

# 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**