

Types of Trauma

“Big T” Trauma

Major events normally seen as traumatic. Emotions, beliefs and physical sensations occur in both the mind and body. *May cause PTSD in some people but not all

Examples:

- Serious accidents
- Natural disasters
- Robbery, rape and urban violence
- Major surgeries, life threatening illness
- Chronic or repetitive experiences, e.g., child abuse & neglect
- War, combat, concentration camps

“Small t” Trauma

Overwhelming but not often seen as traumatic. Emotions, beliefs, and physical sensations occur in both the mind and body.

- Unprocessed traumas have a long-lasting, negative effect
- Can cause concentration, self-esteem & emotional regulation difficulties
- Stunts and colors later perceptions
- Often no intrusive imagery
- Most common in neglected/abused children
- Become part of a negative spiral when a “Big T” trauma occurs
- Sometimes referred to as “complex trauma”

Trauma is any event beyond a person’s ability to master it at the time.

- A person may withstand a big T trauma but be so weakened that it is a small t trauma that finally causes their coping abilities to collapse.
- Naming “small t” experiences as traumatic, and validating them, aids recovery.
- This content originally came from a website that is no longer active: www.dissociative-identity-disorder.net/wiki/Trauma