



**Ways to  
Understand  
& Overcome  
Trauma**

AN INTRODUCTION

# You are not alone.

Trauma affects us all in some way. It happens when we have been exposed to a distressing event or when we feel our safety, or the safety of a loved one, is threatened. But there is good news – we have the ability to understand and overcome the trauma around us. It's why we wrote this simple guide to get you started on your healing journey.

DID YOU KNOW?

# 70%

of adults experience at least one traumatic event in their lifetime

<https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/mental-health/ptsd/related/ptsd-statistics/#:~:text=70%20percent%20of%20adults%20experience,PTSD%20in%20a%20given%20year>



Start Reading

Healing  Within  
TRAUMA HEALING PROGRAM

# 1

**Trauma is anything that we perceive as a threat to our safety and well-being.**

**Trauma is a life event that has created an overwhelming response in our mind, body, and spirit.**

Common types of traumatic events include exposure to: physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; serving in the military; being in a relationship with an addict; the death of a loved one; divorce; the absence of a close, bonded relationship with a primary caregiver; a natural disaster; surgery; mental or chronic physical illness; frequent moves as a child; and, the list goes on. Because trauma looks different for everyone, our approach to healing trauma is highly individualized, even when provided in a group setting.

**When trauma happens, it is stored in a part of the brain that is unable to put words and feelings with the experience and make sense of it.**

Because this happens, many people have difficulty identifying how they think and feel about the experience. Unable to verbalize the experience, hiding it or ignoring the trauma creates a vessel of pain that eventually erupts. This pain feels overwhelming. Individuals know that they do not like the way they feel and the body will do anything to stop that overwhelming feeling.

# 2

## Unprocessed trauma can have lingering effects on the mind and body.

### It may surface as:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Feelings of anger/betrayal
- Mistrust
- Sleep disturbances
- Fear of intimacy
- Mood swings
- Isolation or withdrawal
- High-risk behaviors
- Needing to be in control
- Hypervigilance
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Boundary Issues
- Difficulty expressing feelings
- Physical tension or pain
- Dissociation (spacing out)
- Panic Attacks
- Other physical symptoms

**If the core issues of trauma are not addressed, individuals will continue to live with these effects and move into maladaptive ways of coping.**

When individuals do not share or receive support, they will take actions to self-medicate and numb to manage the emotional pain. They will seek a substance, a person, or an activity that will bring quick and reliable relief.

**Some individuals turn to alcohol, sex, spending, drugs, relationships, eating or restricting, pornography, gambling, dissociating** (going to another place psychically) or video gaming to name a few.

# 3

## The support of friends and family is vital for those who have experienced trauma.

**It is common for people who have experienced trauma to want avoid it.**

Most people want to avoid thinking about the trauma altogether and going to places that would remind them of it.

**You can use these tips from the MHFA curriculum to support those around you who might be struggling<sup>1</sup>:**

### **SUPPORT**

Encourage the person to talk about his or her reactions only if they feel ready. If the person wants to talk, listen in a respectful and nonjudgmental way and avoid saying anything that might trivialize the person's feelings, such as "don't cry," or "calm down."

### **HELP**

Help the person identify sources of support, including loved ones, friends, and professional resources.

### **ENCOURAGE**

Encourage the person to get plenty of rest, and to do things that feel good (such as take baths, read, exercise, or watch television). Encourage them to think about coping strategies they have successfully used in the past and to spend time where they feel safe and comfortable.

### **RESPECT**

Respect the person's need to be alone at times.

# Take the Next Step in Your Healing Journey

Healing Within utilizes an integrated system of treating trauma's effects on both the mind and the body. This bridges the gap between verbal psychotherapies and body-oriented psychotherapies.

The Healing Within program will help you understand the effects of trauma on your life, create meaning out of your journey, and acquire education and tools to overcome it.

In addition to the practice of reconnecting with others in our healing retreat atmosphere, we create the environment where not only healing happens, but where you can transform into the version of yourself that you both want and need in this part of your journey.

Get Started Now 