NHS
Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Information about the

Major Trauma Psychology Service

Ward 1C

Queen Elizabeth University Hospital
1345 Govan Road
Glasgow G51 4TF

☎ 0141 452 3902



How can the Psychology Service in Major Trauma help me?

The psychology team within the Major Trauma service is here to support you and your family in the process of psychological recovery from a traumatic event.

This may involve helping you to recognise and understand some of the common emotional responses to trauma, providing support with your mental health and wellbeing.

It could also potentially help you to understand any changes in your thinking skills (e.g. memory or attention) that you might have noticed following your injuries, especially if you have had a brain injury.



Everyone is different and the way that trauma affects us can differ. As such, everyone will have different needs.

Psychology is here to offer support that is tailored to your individual needs, and can do this by:

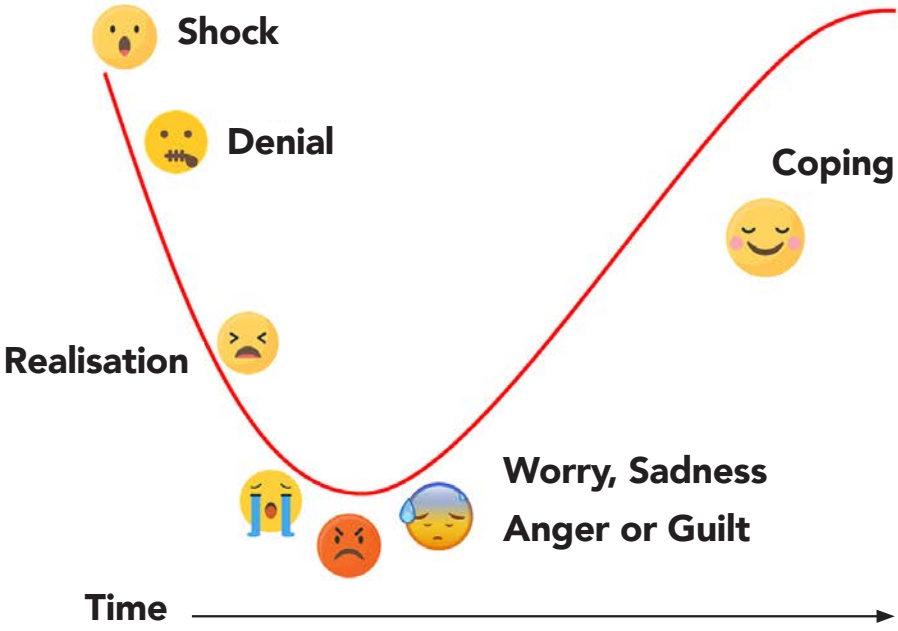
- Providing a supportive space for you to discuss and explore any thoughts, worries or beliefs that you have experienced as a result of your traumatic event.
- Reviewing your usual coping strategies, and offering guidance on how to develop some new approaches to help you cope in the early stages of recovery.
- Providing this same space for your family.
- Helping you to better understand the emotional reactions you are experiencing.
- Helping you understand any changes in your thinking skills that you may be experiencing, such as difficulties remembering or concentrating, and help you better manage these.
- Working with other members of staff within the Major Trauma team to help them best understand and support your needs.
- Assessing your ongoing psychological needs and signposting you to local services for further support.



How traumatic events can affect us

Traumatic events can often be sudden and unexpected and may involve an element of loss and injury. In addition to adjusting to any physical changes, it is likely that you may need to adjust to the emotional challenges experienced after a traumatic event.

Some common emotions that you may feel are shown on this graph:



These responses are normal, healthy reactions to an abnormal event.

You may find that you move back and forth along this curve over time in response to different things that remind you of what has happened.

The emotions may feel extreme, scary, or unfamiliar - like you are not yourself. This is how our body responds to stressful circumstances.

Common responses to traumatic events

- **Hyperarousal:** You may feel on-edge, panicky, or more sensitive to particular sounds or sensations.
- **Re-experiencing:** You may experience nightmares or flashbacks; or may see, hear, feel or smell the event again.
- **Thoughts:** You may find that you get stuck thinking about certain thoughts, or experience more "what if…" or "why me?" thoughts.
- **Changes in mood:** Your emotions may change quickly, feel numb, or more intense than usual. You may feel many emotions in a short time period, or you may find it difficult to know how you feel.
- **Avoidance:** You may try to avoid reminders of the event, preferring not to think or talk about it.
- **Detaching from the event:** You may feel disconnected from the traumatic event, as if it did not happen to you. This may feel "dream-like" or as though you watched it happen in a film.
- **Physical symptoms:** You might notice physical symptoms in your body as it processes your trauma, e.g. a quick heartbeat, changes to your breathing, poor sleep, fatigue, tension or pain.
- **Changes in thinking skills:** You may find it difficult to concentrate, understand, or remember information after a traumatic event. This can be especially the case if you have had a brain injury.

For most people, post-traumatic symptoms such as flashbacks and nightmares will gradually improve over a few weeks. However, if you are still experiencing these symptoms in the couple of months after the traumatic event, you may benefit from further psychological support.

I would like to speak with a psychologist

Whilst you are an inpatient in the Major Trauma service, you have access to support from the psychology team.

If you would like to speak to a psychologist please contact the ward staff who will refer you.

Conversations with a psychologist follow the NHSGGC Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy which can be accessed on the NHS GG&C website.

Once you leave hospital, further psychological support can be arranged by contacting your GP or local major trauma co-ordinator.

How can I support myself?

- Remember that many emotional reactions are normal and are expected after a traumatic event.
- Allow yourself the time and space to feel your emotions and do this in a place where you feel safe. You may need to grieve for the changes in your life and take time to heal.
- Talk to people you trust and don't hesitate to ask for support. The ward staff can help if you have questions or are concerned about how you are coping. After leaving hospital, please contact your GP.
- Sleep and eat well. Your brain and body benefit from a good night's sleep and a good diet to maintain your energy levels, as they will be physically and emotionally exhausted by this experience.

- It can be helpful to have a structure and routine in your day, even if this looks different to before your injury.
- Remember recovery takes time and everyone is different - be kind to yourself!

Further sources of support can be found at:

- **NHS Inform**
  🌐 www.nhsinform.scot
- **After Trauma**
  🌐 www.aftertrauma.org
- **Day One Trauma Support**
  ✉ support@dayonetrauma.org
  🌐 www.dayonetrauma.org
- **Samaritans**
  ☎ **116 123**
  ✉ jo@samaritans.org
- **Breathing Space**
  ☎ **0800 83 85 87**
  🌐 www.breathingspace.scot
- **ICU (Intensive Care Unit) Steps**
  🌐 www.icusteps.org
- **Headway - Brain Injury Association**
  🌐 www.headway.org.uk
- **Head Injury Symptoms**
  🌐 www.headinjurysymptoms.org
- Phone ☎ **NHS 111**
- **Contacting your GP**

Notes



This leaflet has been adapted with kind permission from Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.
Special thanks to Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust for inspiring this leaflet.