



Helping Hands



Emotional and Psychological Trauma

(excerpts from HelpGuide.org, "Emotional and Psychological Trauma, Symptoms, Treatment and Recovery")

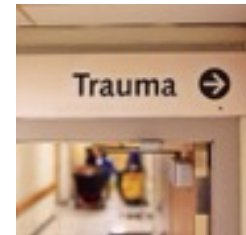
Emotional and psychological trauma is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless and vulnerable in a dangerous world.

Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety, but any situation that leaves you feeling overwhelmed and alone can be traumatic, even if it doesn't involve physical harm. It's not the objective facts that determine whether an event is traumatic, but your subjective emotional experience of the event. The more frightened and helpless you feel, the more likely you are to be traumatized.

Causes of emotional or psychological trauma

An event will most likely lead to emotional or psychological trauma if:

- It happened unexpectedly.
- You were unprepared for it.
- You felt powerless to prevent it.
- It happened repeatedly.
- Someone was intentionally cruel.
- It happened in childhood.



Emotional and psychological trauma can be caused by single-blow, one-time events, such as a horrible accident, a natural disaster, or a violent attack. Trauma can also stem from ongoing, relentless stress, such as living in a crime-ridden neighborhood or struggling with cancer.

Commonly overlooked causes of emotional and psychological trauma

- Falls or sports injuries
- Surgery (especially in the first 3 years of life)
- The sudden death of someone close
- A car accident
- The breakup of a significant relationship
- A humiliating or deeply disappointing experience
- The discovery of a life-threatening illness or disabling condition

Emotional and psychological symptoms of trauma:

- Shock, denial, or disbelief
- Anger, irritability, mood swings
- Guilt, shame, self-blame
- Feeling sad or hopeless
- Confusion, difficulty concentrating
- Anxiety and fear
- Withdrawing from others
- Feeling disconnected or numb

Physical symptoms of trauma:

- Insomnia or nightmares
- Being startled easily
- Racing heartbeat
- Aches and pains
- Fatigue
- Edginess and agitation



Processing Trauma

Grieving is normal following trauma

Whether or not a traumatic event involves death, survivors must cope with the loss, of their sense of safety and security. The natural reaction to this loss is grief. Like people who have lost a loved one, trauma survivors go through a grieving process. This process, while inherently painful, is easier if you turn to others for support, take care of yourself, and talk about how you feel.

When to seek professional help for emotional or psychological trauma

Recovering from a traumatic event takes time, and everyone heals at his or her own pace. But if months have passed and your symptoms aren't letting up, you may need professional help from a trauma expert.

Seek help for emotional or psychological trauma if you're:

- Having trouble functioning at home or work
- Suffering from severe fear, anxiety, or depression
- Unable to form close, satisfying relationships
- Experiencing terrifying memories, nightmares, or flashbacks
- Avoiding more and more things that remind you of the trauma
- Emotionally numb and disconnected from others
- Using alcohol or drugs to feel better



IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program are your local lodge EAP peer coordinators. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations. They are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you are experiencing. Your IAM EAP resource is listed below. Please call the representative listed here for help with troubling issues.

CLE IAM EAP Coordinator

Patty Levstik

E-Mail: pattylevstik@gmail.com

IAM EAP Midwest Region Representative:

Mark Sanderson

(773)-601-5081 E-Mail: msandersoneap@gmail.com

Trauma Self-help Strategies:

- 1) Don't Isolate
- 2) Stay Grounded
- 3) Take Care of Yourself and Your Health

Finding a trauma specialist



Working through trauma can be scary, painful, and potentially retraumatizing. Because of the risk of

retraumatization, this healing work is best done with the help of an experienced trauma specialist. Finding the right therapist may take some time. It's very important that the therapist you choose has experience treating trauma. The quality of the relationship with your therapist is equally important.

The IAM EAP regional and peer representatives can help you find a resource that will address your specific needs and circumstances. The information located in the box on this page has the names and numbers of your IAM EAP representatives. The call is free and confidential.