



It's Up to Us to Create a Healthy and Supportive San Diego

Shine a Light On: Understanding Trauma and Mental Health

You may have heard the word “trauma” before, but what does it mean? Trauma is when you experience something frightening, life-threatening, or harmful. This includes events where your safety, security, trust, or sense of self were threatened or violated. It could be one single event or an ongoing bad situation. These experiences can stick with you and affect your mental health long after they're over.

Trauma can also be something that a whole group of people experiences together. For example, racism or discrimination can be types of trauma that can hurt people's well-being in similarly deep and lasting ways.

Trauma can affect your mind and body in different ways, including:

- ☹️ Feeling numb
- ☹️ Getting annoyed easily
- ☹️ Feeling anxious or sad
- ☹️ Having a hard time trusting people
- ☹️ Getting headaches or feeling exhausted

Connecting with your support network or seeking professional help as soon as you notice something feels wrong or different is the first step to feeling better.

You *Can* Feel Better

Many people are affected by trauma and don't even know it. Without support, trauma can make it very hard to feel calm, safe, or hopeful.

But with the right help from family, friends, health professionals or counselors, it's possible to heal wounds from trauma and strengthen your mental health.

Read Up: How to Find Support



Friends, family, and community spaces can be part of the healing process.

- **Reach out for connection.** Sharing what you're going through with someone can help you feel less alone.
- **Find what works for you.** There are many different ways to heal from trauma: group meetings, meditation, doing something physical, and more. Whatever you find should help you feel grounded and supported.



If you want professional support, it's important that it feels right for you.

- **Look for the words “trauma-informed care.”** This means your provider knows how past experiences can affect your life now.
- **Ask questions.** Most providers expect questions, and you have a right to ask. If you ever feel misunderstood or unheard, it's okay to look for something else that might be a better fit for you.

Common Questions About Trauma



How do I know if trauma is affecting my mental health?

You might notice changes in your mood, sleep, or energy. You may replay painful memories or avoid reminders of them. If these impact you for more than three weeks, consider getting support.

What if I don't want to talk about my trauma right away?

That's okay. You can start with small steps, like learning relaxation techniques, journaling, or connecting with others. You can open up more when you're ready.

Does insurance cover therapy for trauma?

Yes, most insurance plans, including Medi-Cal, will help pay for therapy for conditions related to trauma. To be sure, call your insurance company or the therapist's office to ask what's covered.

Sources

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