

TRAUMA

Where to go when you're looking for help

Anyone who has experienced trauma will know that it can be very emotionally painful, and can elicit feelings of terror, shame, helplessness and powerlessness.

What is trauma?

Here are some features of traumatic events:

- They are usually severe, sudden or unexpected, and outside normal or typical experience.
- They can involve a single event, or be long term or chronic (e.g., ongoing childhood sexual, growing up in a violent environment).
- They can be recent or further in the past.
- They can be man-made disasters (e.g., car accident, building fire); natural disasters (e.g., flood, earthquake); or they can involve violence, criminal activity or terror (e.g., assault, war).
- People can experience them directly or witness them.

The most common traumatic events include:

- physical or verbal assault, or being threatened by this kind of assault
- sexual assault, including childhood sexual abuse
- witnessing violence against others
- long-term neglect in childhood.

What is the impact of trauma?

People respond to trauma in different ways. The same event may be more traumatic for some people than for others. Not all people who experience traumatic events develop mental health or addiction problems. Traumatic responses include:

- isolation
- hypervigilance or increased alertness

If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, or if there are additional organizations or programs that would be helpful to include, please e-mail the information to us at access.resources@camh.ca.

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- drinking or using other drugs to cope
- self-injury
- eating disorders
- depression
- anxiety.

People may re-experience the trauma mentally and physically. This may be a symptom of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In the long term, trauma may also cause flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms such as headaches or nausea. When thoughts and memories of the traumatic event don't go away or get worse, they may lead to PTSD.

PTSD symptoms can be grouped into four categories:

- Re-experiencing the event in the form of flashbacks, bad dreams and frightening thoughts.
- Avoiding memories, thoughts, feelings or outside reminders (people, places, activities, objects, conversations) (e.g., staying away from places that are reminders of the experience).
- Having negative thoughts and emotions (e.g., low self-esteem, blame, fear, anger, guilt, disconnection from others, lack of pleasure).
- Experiencing hyperarousal symptoms such as being easily startled, feeling tense or "on edge," having difficulty sleeping and having angry outbursts.

If you or someone else requires emergency services, please call 911 or go to the Emergency Department of your nearest hospital.

What treatment is available?

Some therapies target the symptoms of PTSD directly, while others focus on social, family or job-related problems. Therapists often use a combination of therapies to match individual needs.

Trauma-focused therapy addresses the memories, reminders and beliefs related to the traumatic event. Examples of this kind of therapy include cognitive processing therapy and prolonged exposure.

Cognitive processing therapy is a type of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). CBT helps people become aware of how certain negative automatic thoughts, attitudes, expectations and beliefs can contribute to anxiety and sadness. People learn how these thinking patterns, which they may have developed in the past to deal with difficult experiences, can be identified and changed in their daily lives to reduce unhappiness. They learn to have more control over their moods by having more control over the way they think.

Exposure therapy involves directly or indirectly exposing the person to the original memory of trauma to help them deal with anxiety, and learn to integrate triggers or reminders from the original trauma rather than avoiding situations to manage these feelings. Types of exposure therapy include EMDR (eye movement desensitization reprocessing) and prolonged exposure.

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Non-trauma-focused therapy addresses trauma-related behaviours, thoughts, feelings or problems in the here and now without referring back to or recounting traumatic events. Examples of this type of therapy include Seeking Safety and stress inoculation training.

Medication may provide relief from sleeplessness, depression, panic attacks and other trauma reactions. Your doctor should be trained in understanding trauma as well as in prescribing psychotropic drugs. Although medication can help to manage some of the symptoms of trauma, it tends to be more effective when combined with counselling.

For more information, call ConnexOntario's Mental Health Helpline at 1 866 531-2600. To find out about services for people who have experienced sexual assault or other forms of abuse, visit www.connexontario.ca and search the Directory under "Abuse Services."

Counselling and Support Services

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture

194 Jarvis St., 2nd floor, Toronto, ON

416 363-1066

<http://ccvt.org>

Services offered: Drop-in, individual and group programs, and mutual support groups to help survivors overcome the effects of torture and war.

The Gatehouse

3101 Lakeshore Blvd West, Toronto ON

416 255-5900

www.thegatehouse.org

Services offered: Two-phase Adult Support Program – 15-week group sessions covering topics such as triggers and moving out of isolation, followed by a 16-week group program, which focuses on specific topics and incorporates trauma-focused yoga, mindfulness living techniques and tai chi to enhance coping skills.

