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.

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.
2. Thing you can touch.
3. Thing you can hear.
4. Thing you can smell.
5. Thing you can taste.

Loving Kindness Meditation

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

#### 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.”
- Talk of being “trapped”
- Hopelessness/helplessness.

#### 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, bloodshot eyes, and dizziness.
- Signs of impairment.

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**Intermountain Employee Assistance Program**

**CALL: 800.832.7733 or 801.442.3509**