



# Understanding Trauma: A Fact Sheet

Trauma is created in many different ways and affects everyone differently. In our mob, how we feel because of trauma can be worse because of our personal, family, kinship, communal, and historical factors.

This fact sheet is designed to help mob better understand the five main types of trauma – acute, chronic, complex, secondary, and intergenerational – how they may look and feel, and coping strategies. The aim is to help mob understand trauma, encourage yarning, and learn how to help mob heal within our communities. Remember, while trauma can be deeply challenging, our shared strength, resilience, and rich culture offer powerful tools for our healing journey.

## DIFFERENT TRAUMAS

### Acute Trauma

**Description:** Acute trauma stems from a single, distressing incident, such as a sudden accident or violent event.

**Symptoms:** Physical reactions (headaches, stomach-aches), nightmares, increased anxiety, difficulty concentrating.

**Coping strategies:** Seek professional help, maintain self-care and cultural practices, share your feelings with mob.

### Chronic Trauma

**Description:** Chronic trauma is linked to long-term exposure to stressful situations, like abuse, neglect, or conflict.

**Symptoms:** Might lead to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety disorders, depression, and other mental health issues.

**Coping strategies:** Therapy or counselling, healthy lifestyle practices, building a strong support network.

### Complex Trauma

**Description:** Complex trauma refers to multiple traumatic events, often experienced in childhood, such as ongoing abuse, neglect, or a violent environment.

**Symptoms:** Difficulties with relationships, self-image, and managing emotions.

**Coping strategies:** Professional therapy focused on trauma, building healthy relationships, learning coping skills and resilience techniques.



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## Secondary Trauma

**Description:** Secondary trauma arises from indirect exposure to a traumatic event, commonly affecting those who provide support to trauma victims.

**Symptoms:** Increased anxiety, avoidance behaviours, emotional distress mirroring those of direct trauma.

**Coping strategies:** Self-care, seeking support from peers or professional help, setting boundaries, and practicing stress reduction techniques.

## Historical or Intergenerational Trauma

**Description:** Intergenerational trauma refers to the collective emotional and psychological wounding from massive group traumas impacting on families, communities and traditional nations passed down through generations.

**Symptoms:** Grief, loss, PTSD, substance misuse, physical health problems.

**Coping strategies:** Draw on cultural heritage, community support, and traditions for healing. Seek professional support if needed.

Remember, everyone's experience with trauma, including PTSD, is unique, and responses can vary widely. If you or a loved one are grappling with the aftermath of trauma, don't hesitate to seek help from a health professional or trusted community elder. Seeking help is a testament to your strength, courage, and resilience towards the ongoing survival of our mob.



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