

Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea Educational Psychology Consultation Service

Taking care of yourself following a serious incident

"I felt afraid to go to school
and would feel worried around
large crowds of people"



"I would often experience
nightmares and flashbacks that
felt like living the experience again"



YOU COULD BE EXPERIENCING TRAUMA WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

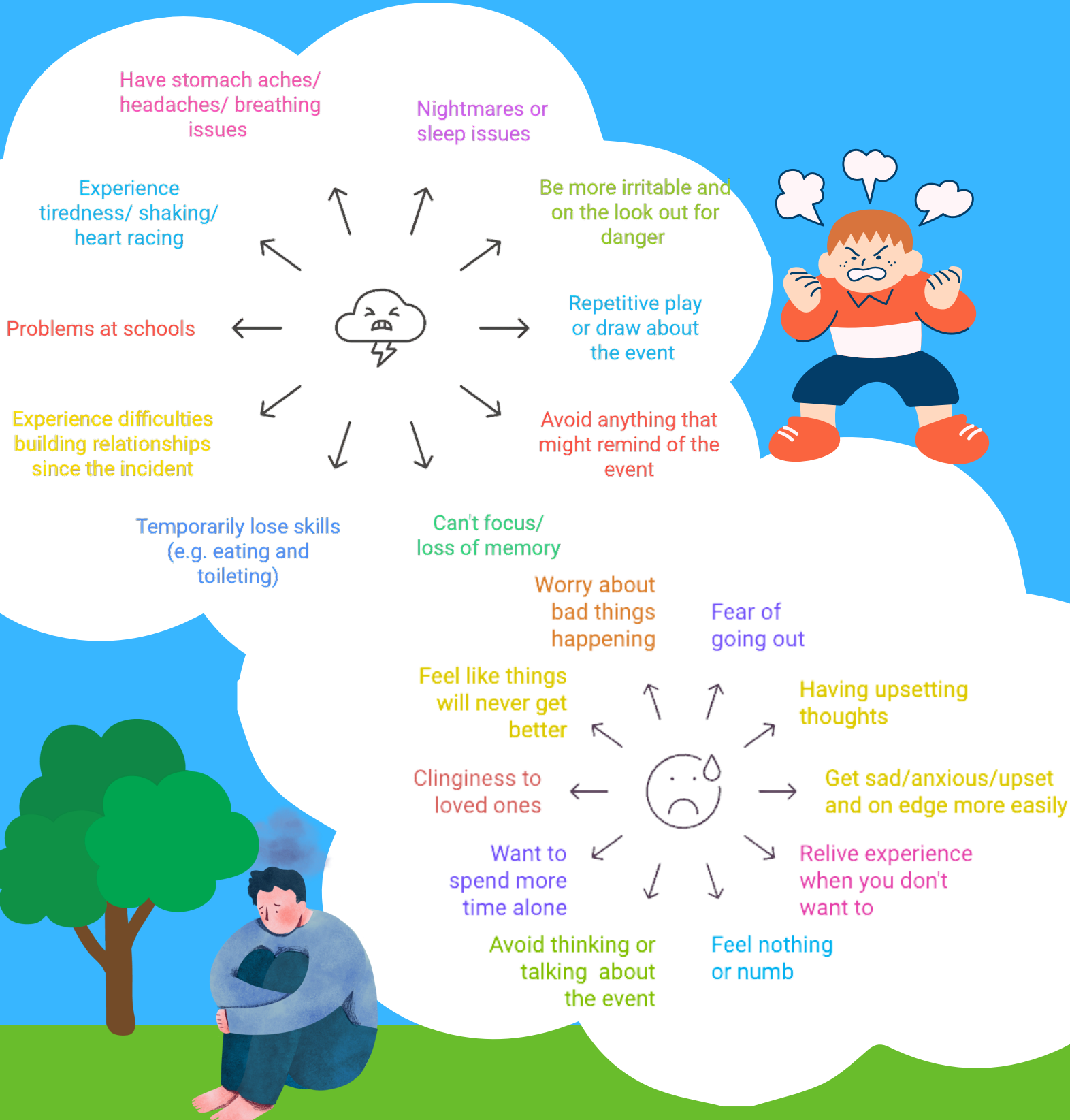
A trauma is an unexpected situation where you have felt helpless, or afraid for the safety of yourself or someone you love.