Eligibility: Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse

Referral: Self-referral with an initial intake at Gatehouse

Fees: Group sessions are free

Sherbourne Health Centre, Counselling Services

333 Sherbourne St., Toronto, ON

416 324-4100

<http://sherbourne.on.ca/counselling-services/>

Services offered: Individual and group counselling

Eligibility: Adolescents and adults in Toronto who have experienced abuse and other forms of violence, trauma and issues related to war, poverty and racism. Primary populations served are LGBTQ, homeless and newcomers, but all are welcome.

Referral: Self-referral but may be a waitlist of six months or more

Fees: Free

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Toronto Distress Centre – Survivor Support Programs (Suicide and homicide loss)

416 595-1716

www.torontodistresscentre.com/suicide-loss

www.torontodistresscentre.com/homicide-loss

Services offered: Eight weekly one-on-one sessions followed by group support

Eligibility: People who have lost someone to a death by suicide or homicide

Referral: Self-referral

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre – Multicultural Women against Rape

416 597-1171 (inquiries), 416 597-8808 (crisis line)

<http://trccmwar.ca/our-services>

Services offered: 24-hour crisis line, individual face-to-face counselling, court support and accompaniment, support groups, public education and workshops

Eligibility: Survivors of sexual violence (welcomes all gender identities and sexual orientations)

Referral: Self-referral

Fees: Free

Hospital-Based Services

CAMH Aboriginal Service

60 White Squirrel Way, 1st floor, Toronto, ON

416 535-8501 and press 2 (Access CAMH, the centralized intake service)

www.camh.ca

Services offered: Separate gendered first-stage trauma 12-session group

Eligibility: Aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit, Metis) people 18 years and older with a desire to access an Aboriginal service and who is already a client with Aboriginal Service

Referral: Clients can access the service as part of the treatment plan in the Aboriginal Service

CAMH Concurrent Outpatient Medical and Psychological Addiction Support Services (COMPASS)

100 Stokes St., Toronto, ON

416 535-8501 and press 2

www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/compass

Services offered: Group therapy offered through a trauma-informed lens: includes a 15-week first-stage trauma group, Seeking Safety for men and women separately

Eligibility: People with addiction and trauma issues

Referral: People who have already had an addiction assessment with COMPASS may be referred to Seeking Safety, but a referral is not required.

Note: Limited individual therapy

CAMH Rainbow Services

60 White Squirrel Way, Toronto, ON

416 535-8501, press 2, or ext. 34430 if you are an existing client

<https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/rainbow-services-lgbtq>

Services offered: Seeking Safety, a first-stage trauma group using CBT that focuses on skill development for recovery from trauma and substance use (experiences of trauma are not processed in the group).

Eligibility: LGBTQ clients of the Rainbow Service who have substance use problems and serious childhood trauma. Clients usually need to complete Rainbow First Stage Group first, and achieve some stability with their substance use goals in order to prepare for Seeking Safety.

Referral: From within Rainbow Services, or by COMPASS if a client has completed a comparable early recovery program.

CAMH Women and Trauma Service, Integrated Day Treatment Service

100 Stokes St., 4th floor, Toronto, ON

416 535-8501, press 2

www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/women-and-trauma-service-integrated-day-treatment-service

Services offered: Outpatient program incorporating DBT, psychoeducation, skill building and coaching (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – half days)

Eligibility: Women struggling with the impact of trauma on their lives

Referral: Physician referral online or referred from a CAMH inpatient program

Scarborough Hospital – Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Care Centre

3050 Lawrence Ave. East, Scarborough, ON

416 495-2555

www.tsh.to/areas-of-care/emergency/sexual-assault-and-domestic-violence/

Services offered: 24-hour emergency care, crisis intervention, forensic care (documentation and evidence collection), risk assessment and safety planning, acute crisis and individual trauma-based counselling

Eligibility: Transgendered people over age 12 who have been sexually assaulted or have experienced intimate partner violence

Referral: Through emergency departments

Women's College Hospital – Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence Care Centre

76 Grenville St., ground floor, Room 1305, Toronto, ON

416 323-6040

www.womenscollegehospital.ca/programs-and-services/sexual-assault-domestic-violence-care-centre/

Services offered: Range of services include nurse available 24/7, 24-hour emergency care, referral to community resources, free counselling, assessment and documentation of injuries and assault history

Eligibility: Women, men and trans people (over age 12) who are survivors of sexual assault and domestic/intimate partner violence

Referrals: Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, drop-in

Mount Sinai Hospital – Psychological Trauma Assessment and Consultation Clinic

600 University Ave., 9th floor, Toronto, ON

416 586-4800 ext. 8714

www.mountsinai.on.ca/care/psych/patient-programs/trauma-clinic

Services offered: Extended assessment and consultation service for trauma. After assessment, a consultation report is sent to the referring doctor and treatment recommendations are provided.

