

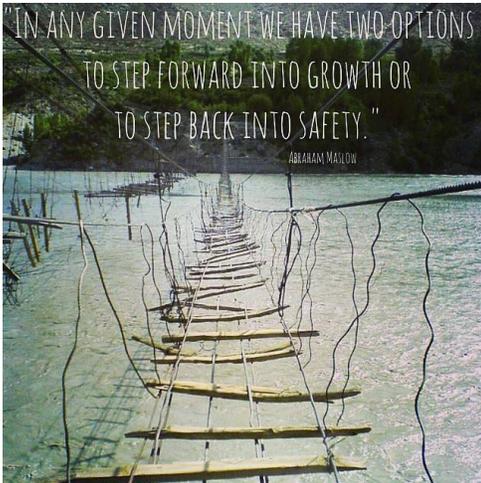


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Why Am I Not Over It? 5 Common Effects of Trauma

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Have you experienced an event so distressing that it has caused you ongoing mental, emotional or physical distress ... maybe days, months or years after the incident? Maybe you've tried forgetting about it, ignoring it, or drowning it out with alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling or food. And I'm guessing this hasn't worked, or it's only given you temporary relief.

If you're still distressed by your reactions to a traumatic experience, you're not alone. Approximately 80% of people who experience a trauma will recover in the following months after the event; however this means up to 20% don't recover well ... and these are some reasons why.

1. You're telling yourself what you **should** be doing, feeling, and thinking ... or you're ignoring your reactions to the trauma. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to react immediately after a traumatic event. Acknowledge and accept your reactions, and of those around you. And talk about what you're feeling with others, even if it is difficult.

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2. You've experienced trauma previously, such as trauma that occurred in **childhood**. Childhood trauma results from anything that unsettles your sense of safety and security. When childhood trauma is not resolved, a sense of fear and helplessness carries over into adulthood. This, in turn, can set the stage for further trauma, or for experiencing a new traumatic event more severely. Remember to do things that make you feel safe and in control.
3. You've recently suffered a series of **losses**, or you're under a **heavy stress load** already. This means your mental, emotional and physical resources will already be at a low. Add to that a traumatic event, and unfortunately research shows you'll find it harder to cope than someone who hasn't suffered a series of losses, or who isn't under a heavy stress load. Relaxation and stress reduction are the key. Take time to meditate, be mindful, listen to relaxing music, spend time with those you love, watch an uplifting movie, walk on the beach, or visualise your favourite place.
4. You're obsessively **thinking** about the disastrous event. This repetitious thinking can overwhelm your fight-flight-freeze system, making it harder to think clearly and act appropriately. Try to spend time doing things that you love, so you spend less time thinking about the traumatic situation.
5. You're trying to '**get over it**' or force the healing process. Be patient with your pace of recovery. Whilst you may not like how you feel, what you're thinking, or what you're doing it's important that you don't rush the process. Long-term recovery is quicker if you don't rush or ignore your

reactions.

So, if a past or recent trauma is impacting negatively upon your life, maybe the above reasons will help you to understand why ... and what you can do about it. So remember:

- **don't withdraw** from people, places or things that you used to do; connect with others, ask for support, participate in social activities or join a support group for trauma survivors.
- **stay grounded** by keeping up a regular daily routine for sleeping, eating, working and exercise; do small things regularly for a sense of achievement; do things that make you feel good; and allow yourself to feel what you feel, when you feel it.
- **remind yourself** that you have strength and power to counteract your sense of powerlessness and vulnerability.
- **take care of your health** and get plenty of sleep, eat well, avoid alcohol and drugs, exercise regularly, and reduce stress as much as possible.

However, if these strategies don't help, and your thoughts, feelings or behaviours are still having a negative impact on your life and those around you, seeking professional assistance could be useful.

If you would like help in managing your thoughts, feelings or behaviours, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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