You don't have to have been there or even to have seen it to be affected.

There is no right or wrong way to think or feel.

Many people find that with support and time, these feelings can change and become more manageable.

These are typical reactions after a traumatic event.
Some of the things people might experience are listed below:



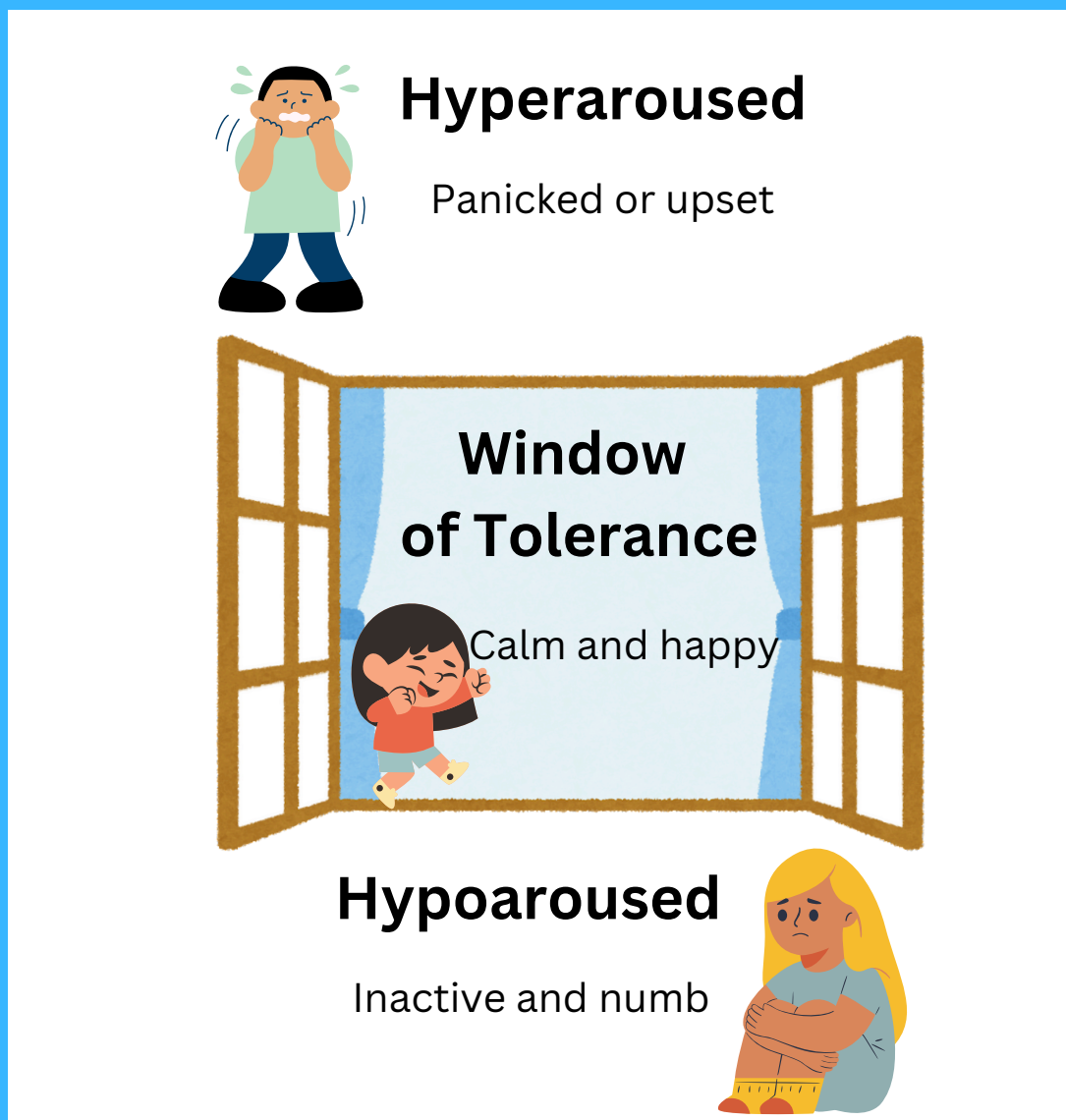
Window of tolerance

Everyone has a window of tolerance where they feel **safe and calm** and can learn and play.

When something scary happens, we can get pushed out of our window of tolerance.

We might feel **hyper-aroused** and feel anxious, panicked or upset, which is called our fight or flight response.

We may also feel **hypo-aroused** where we feel like we have no emotions and are feeling inactive. This is also called our freeze response.

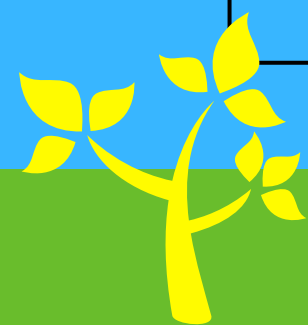


Some things can make your window of tolerance smaller, like stress and coming across things that remind you of difficult and scary times.

Some things can increase your window of tolerance, like **being mindful - noticing thoughts and feelings without judgement, talking to a trusted adult and doing deep breathing.**

What can you do about it?

Do...	Don't...
...Talk to people that you trust	...Bottle up your feelings.
...Be kind to yourself	...Be embarrassed about your feelings or thoughts, or those of other people. They are normal reactions to a very stressful event.
...Make time for your emotions	...Avoid people you trust.
...Focus on helpful routines	...Use social media and access the news if you're finding this upsetting.



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People who can help

