

Coping with Trauma

Techniques for dealing with traumatic experiences

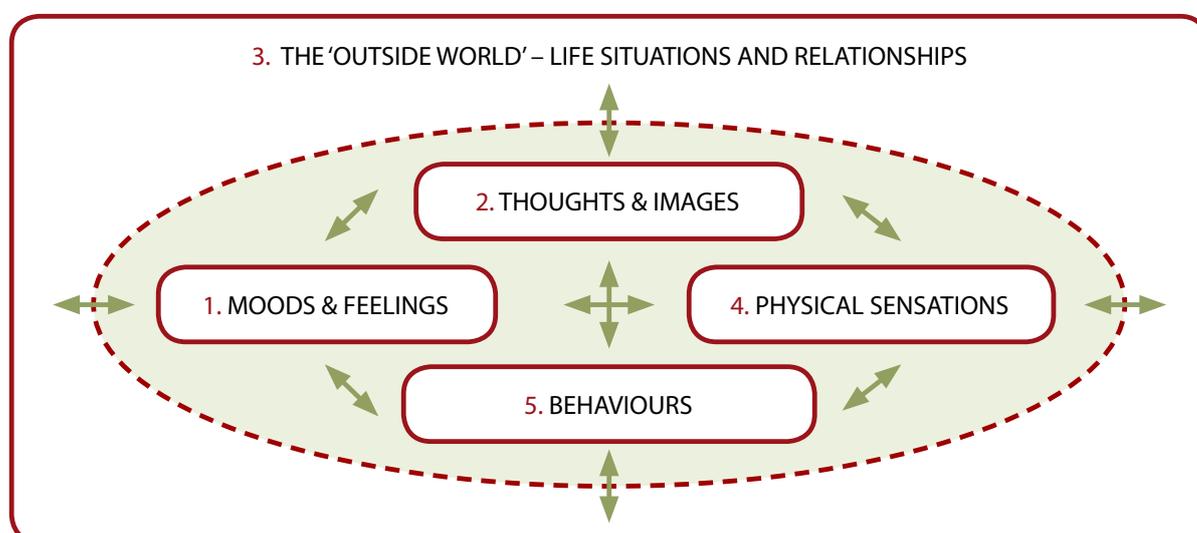
Coping with difficulties is part of everyday life and we develop ways of coping as a result of our own experiences. However, we may also experience traumatic events which are outside of the range of our ordinary experience. For example we may be a witness to, or directly involved in a car accident, a fire, a mugging or some other traumatic incident, or our job may bring us into contact with trauma such as being in the armed forces or the rescue services.

In recent years much has been learned about the effects of trauma. Trauma may affect not only those who are directly involved as survivors of a traumatic event, but also witnesses to the event, those involved in rescuing and helping and the families and friends of survivors. It is now acknowledged that there are a range of NORMAL reactions that occur in response to being involved in a traumatic incident. These reactions form part of a NORMAL response and are an attempt to make sense of an unusual and overwhelming event.

The aim of this leaflet is to give some information on the sorts of reactions that have been described by people who have experienced a traumatic event. You may have experienced such an event relatively recently or it may have occurred a long time ago. This leaflet may help to provide you with an understanding of some of your reactions and feelings and how to cope with them.

You can talk through this leaflet with your guide to help you decide if you are affected by symptoms of trauma. People affected by severe symptoms or for a long period of time are often said to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but even if your symptoms are severe you might still benefit from the information in this leaflet and from the help and support of your guide.

People who have experienced traumatic events report a whole range of different reactions. These can be in any of the "Five Area's" that you have learnt about in other leaflets – ask your guide if you haven't yet had the leaflets telling you about the "Five Area's". A "Five Area's" diagram illustrating some of the ways that trauma can affect you is shown below:



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