



Attachment and Trauma Treatment Centre for Healing (ATTCH)

*Healing life's hurts through awareness,
compassion, & self-care*

Trauma: What it is, What it looks like, and How to help:

Trauma can occur as a result of experiencing, witnessing, or secondary to another person's trauma experience. These experiences can be the result of many things, (abuse, loss, exposure to domestic violence, separation and divorce) and are experienced differently by each person. The key feature of trauma is terror, the primary goal of trauma therapy is to establish a sense of safety to reduce the incidence and intensity of trauma symptoms.

Common symptoms of trauma may include:

- A sense of terror, loss of control, and numbing or detachment.
- Intrusive thoughts, images, or dreams.
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering information.
- Intense Reactivity.
- Changes in mood (anxious or agitated, excessive fearfulness or lack of fear, withdrawn).
- Inability to talk about what happened or inability to stop talking about what happened.
- Difficulty sleeping, fearful of sleeping alone or being left alone, even for short periods of time.
- Easily startled (terrorized) by sounds, sights, smells similar to those that existed at the time of the event.
- Hypervigilance watching out for and anticipating that you are about to be or are in danger.
- Headaches, stomach problems, fatigue, and other ailments not previously present.

Helping to reduce the impact of trauma:

- Compassion and Safety – trauma is like no other experience and may evoke behaviours and feelings uncharacteristic to you. This is not uncommon or within your control; your body and mind is doing the best it can to survive and needs a sense of safety more than anything. Once this has been established, cognitive restructuring becomes possible.
- Empowering and Normalizing - this can be confusing and overwhelming experience. It is important to know about the common symptoms of trauma, how trauma impacts the mind, body, and behaviour and that these responses are normal, but can be treated.
- Affection and Connection - Provide yourself with lots of love, affection, and connection. Feeling alone is common to people who have experienced trauma. Take extra care to soothe yourself through sensory activities that are calming and by engaging in healthy and positive connections with others.
- Supportive and Structured Care - Structure and predictability will help provide a sense of safety. Understand that your emotions and behaviours may be intense at times. In this time, practice compassion for yourself, understanding that you have been through something incredibly difficult and you need to regain a sense of security and stability.

Readings:

Dr. Gabor Mate, When the Body Says No - a book examining the impact of trauma on physiological, emotional, and psychological health

Dr. Gabor Mate In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts - A book on trauma and addictions

Peter Levine, Walking the Tiger: Healing Trauma – A powerful resource for understanding and healing trauma

Counselling:

Engaging in counselling with a qualified trauma specialist will allow you to work through and have a greater sense of control over your trauma experience, restoring empowerment and safety to mind and body. When selecting a counsellor for trauma treatment it is important to determine whether they are trained in trauma intervention. TLC maintains a directory of certified trauma specialists, which can be accessed by calling: 1-877-306-5256

Quality trauma and attachment assessment, treatment, & evidence-based training

Email: reception@attch.org

Website: www.attch.org

Phone: (905) 262-0303

P.O. Box 10, St. David's Ontario L0S 1P0