If you've been feeling sad, anxious, or have memories that are hard to handle, there are ways to get help:

If you're under 16, your school nurse, pastoral lead, or GP can help you find the right support, like Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

If you're over 16, your local Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service can help too. In some cases, you can even ask for help by yourself.

When you go for support, you'll meet someone who will listen and help you figure out how you're feeling. You don't need to talk about all the details of what happened, but it's helpful to explain how your feelings are affecting you. The person you see will help you decide the best way to feel better.

For example, talking therapies like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) or Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) can be helpful in managing difficult emotions.



HELPLINES & APPS FOR SUPPORT

If you're feeling really upset and need someone to talk to right away, here are some phone numbers and text services that can help:

Young Minds Crisis Text:

Text: YM to 85258

Childline (for any worries or problems):

Call: 0800 1111

Samaritans (for emotional support anytime):

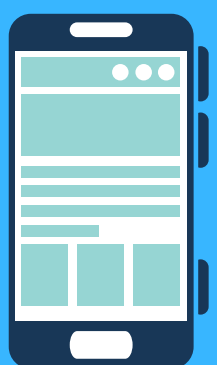
Call: 116 123

You can also find helpful apps to support your mental health on the NHS website:

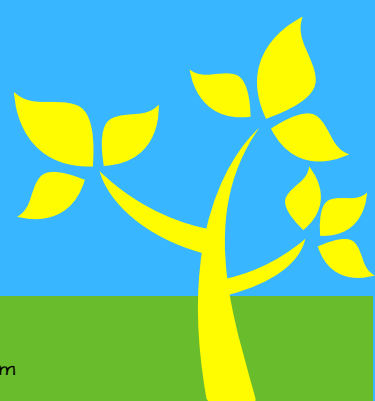
nhs.uk/apps-library

Papyrus (for young people struggling with thoughts of self-harm or suicide):

Call: 0800 068 41 41 Text: 07860 039967



Remember, it's okay to ask for help whenever you need it!
You don't have to go through it alone.



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References:

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