

Understanding Trauma

Trauma: an experience or situation that is emotionally painful or distressing and that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope

During traumatic event:

- ◇ Hippocampus (responsible for chronology) shuts down
- ◇ Amygdala (responsible for emotional memory) on overdrive
- ◇ “Freezing”: individual’s ability to speak and/or move is compromised

Effects:

- ◇ Fragmented memories with intense emotional association
- ◇ Triggers: anything internal or external that recalls sensory/emotionally memory of trauma
- ◇ Freezing even more common in SA survivors than other kinds of trauma
- ◇ High instances of repeat victimization

Symptoms of Trauma		
Arousal	Re-experiencing	Avoidance
Hyper-arousal: on guard or easily startled	Intrusive thoughts, ruminating thoughts	Avoiding situations, thoughts, emotions that can trigger trauma
High anxiety	Reliving the experience (flashbacks)	Isolation
Panic	Nightmares	Feeling numb, sluggish
Irritability		Memory difficulties
		Depression

Healing is Facilitated By

