

## What's the difference between experiencing trauma and having post traumatic stress disorder?

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation, a natural emotional response to a deeply shocking and disturbing experience.

**Not everybody who is exposed to a devastating event or trauma will develop full PTSD, though many will have some of the symptoms initially.**

PTSD used to only be diagnosed where a person endured a life threatening event. However, it is increasingly recognised that **trauma can result from events which threaten psychological, in addition to physical, integrity.**

In particular, it is understood that repeated or adverse events (such as neglect or abuse) in childhood can cause complex trauma.

PTSD is also more common in emergency services staff who witness repeated traumatic events. There is evidence that **post traumatic stress disorder alters**

**brain structure, as well as body chemistry.** It is a psychological **injury**, rather than a mental health problem, though people who have suffered trauma are more likely to have concurrent mental and emotional health issues, such as depression, anxiety, substance misuse problems or dissociative disorder.

**An estimated 7.8% of Americans will experience PTSD at some point in their lives with women twice as likely to develop it. 31% of people who have spent time in war zones develop it.**

Factors which increase the risk of developing PTSD are:

**Nature of event** - more 'serious' event, unpredictable or uncontrollable event, manmade disaster, sexual victimisation, feelings of responsibility, and betrayal (i.e., abused by a relative, or let down by the authorities)

**Personal vulnerability factors** – genetics, young age at the time, sustained trauma, lack of social support, attachment issues, other stressful events

**Greater perceived threat** or danger, suffering, upset, terror, horror or fear

**Social environment** producing shame, guilt, stigmatisation or self hatred, for example, a soldier who killed people in an unpopular war.

## Symptoms of PTSD

There are three components to PTSD symptoms:

### **Intrusive symptoms – reliving the experience**

Flashbacks – re-experiencing rather than just remembering the experience

Intense distress at real or symbolic reminders of the trauma

Intrusive thoughts and images

Nightmares

### **Avoidant symptoms – avoiding reminders of events; numbing**

Avoiding situations which remind you of the trauma

Being unable to express affection

Feeling detached, cut off and emotionally numb

Keeping excessively busy

Repressing memories (unable to remember aspects of the event)

Sense of a foreshortened future – seeing no point in planning ahead

### **Hyperarousal – a constant state of hypervigilance**

Being easily startled

Disturbed sleep

Extreme alertness

Irritability; aggressive behaviour

Lack of concentration.

## How can hypnotherapy help with trauma?

**Hypnotherapy** is invaluable for reducing associated distress, promoting relaxation and the ability to self soothe through relaxation, increasing insight into, and managing triggers, and building confidence and self esteem. Cognitive behavioural techniques are often incorporated into sessions, which are helpful in enabling people to rationalise what happened, to have a more positive and realistic view of their future safety and enhance their sense of control.

## How can EMDR help?

EMDR is a specialist trauma therapy and is recommended by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence for the treatment of PTSD. It is quicker, and just as effective as cognitive behavioural therapy for treating PTSD. EMDR enables people to effectively process traumatic events and memories, and the negative feelings associated with them, in a safe, controlled way, reducing the emotional charge of the event, and replacing negative thoughts, memories and feelings with more positive, adaptive thoughts and feelings.

## Why choose to work with Mindscape Therapies?

My name is Kate Mortimer, and I run Mindscape Therapies. **An experienced, well qualified clinician, I work with a wide range of issues,** specialising in emotional wellbeing, mental health and trauma issues. I have advanced training in EMDR, enabling me to work with complex trauma. I have facilitated skills and therapeutic groups and worked 1:1 with clients since 1999.

**I work from a humanistic, client centred perspective, valuing and respecting you, your experiences and your choices.**

I work to NCH, LAPHP & BAOT Codes of Ethics, and am totally committed to providing a holistic, confidential, ethical and professional service.

**I am a dedicated, dynamic therapist, and am passionate about supporting people to achieve their goals and dreams.**

Please contact me for a **free** consultation, information or advice.

Sessions from £45 per 50 minutes.

**07810 510170**

**Kate Mortimer**

**(BA, BSc, MA, DipCAH, HPC reg, HPD, PNL, MNCH, LAPHP, MNGH, Advanced EMDR).**

**[www.mindsapetherapies.co.uk](http://www.mindsapetherapies.co.uk)**

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# TRAUMA and POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

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