

When What Happens at Work, Won't Stay at Work

EMPLOYEE HANDOUT

TRAUMA

Trauma is complex and impacts people differently. How one reacts to a traumatic event can depend on their past trauma, current life stressors, etc. This is why some people are triggered by a situation while others are not.



FIGHT

Foot on the gas



FLIGHT

Foot on the brake



FREEZE

Foot on the both
the gas
and the brake

SIGNS OF STRESS/TRAUMA RESPONSE

See second page of handout for more information on each sign.

- Self isolation
- Loss of pleasure in activities
- Struggle to concentrate
- Decreased tolerance
- Increased pessimistic talk
- Mood disturbances
- Intrusive thoughts
- Increased paranoia
- Sleep and/or appetite changes
- Body complaints
- Risky, dangerous behaviors or thoughts
- Increased substance use

MANAGING SYMPTOMS

- Quickest and most effective way to shift from fight/flight to rest/digest is to engage body and mind together.
- Mindfulness: focusing thoughts on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.
- Actively connecting the mind to what the body is doing.

Contact

Email: eap@imail.org Free confidential counseling services and 24/7 crisis hotline.

EXERCISES

Breathing

1. Inhale, one, two.
2. Purse your lips.
3. Breathe out slowly.

Grounding:

Look around your space. Remind yourself you are safe, and then connect with the five senses.

1

Thing you can see.

1

Thing you can touch.

1

Thing you can hear.

1

Thing you can smell.

1

Thing you can taste.

Loving Kindness Meditation

https://self-compassion.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/08/LKM_cleaned_01-cleanedbydan.mp3



Intermountain*
Employee Assistance Program

CALL: 800.832.7733 or 801.442.3509

Signs and Symptoms



SELF ISOLATION

- Declining invitations to lunch or coffee.
- Sitting apart from others in meetings.
- Arriving late, leaving early.
- Delay in returning texts/emails.
- Excuses these actions by saying, "I'm just tired" all the time.



LOSS OF PLEASURE IN ACTIVITIES

- Working in silence more.
- Not laughing at jokes as much.
- Forced happiness.
- Resting face is sad when no one is watching.
- Neglected grooming/hygiene.



STRUGGLE TO CONCENTRATE

- Distracted in meetings.
- Staring out the window.
- Asks you to repeat things.
- Difficulty making decisions.
- Difficulty starting completing work.
- Difficulty doing math.



DECREASED TOLERANCE

- Overreactions to small irritations.
- Underreaction to provocation.
- Exaggerated startle response.
- Increased irritability.



INCREASED PESSIMISTIC TALK

- "This isn't worth it."
- "What if this is as good as it gets?"
- "This place is nuts."
- "This used to be a great place to work."
- Blaming



MOOD DISTURBANCES

- Increased highs and lows
- Recklessness/impulsiveness
- Upset about setbacks/hard time recovering
- Increased anger
- Talk of being "trapped"
- Hopelessness/helplessness

Signs and Symptoms



INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

- Re-experiencing the event, mental pictures
- Thinking of your own family and kids
- Confusion
- Not feeling yourself
- Time slowed down
- Am I going crazy?
- Guilt



INCREASED PARANOIA

- Working in silence more.
- Thinking others are talking about you.
- Decreased trust in co-worker relationships
- Assumes negative intent from others
- Assigns negative motives to other's actions
- More frequent use of "us" vs "them"
- Abundant apologies for not being a good coworker or friend



SLEEP AND/OR APPETITE CHANGES

- Dark circles
- Frequent yawning
- Falling asleep
- Nothing tastes good anymore
- Gaining or losing weight



BODY COMPLAINTS

- Headaches
- Stomach/gastrointestinal problems
- Muscle tremors
- Heart racing
- Difficulty breathing
- Decreased sex drive
- Phantom pain in the same area of body as a patient



RISKY, DANGEROUS

- Thoughts of suicide
- Manic behavior
- Risky behavior



INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE

- Frequent tardiness/absenteeism on Mondays
- Signs of hangover
 - fatigue, thirst, headache, nausea, light and sound sensitivity, blood-shot eyes, and dizziness
- Signs of impairment



Intermountain[®]
Employee Assistance Program

CALL: 800.832.7733 or 801.442.3509