## BACK TO SCHOOL: Understanding Trauma

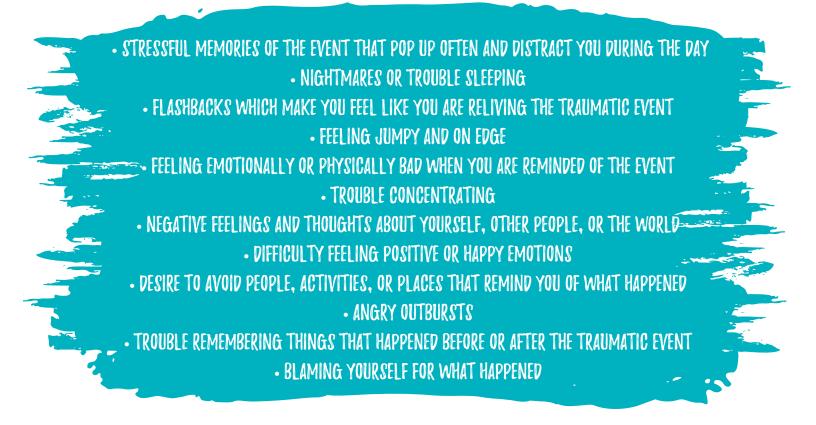
Trauma occurs when something bad happens that makes you feel unsafe and scared. And because this experience was a big deal, it has an ongoing impact on your life.

Lots of different kinds of events can cause trauma. Some common examples are:

BEING BULLIED SEEING SOMETHING VIOLENT BEING ABUSED NOT FEELING SAFE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD **LOSING A LOVED ONE** NOT FEELING SAFE IN YOUR HOME LIVING THROUGH A DISASTER LIKE A BAD ACCIDENT, FIRE, OR HURRICANE BEING EXPOSED TO SOMETHING BAD THAT HAPPENED TO A LOVED ONE

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Your brain can be put under a lot of stress if you are experiencing trauma over a long period of time or dealing with an extreme event. When this happens, it's possible to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. If you have some of the symptoms below, you might be dealing with PTSD.<sup>1</sup>



## What Next?

Trauma is hard for the mind and body and you may not feel "normal" for a little while. To reverse the effects of trauma and PTSD, you have to teach your mind and body how to feel safe again. Learning how to feel safe again is best done with support. Some things that might help include: talking about what happened, being in tune with your body's reactions to stress, changing upsetting and untrue thoughts that are in your head because of the trauma, or finding ways to help you sleep. If you find you can't quiet your mind, try using MHA's "Keep Your Mind Grounded" worksheet. If you need help starting a conversation, visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net/timetotalk for tips on how to get started.

Traumatic events can also cause people to start having symptoms of anxiety, depression, or psychosis for the first time in their lives.



If you or someone you know is struggling, it is important to reach out for help as soon as possible. There are doctors and counselors who have special training to help people who have been through traumatic events, and the sooner you get help, the more likely you are to get better.

TRAINED CRISIS COUNSELORS ARE AVAILABLE 24/7 BY TEXTING "MHA" TO 741-741 OR CALLING 1-800-273-TALK(8255).

YOU CAN ALSO DOWNLOAD THE NOTOK APP ON GOOGLE PLAY OR THE APP STORE. THE NOTOK APP ALLOWS YOU TO IDENTIFY UP TO 5 PEOPLE WHO WILL RECEIVE A NOTIFICATION WHEN YOU PRESS A BUTTON INDICATING THAT YOU'RE NOT OK.

Sources

<sup>1</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.*). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.



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