



Understanding Trauma Memories & Flashbacks

When re-experiencing trauma, it comes up intrusively in the present with or without any conscious awareness that it is related to the past.

Flashbacks are intrusive trauma memories coming up that include one or many of the following:

1. Overwhelming feelings & emotions
2. Physical Sensations & Images
3. Nervous System Reactions & Protective Defense Behaviors

Overwhelming Feelings & Emotions

- Panic
- Rage
- Shame
- Loss or Grief
- Guilt
- Despair
- Conflicting beliefs
- Negative thinking

Physical Sensations & Images

- Pain - anywhere
- Headaches
- Stomaches
- Muscle tension
- Nausea or dizziness
- Shaking or trembling
- Sweating
- Heart beating fast or shallow
- Other sensations in body
- Sounds, tastes, or smells
- Fragmented images of trauma memory

Nervous System Reactions and Defense Behaviors

- Flee. An urge to run or get away
- Fight. Tension in the body
- Freezing with or without hyper-vigilance, eyes surveying environment, or darting
- Shut down, collapse, faint, or fright state

Common Triggers & Reminders

- Relational interactions with others
- Places and objects in the environment
- Inner experience: feelings, thoughts, images, or needs arising
- Feeling sensations: smell, sight, hear, touch, or taste

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