

Different Types of Trauma

Traumatic Stress: Stress that induces the flight/fight/freeze response. Unlike typical stress, traumatic stress includes intense physical and emotional responses that can have a lasting impact.

Complex Trauma: The pervasive impact of exposure to multiple, simultaneous, or prolonged traumatic events. The feelings and behaviors associated with complex trauma can produce a domino effect and facilitate subsequent or repeated trauma.

Re-Traumatization: The recurrence of traumatic stress symptoms upon exposure to multiple traumatic events. Also includes reexperiencing traumatic stress symptoms when a new situation is similar to prior trauma.

Secondary or Vicarious Trauma: Experiencing trauma-related psychological and physical symptoms in response to helping or empathizing with others who have experienced traumatic events. This is very common among helping professionals working with trauma survivors.

Historical Trauma: Also known as generational trauma, this refers to traumatic events that are experienced by a specific cultural, racial, or ethnic group. Examples include the enslavement and oppression of African American/Black Americans in the U.S., the forced migration and colonization of Native Americans, and the genocide of Jewish populations during the Holocaust. Historical trauma can have psychological and physical health impacts on a population and can result in individuals being hesitant to enter into systems of care that have historically oppressed these populations.