

Healing from trauma

1. Learn more about recovery from trauma and PTSD. If you're reading this, it's a great first step!
2. Maintain a daily routine that includes relaxation and leisure.
3. Practice good self-care strategies, which includes good sleep hygiene, regular exercise, and eating well. Physical fitness is crucial to mental fitness.
4. Use grounding exercises to stay in the present moment when you have a flashback. It is normal for the mind to connect daily events with past traumatic experiences. It is the mind's way of trying to protect you from danger. However, when you are no longer in a warzone or traumatic situation, the mind may continue to have "false alarms" for danger. Grounding strategies help your physical body connect to the current situation, to reduce feeling as though you are experiencing the traumatic event again. Strategies include planting your feet firmly on the ground, repeating to yourself where you are, splashing cool water or holding ice, and using soothing scents.
5. Learn strategies for helping your body relax. Being in constant fight-or-flight - "go-mode" - is exhausting and can lead to health problems down the road. Fortunately, you can learn to train your body's parasympathetic nervous system. This system is responsible for returning the body to a resting state after stress. Strategies for relaxation may include visual imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, and diaphragmatic or deep, slow breathing. Exercise in moderation is also crucial.
6. Spend time with family and friends who are supportive. Avoid isolating, which can often worsen PTSD symptoms.
7. Communicate with loved ones about potential triggers so they can help you manage these triggers. Talk to them about how they can help when you experience stress.
8. Take medications as prescribed. Avoid substances and non-prescribed medications. Not only can they interact with your medications, but many substances, including alcohol can interfere with recovery.
9. Join a support group. Seek treatment.
10. Do something kind for someone every day. Practicing compassion towards others can help someone learn to have compassion for him or herself during the recovery process. Healing takes time.