



Trauma and the Brain Wellness Workshop

Trauma Defined: “Trauma is any past experience that one perceives as negative and that negatively impacts your present life. It creates extreme stress in the body and mind. Traumas can be perceived as horrific, helpless to prevent, and threatening to either your survival or the survival of others ... or it can be when something happens to you large or small, that leaves you feeling distress and you are unable to process it” (Maiberger, 2008-2021).

Trauma Signs & Symptoms

- Negative alterations in cognitions and mood
- Symptoms of irritability and outbursts of anger
- Re-experiencing of the traumatic event - flashbacks
- Self-destructive behavior
- Hypervigilance
- Under-arousal: frozen, non-expressive, dissociation
- Exaggerated alarm response
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble falling asleep or staying awake (Maiberger, 2008-2021)

Quick Coping Tips/Strategies

For Hyper-arousal: over-activated, shortness of breath, racing mind/heart rate, intense emotions

- Grounding – using your 5 senses, “I’m aware of _____” (looking around you and naming the things of which you are aware)
- Slow deep belly breathing
- Exercise & Engaging muscles
 - pushing against a wall
 - progressive muscle relaxation
 - Planks, pushups, weights
 - Running, yoga, tai chi

For Hypo-arousal: under-activated, sleepy, sluggish, checked out, dissociative

- Grounding – using your 5 senses, “I’m aware of _____” (looking around you and naming the things of which you are aware)
- Walking, marching, stamping feet
- Faster shallow chest breathing
- Ice cubes to hold, cold water/sparkling water to drink
- Engaging muscles, compressing joints
 - Pushing against wall, planks, pushups, weight lifting

