

DEFENCE ACADEMY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TRAUMA RISK MANAGEMENT (TRIM)

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS

Things you need to know

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Soldiers Airmen/Women and Sailors are often exposed to trauma. This exposure can sometimes cause you to experience unusually strong emotional reactions.

Post event you may experience some strong emotional or physical reactions. It is very common and **quite normal** for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they passed through traumatic events. The signs and symptoms of stress reaction may last days, weeks, months or occasionally longer.

With understanding and support from your comrades and families, these reactions will usually pass more quickly. Occasionally the traumatic event can be so painful that extra help may be needed. This does not imply weakness; it simply means that the event was too powerful for the person to manage alone. Here are some common signs of stress reaction:

REACTIONS TO TRAUMA

Sadness
Guilt
Anger
Fear
Shame
Despair
Echoes (previous incident)

You may experience physical symptoms such as:

Palpitations
Nausea
Fatigue
Chest pain **
Rapid heart rate
Difficulty breathing **

Stress can lead to intrusive thoughts and changes in behaviour:

** indicates the need for medical evaluation

WATCH OUT FOR

Emotional outbursts
Sleeplessness
Agitation
Irritability
Apprehension
Poor concentration
Memory problems
Nightmares
Flashbacks
Increase in alcohol consumption

These can lead to fear, uncertainty and depression.

Whilst you may experience a small number of these or similar symptoms, you will recover given time and support.

If the symptoms worsen or persist you should seek help. Take the advice from this leaflet; this will help you to cope. Above all talk about your feelings, this is key to processing your experience.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

After trauma you can be raw and your defences can be low.

DO:

Talk about it, as early as possible with a trusted friend, partner or colleague. Talking is key.
Express your emotions to someone, or write them down
Take time for family and friends.
Be careful, you are more likely to have accidents.
Sleep and eat well, take exercise.
Keep routines.
Take time to reflect.
Ask for help and support.

And Don't:

Isolate yourself
Bottle up feelings
Avoid talking about it
Expect to forget quickly
Use alcohol or drugs to numb feelings

FOR COLLEAGUES, FRIENDS AND FAMILY

If someone has experienced trauma:

Let them talk
Listen carefully
Offer support
Give them private time
Don't criticise
Avoid platitudes
Be patient

WHO TO CONTACT

Padre: Revered (Padre) Stephen Hancock - Tel: 07977479866.

Welfare Team: Major Ed Bell or WOII Hadrick – Tel: 07825674635

Med Centre – Tel Nos 01793 785552

If you have difficulty in finding any of the above then inform your chain of command.

We cannot control our destiny. However in the aftermath of traumatic episodes and events, by employing proactive and strong attitudes to those events, we are generally able to shape our destiny to ensure a more positive outcome.