Eligibility: 18 years and older

Referral: Trauma referral form (available by requesting it from the phone number above) must be filled out by the family doctor or psychologist and faxed to 416 586-8654.

Note: This is not ongoing treatment.

Women’s College Hospital – Trauma Therapy Program

76 Grenville St., 9th floor East, Toronto, ON

416-323-6400 ext. 4863

www.womenscollegehospital.ca/programs-and-services/mental-health/trauma-therapy-program/

Eligibility: Women and men who have survived childhood interpersonal trauma, which may include sexual, physical or emotional violence and neglect

Referral: Referral required by a primary health care provider, except for the Women Recovering from Abuse Program (WRAP), listed under the “Women Only” services that follow. Every newly referred client must attend an orientation session. An intake interview will then determine the best type of service for the client.

Note: The program does not treat adult trauma reactions to domestic violence, natural disasters, car accidents or other traumas experienced in adulthood. Some programs require prior therapy for trauma or abuse.

Services for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Bellwood Health Services – Operational Stress Injuries and Concurrent Trauma and Addiction Program

175 Brentcliffe Rd., Toronto, ON

416 495-0926, 1 800 387-6198

<https://edgewoodhealthnetwork.com/what-we-treat/addiction-ptsdosi/>

Services offered: 9-week program that includes education about PTSD, strategies to manage symptoms, planning for discharge, anger management

Eligibility: First responders (e.g., member of the military, veteran, RCMP officer) with PTSD or operational stress injuries as well as an addiction

Fee: Fee for service or paid through the employer

National Center for PTSD

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov>

ncptsd@va.gov

1 800 273-8255, press 1, or text 838255 (veterans crisis line)

Services offered: Website information about trauma and its effect on family and friends, veterans crisis line

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PTSD Coach Canada – mobile app

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/stay-connected/mobile-app/ptsd-coach-canada>

Services offered: App that helps you learn about and manage symptoms that can occur after trauma; includes information on PTSD and its treatment, tools for screening and tracking symptoms, easy-to-use tools to help you handle stress; provides direct links to support.

St. Joseph’s Healthcare – Anxiety Treatment and Research Clinic

St. Joseph’s Healthcare West 5th Campus, 100 West 5th St., Hamilton, ON

905 522-1155 ext. 33697

www.stjoes.ca/health-services

Services offered: Treatment for PTSD, with booster group sessions following treatment

Eligibility: Adults

Referral: Physician referral must be faxed to 905 521-6120

Women-Only Trauma Services

Assaulted Women’s Helpline

416 863-0511 (GTA), 1 866 863-0511

www.awhl.org

Services offered: 24-hour, seven-day-a-week helpline for women facing domestic violence or abuse. Includes crisis counselling and emotional support, information (e.g., on safe escape planning) referrals provided for group and individual counselling, legal clinics, housing

Eligibility: Women who have experienced abuse

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

489 College St., Suite 503, Toronto, ON

416 323-9149 ext. 234

<http://schliferclinic.com>

info@schliferclinic.com

Services offered: Free legal services for women who have experienced violence and abuse; transitional and housing support, individual and group counselling (e.g., sensorimotor, open expressive arts, women empowering women)

Eligibility: Women only

Referral: Self-referral

Note: Interpretation offered for more than 200 languages; limited child care and tokens for transportation to program

COSTI Immigrant Services

Sheridan Mall, 1700 Wilson Ave., Suite 105, Toronto, ON

www.costi.org

416 244-7714

Services offered: Trauma group for Spanish-speaking women

Eligibility: Spanish-speaking women

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Etobicoke Children’s Centre – West End Services for Abuse and Trauma

65 Hartsdale Dr., Etobicoke, ON

416 240-1111

www.etobicokechildren.com

Services offered: Group counselling – mindfulness and yoga oriented; individual CBT and EMDR counselling

Eligibility: Adult program for women survivors of abuse and trauma living in Toronto, with priority to women who have children under age 18

Referral: Self-referral

Note: Waitlist – call for updates.

