from it.



Reliving
Memories, nightmares, flashbacks

Avoiding
Places, people, reminders

On guard
Jumpy, tense, easily startled

01 After a traumatic event

Distress after a frightening or overwhelming event is a normal reaction, not a weakness. For most people it eases over the following weeks. When it doesn't (when the memory keeps intruding and the body stays on alert), it may be post-traumatic stress.

02 Staying in your window

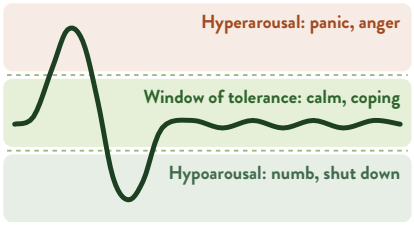
Trauma pushes the nervous system out of its "window of tolerance": into overwhelm, or into numb shutdown. Recovery rebuilds the ability to stay calm and present, so the memory can be processed rather than relived.

03 What genuinely helps

- Trauma-focused CBT to process the memory safely
- EMDR: eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing
- Skills to steady arousal and reconnect with the present
- Going at your pace: safety comes first, always

THE MODEL

The window of tolerance



Trauma tips us into overwhelm or shutdown. Therapy widens the middle band: calm, present, able to cope.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If symptoms last more than a month, or disrupt work, sleep or relationships, a psychologist trained in trauma can help. In crisis, call Lifeline 13 11 14 or 000.

A PRACTICAL STORY

From on guard to back in the present



PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

Grounding: 5-4-3-2-1

1. 5 things you can see, 4 you can feel
2. 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell
3. 1 you can taste

Brings you back to the present.

DID YOU KNOW?

Post-traumatic stress disorder became an official diagnosis in 1980, partly through the advocacy of Vietnam veterans.

DSM-III, 1980

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

Recovery isn't forgetting. It's the memory losing its grip on the present.

Need support right now? Lifeline **13 11 14** · Emergency **000** — available 24/7. More options: **mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help**

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

Parramatta and online, Australia-wide · **Book at mindhealth.com.au**

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MH-CR-203 · v32 · October 2026
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