

What is trauma?

When something very distressing happens to us, our brain and body prepare to protect us. Sometimes this protection system remains on all of the time which can affect our health and wellbeing. It can be helpful to understand how our brain and body work so that we understand some of the symptoms we may be experiencing and can develop strategies to begin to heal.



- ❖ Trauma is an experience that is very distressing, threatening and overwhelming.
- ❖ Many people at NSC have experienced trauma.

- ❖ When we experience something very distressing, our brains and bodies immediately try to protect us.
- ❖ When we experience distress, there is a part of our brain that tells our body that we need to stay alert and escape. If we can't escape, our brains may tell our bodies to shut down or go numb.
- ❖ Other parts of our brain turn off like the part of our brain that makes decisions and organizes thoughts and memories.



- ❖ If we have experienced a very distressing event, we witness another person experiencing a distressing event or we hear about a close family member or friend experiencing a distressing event, this protection system can activate, and sometimes the system may get stuck.

- ❖ When this happens, even when the distressing event is over, we might feel frightened easily, have many body pains, have nightmares or not be able to sleep, or we may not be able to stop thinking about what happened or feel like the stressful event is happening again. Sometimes we may even not be able to feel anything like we are numb.



Jumpiness



Pain



Can't sleep/ Nightmares



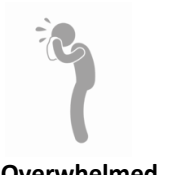
Forgetfulness



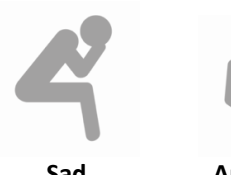
Thinking Too Much



Exhausted



Overwhelmed



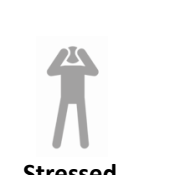
Sad



Angry



Lonely



Stressed

- ❖ Because it takes a lot of energy to be stuck in this protective state, our bodies can sometimes get very tired, and we might feel exhausted, overwhelmed, or very sad or even angry.
- ❖ At NSC, we see many people that have experienced many difficult things in their lives. Many have difficulty sleeping, have many body pains, have difficulty concentrating or remembering things or can't stop thinking about their experiences. These are all normal responses to experiencing very distressing events.

What helps people that have experienced trauma?

- ❖ There are many things that have been helpful for people who are healing from trauma.
- ❖ Everyone is different, so we can try different thing to see if they work for us.
- ❖ Here are some things that other people have said have helped them heal:



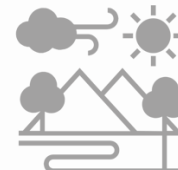
Exercise



Prayer



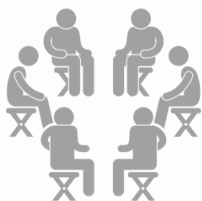
Community



Being in nature



Therapy



Support Groups



Listening to music



Drumming



Meditation



Yoga



Massage



Acupuncture



Volunteering



Cooking



Dancing



Sleep Hygiene



Breathing



Gardening

What types of activities have helped you feel better in the past?