Fred Victor – Seeking Safety Group

Several locations in downtown Toronto

www.fredvictor.org

416 644-3081 ext. 3365

Services offered: Five-session skill-building group for people with traumatic experiences (men only, women only, co-ed), follow-up group for 10 to 12 weeks

Eligibility: Men and women aged 20 to 65 who have a history of trauma and a substance use disorder

Referral: Download the Concurrent Disorders Support Services referral and consent form by going to the Fred Victor website link above, and clicking on What we do, then Health, then [Concurrent Disorders Support Services](#). You can then click on the form at the bottom of the page, fill it out requesting the Seeking Safety Group, and fax it to 416 364-8526.

Fee: None

Jean Tweed Centre

215 Evans Ave., Toronto ON

416 255-7359

<http://jeantweed.com>

info@jeantweed.com

Services offered: Trauma-specific services include Building Resilience, a four-week psychoeducational group; Seeking Safety, a 20-week group about the concurrent impact of trauma, substance use and/or gambling; Parenting through Trauma, a 10-week group; Trauma Recovery Group, a 16-week group for women with previous trauma counselling; individual trauma counselling for one year; one-time consultations

Eligibility: Women with a gambling or substance use concern

Referral: Self-referral or through a GP

Note: Has a child care centre, waitlist for individual counselling

North York Women’s Centre

116 Industry St., Toronto, ON

416 781-0479

<http://nywc.org/support-groups-workshops/support-groups/>

Services offered: Reclaiming Yourself After Abuse, 10-week support group for women who have experienced past relationship violence; Women’s Empowerment Series, three-module skill-building programs

Eligibility: Women only

Referral: Self-referral

Note: Can arrange child-minding and address other accessibility needs. Registration required for groups.

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Women's College Hospital – Women Recovering from Abuse Program (WRAP)

76 Grenville St., 9th floor East, Toronto, ON

416 323-6400 ext. 4863

<https://www.womenscollegehospital.ca/programs-and-services/mental-health/trauma-therapy-program/wrap>

Service offered: Intensive group therapy plus individual therapy for women over age 18 with a history of childhood abuse. The program runs 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Monday to Thursday.

Eligibility: Women over age 18 who identify with a history of childhood abuse. Clients must have had previous therapy for trauma or abuse and prior group therapy

Referral: Self-referrals (by phone) as well as referrals from health care professionals

YWCA of Greater Toronto – Breakthrough

West Central Toronto and South Scarborough

416 487-7151 ext. 266

www.ywcatoronto.org/page.asp?pid=65

Services offered: Imagining New Directions, for women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse or incest; Healing Through Expressive Arts, for women who have experienced violence or abuse; Stepping into Connection, an open group for women who may be new to group support; Creating Safety and Possibilities, for women dealing with the effects of intimate partner abuse

Eligibility: Women who have been abused or harmed by violence

Referral: Self-referral

Note: Child care available while attending programs

Men Only

Canadian Centre for Men and Families

152 Carlton St., unit 201, Toronto, ON

<https://menandfamilies.org/>

Services offered: One-on-one therapy, men's peer support group, legal assistance, mindfulness meditation and other supportive services

Eligibility: Men over age 16, or younger with parental consent. Participants must not be in need of emergency or crisis services, or detoxification or withdrawal services.

Referral: Fill out the form on the website to register.

Canadian Centre for Men and Families

292 Montreal Rd., Suite 302, Ottawa, ON

613 518-1065

ottawa@menandfamilies.org

<https://menandfamilies.org/Ottawa>

Services offered: Fathering after Separation or Divorce Peer Support Group, Emotional Support Peer Group, employment support and resources, reading group, legal information clinic, men's social group

Fee: Free

Fred Victor – Seeking Safety Group

Several locations in downtown Toronto

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www.fredvictor.org
416 644-3081 ext. 3365

Services offered: Five-session skill-building group for people with traumatic experiences (men only, women only, co-ed), follow-up group for 10 to 12 weeks

Eligibility: Men and women aged 20 to 65 who have a history of trauma and a substance use disorder

Referral: Download the Concurrent Disorders Support Services referral and consent form by going to the Fred Victor website link above, and clicking on What we do, then Health, then [Concurrent Disorders Support Services](#). You can then click on the form at the bottom of the page, fill it out requesting the Seeking Safety Group, and fax it to 416 364-8526.

Fee: None

Family Services of Peel – Support Services for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

151 City Centre Dr., Suite 501, Mississauga, ON

1 855 505-5205, or 905 453-5775

<http://fspeel.org>. Click on “Services” and then “Counselling.

