

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA!

There are wounds that never show on the body that are deeper and more hurtful than anything that bleeds." ... Laurell K. Hamilton

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Trauma is a high intensity, often short lived event, that causes damage to one's psyche
- ❖ Traumatic events: often happen suddenly and unexpectedly, when you are unprepared, when you are powerless to prevent it, when someone is intentionally cruel or threatening
- ❖ Emotions after a trauma are often normal reactions to abnormal events
- ❖ Trauma is the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds a person's ability to cope with or emotionally process the event
- ❖ Trauma can be one event or it can be repeating events
- ❖ Trauma shakes up our ability to manage our lives, our safety, and our ability to trust
- ❖ Secondary traumatization, or compassion fatigue or burnout, often effects first responders or others who help trauma victims
- ❖ Often the experience of being traumatized can be delayed by weeks, months, or years
- ❖ Sufferers of trauma include those who were victimized and those who have observed it
- ❖ Those who have been traumatized often develop patterns of living that include addictive behaviors which are attempts to avoid the feelings and memories of the trauma
- ❖ Common traumatic events that involve physical or emotional damage include: harassment, verbal, physical or sexual abuse and neglect, bullying, criminal activities, domestic violence, death, medical conditions, abandonment, war, earthquakes and hurricanes, terrorism, discrimination, accidents, relationship breakups, sports injuries
- ❖ Triggers and cues can cause a person to re-experience the trauma and can produce extreme anxiety, intense anger, withdrawal, insomnia and dissociation or numbing
- ❖ Psychological symptoms after a traumatic event often include intrusive thoughts, worry, trouble focusing, difficulty sleeping, difficulty eating, crying, blame, fear, and anger
- ❖ Physical symptoms after at trauma can include nausea, stomachaches, diarrhea, dizziness, rapid heartbeat, lightheadedness, feeling sick, and rashes
- ❖ Cognitive symptoms include memory lapses, indecisiveness, difficulties in concentrations, feeling distracted, and difficulty paying attention
- ❖ Intense traumatic symptoms tend to lessen within 2 weeks and often disappear in 4 to 6 weeks with many people feeling better in 3 months although others can recover slowly
- ❖ Survivors of trauma often adjust to the challenges, integrate the event into their lives, and rebuild their lives with a new perspective on reality
- ❖ Treatment approaches to trauma include Debriefings, Cognitive Behavior Therapy. Eye Movement Desensitization/Reprocessing (EMDR), and Systematic Desensitization

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Help loved ones by being patient and understanding, not taking trauma symptoms personally, encourage them to relax and be around others, listen when they want to talk
- ❖ If traumatized, take one day at a time, eat a balanced diet, drink water, and do not use or abuse alcohol or drugs
- ❖ Try to get enough rest, take care of your daily hygiene, and exercise
- ❖ Keep to a daily routine and find activities that make you feel better
- ❖ Do not isolate; join a support group or talk to others who have been through traumas
- ❖ Learn and use stress reduction and coping strategies
- ❖ Seek professional help if you are not able to overcome the effects of a trauma

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [**DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com**](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

Joel I. Kimmel, Ph.D. P.A. and Associates
5571 N University Drive, Suite 101
Coral Springs FL 33067