PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

Understanding the emotional and physical response to overwhelming events

M2M RECOVERY PROJECT
PEOPLE | PURPOSE | A STRONGER TOMORROW

WHAT IT IS

Psychological trauma is an emotional and physiological response to a severely distressing or threatening event that overwhelms a person's ability to cope.

TRAUMA IS SHAPED BY THE EVENT AND THE PERSON'S EXPERIENCE OF IT

EVENT
Threat, injury, abuse, sexual violence, or another overwhelming experience

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MEANING
The person experiences danger to self or to someone they love

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RESPONSE
Mind and body mobilize to survive, protect, or regain safety

People can react very differently to similar events.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES

IMMEDIATE

- Psychological shock
- Denial or numbness
- Intense distress
- Heightened stress response

ONGOING

- Flashbacks or nightmares
- Panic or sleep problems
- Relationship difficulties
- Posttraumatic stress symptoms

PHYSICAL

- Headaches or migraines
- Rapid breathing
- Excessive sweating
- Nausea or body distress

A NOTE ABOUT INDIRECT EXPOSURE

Witnessing disturbing events through news or media can trigger intense and involuntary stress. The distress is real, even when the exposure differs from directly experiencing the event.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS CAN SUPPORT RECOVERY

RESILIENCE
Existing coping strengths

ENVIRONMENT
Safety and steady support

CONNECTION
Trusted relationships

SEEKING HELP
Willingness to reach out