Services offered: Individual, group, phone and e-counselling

Eligibility: Men living or working in the Region of Peel or Toronto who are over age 16 and have experienced earlier or recent sexual abuse

Referral: Self-referral

Fees: Free

Note: Services in English and French

A Time for Men

2489 Bloor St. West, Suite 306, Toronto, ON

<https://bloorwestpsychotherapy.ca>

416 432-7725 (Craig Bolton, psychotherapist)

Craigbolton.recovery@gmail.com

Services offered: 12-week group for men who have been sexually abused; phase 2 group for men who have completed the 12-week group or have participated in another trauma recovery program; individual therapy

Eligibility: Men who have been sexually abused; in-person assessment required

Referral: Self-referral by phone or e-mail above, or e-mail referral by professionals

Fee: Both groups are free. Individual therapy is \$135/session; limited sliding scale appointments available (can be discussed on an individual basis)

First Responders and Military

Project Trauma Support

<http://projecttraumasupport.com>

See website under “Peer Support” for addresses and other contact information of peer support groups in Russell, Smiths Falls, Ottawa, Kingston, Guelph, Belleville, London, Meaford, Fort McMurray, AB, and Halifax, NS.

Services offered: Information and support for posttraumatic stress and operational stress injury in military personnel, veterans and first responders; weekly and bi-weekly peer groups; separate residential experiential treatment programs for men and women

Eligibility: Military personnel, veterans and first responders (police, firefighters, paramedics, dispatchers, corrections officers) coping with the effects of trauma

Note: Not located in Toronto

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Veterans Affairs Canada – Operational Stress Injury Clinics

St. Joseph's Healthcare London, 550 Wellington Rd., London, ON

Regus Business Centre, 4711 Yonge St., 10th floor, Toronto, ON

Royal Ottawa Hospital, 1145 Carling Ave., Ottawa, ON

St. Joseph's Healthcare, 100 West 5th St., Level 1, Block B, Hamilton, ON

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/services/health/mental-health/understanding-mental-health/clinics>

Services offered: Assessment, treatment, prevention and support

Eligibility: Serving CAF members, veterans and RCMP members and former member

Veterans Affairs Canada – Operational Stress Injury Social Support

<https://www.cfmws.com/en/AboutUs/DCSM/OSISS/Pages/Injured.aspx>

Services offered: A national peer support network with peer support co-ordinators who can connect you to community resources and peer support groups

Eligibility: Canadian Armed Forces members and veterans with operational stress injuries and their families; see the website for listings in Ontario

Trauma Support for Children

Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre – Trauma Recovery Program

325 Milner Ave., Ste 110, Toronto, ON

416 321-5464 ext. 255

www.aislingdiscoveries.on.ca

gliu@aislingdiscoveries.on.ca

Services offered: Individual and family treatment, trauma assessments and clinical consultations

Eligibility: Children up to age 11 who have experienced sexual abuse or who display sexualized behaviours

Referral: By child's legal caregiver

Note: Interpreters available

Child Development Institute – Family Violence Services

197 Euclid Ave., Toronto ON

416 603-1827

<https://www.childdevelop.ca/programs/family-violence-services>

info@childdevelop.ca

Services offered: Group programs include Here to Help, Mothers in Mind, Child and Adolescent Services for Trauma

Eligibility: Women and children who have experienced family violence or other trauma; and children, youth and families who have been affected by childhood sexual abuse

Note: Free cultural interpretation for all programs

Etobicoke Children's Centre – Child and Family Counselling Services

65 Hartsdale Dr., Etobicoke, ON (main office)

200 Ronson Dr., 4th floor, Etobicoke, ON (satellite office and walk-in clinic)

416 240-1111 (main office), 416 240-1111 (satellite office and walk-in clinic)

www.etobicokechildren.com

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Services offered: Counselling for children and youth, families and groups

Eligibility: Children, youth and their families living, working or going to school in West Toronto where there is an identified child and youth mental health problem: services are accessed through an intake co-ordinator and usually begin with an intake interview followed by a single-session consultation. A walk-in clinic is also available.

Manitoulin Family Resources

P.O. Box 181, Mindemoya, ON

www.mfresources.net

705 377-5160, or 1 800-465-6788

Services offered: Counselling and support for victims of sexual assault, sexual abuse and historical sexual assault using a feminist, client-centred approach

Eligibility: Women and children in Manitoulin, Espanola and North Shore area: children under age 12 accepted with parental or guardian consent.

Referral: Through the shelter office, which is open 24/7. The referral will be forwarded to a worker who will call you within two business days to arrange an appointment. Appointments can be made at the office or in the community.