

Struggling between resilience and disorder: psychological consequences of war related trauma

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Traumatic events

- War, combat and destruction
- Terroristic acts
- Long-term imprisonment (e.g. concentration camps)
- Criminal violence (e.g. rape, robbery, hijacking)
- Disasters (natural, man-made and technological)
- Accidents (e.g. traffic accidents)
- Child abuse (incest)
- Sudden and traumatic loss of a loved one



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Psychotrauma: definition

- Exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence
- The event (or events) is phenomenologically characterized by:
 1. extreme sense of powerlessness
 2. disruption of beliefs and expectations



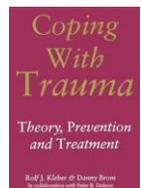
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Topics

1. What is trauma?
2. Resilience: Responses and coping
3. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: blessing or tyranny?
4. Long-term consequences
5. How to help?
6. The social dimension of care
7. Social recognition and rehabilitation



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Trauma as shattering basic assumptions

- The world is meaningful
- The world is benevolent
- The world is predictable
- I am invulnerable
- I am in control
- I am trustworthy



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Characteristic reactions after extreme life events

- Recurrent thoughts about the event
- Sleeping problems (including nightmares)
- Anxieties
- Anger and irritations
- Self-blame and feelings of guilt
- Sadness
- Feeling of alienation and isolation
- Hypervigilance



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"... suffering is not psychopathology"

The concept of posttraumatic stress-disorder (PTSS) dominates the field of traumatic stress studies, but only a minority has been found to suffer from this disorder

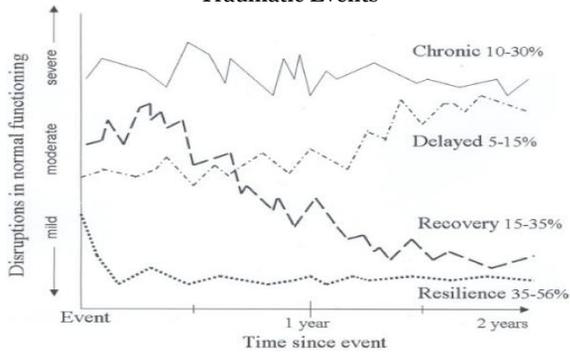


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Resilience



Prototypical Patterns of Disruption in Normal Functioning Across Time Following Potentially Traumatic Events



Criteria of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (DSM-5, 2013)

- The person was exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence
- Symptoms of persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event
- Persistent effortful avoidance of distressing trauma-related stimuli after the event
- Negative alterations in cognitions and mood
- Persistent symptoms of increased "arousal"
- Length of the symptoms (criterion B, C, D and E) is more than a month
- The disturbance causes significant distress or functional impairment socially, at work and in other areas

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Complex PTSD (ICD-11, 2018)

- * The core symptoms of PTSD (re-experiencing, avoidance/numbing and hyperarousal) in conjunction with a range of disturbances in self-regulatory capacities
- 1. **Affect problems:** heightened emotional reactivity, violent outbursts, impulsive or reckless behaviours and dissociation
- 2. A **disturbed sense of self:** marked by persistent beliefs about himself/herself as diminished, defeated or worthless, accompanied by deep and pervasive feelings of shame, guilt or failure
- 3. Persistent **difficulties in sustaining relationships:** marked by difficulties in feeling close to others, having little interest in relationships or social engagement in general

Indication of PTSD among young war victims from the former Dutch Indies

(Mooren & Kleber, 1996, 2013)

- Sample from Dutch population (born 1930–1945): 6%
- Sample from population born in Dutch East Indies: 23.5%
- War pension applicants (born in Dutch East Indies): 58.8%
- Patients (born in Dutch East Indies) in therapy at Centrum '45: 69.8%

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Effective treatments of PTSD as shown by RCT's and meta-analyses

1. Cognitive Behavior Therapies
2. Cognitive therapy
3. EMDR
4. BEPP
5. Narrative Exposure Therapy
6. Mindfulness-based stress reduction
7. Internet treatment
8. Group therapy
9. Present-centered therapy



EMDR therapy versus stabilisation
in refugees suffering from chronic PTSD:
results of a randomised controlled trial

British Journal of Psychiatry, 2016

Jackie June ter Heide
Trudy Mooren, Rens van de Schoot, Ad de Jongh & Rolf Kleber

PTSD: pre post changes

- Drop-out:
- EMDR n=6; stabilisation n=8 (1 due to increasing symptoms)

	EMDR (n=29)	Stabilisation (n=27)
Measure		
CAPS severity		
Deterioration (10 points or more), n (%)	6(20.7)	5(18.5)
No change, n (%)	10(34.5)	9(33.3)
Improvement (10 points or more), n (%)	13(44.8)	13(48.2)



The social dimension

- The role of social support
- Restoring trust
- Restoring connections
- Sharing experiences
- Collective ceremonies
- Rituals



Reconciliation and well-being: A Field Experiment in Sierra Leone

(Cilliers et al., 2016)



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Reconciliation and well-being: A Field Experiment in Sierra Leone

(Cilliers et al., 2016)

- Providing a forum for villagers (N=2300) to air war-time grievances to improve conflict resolution.
- Respondents who received the intervention are more forgiving and are more charitable in their views of ex-combatants. Respondents are more active in village organizations and conflicts are more satisfactory involved.
- However, psychological health – depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety – deteriorated.

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Cleansing ceremony after the Bali Bombings



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