



Understanding Trauma: Help and Support in Challenging Times for Women*

You are not alone –
steps to self-care



**„You don't
have to heal
immediately.
Just breathing
is enough.“**

**„In this
moment, you
are safe. Stay
here for a
moment.“**

**„Your body
remembers
– but you can give it
new experiences
today.“**

**„Sometimes self-
care is simple:
take a sip of
water, take a
deep breath, and
rest for a
moment.“**

**„Even small
steps count.
Stopping can
also be part
of the
journey.“**

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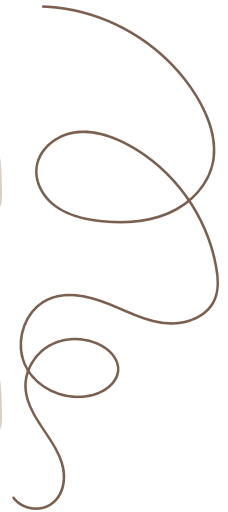
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1. Understanding Trauma

**You've been
through a lot.
It's normal to feel
insecure.**



What is trauma?

- Trauma is an **emotional wound**.
- It occurs when you have experienced **something very bad** and have not been able to process it.
- You feel **helpless, powerless, or frozen**.
- Perhaps no one was there to help you.
- It can happen once or multiple times.

Trauma is **not a weakness**, but a **normal reaction** to something very stressful.



Everyone reacts differently to a bad event in life.



What can trigger trauma?

- **Physical violence** – for example, beatings or other injuries
- **Sexual violence** – for example, assault or abuse (including within marriage)
- **Emotional violence** – for example, extreme verbal abuse or constant degradation
- **Neglect and abuse in childhood**
- **War and displacement**
- **Natural disasters** – for example, floods
- **Accidents, difficult births, or other sudden events**

What influences processing?

- **Age:** How old were you when the experience happened?
- **Previous experiences:** Have you had any bad experiences before?
- **Support:** Was someone there for you?
- **Stress management:** How well can you handle stress?



You don't have to prove anything.
If it feels bad, then it was bad.

Your feelings count.

How can you recognize trauma?

You avoid everything that reminds you.

You avoid places, people, situations, and feelings.

You don't talk about what you experienced.

You feel numb and empty inside.

You perceive the world around you as strange and unreal—or even yourself.

You are constantly tense or overstimulated

You're constantly nervous or restless inside - your body is reacting!

You're easily jumpy, even over little things.

You relive the trauma over and over again.

Memories emerge suddenly and involuntarily (related to the event).

You have nightmares, including about the experience.

You react strongly emotionally.



There are other signs:

- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Addiction
- Eating disorders
- Self-harming behavior



What can trigger my trauma?

- Triggers are things that remind you of a bad experience and make you feel like it's happening again.
- For example places, smells, sounds, etc.

What can give you support?



A best friend or nice neighbor you can talk to and trust.



**THIS IS A
SAFE
SPACE**

A place where you feel safe and find refuge.

Something small to hold on to that gives you security.



Rituals or fixed daily routines that give you orientation, support and structure.



A mobile phone that you can use to call someone in an emergency.



2. Practical tips

What can I do to feel comfortable and safe again?

5-4-3-2-1 method

Get back to the “here and now” by going through the following things in the place where you are right now:



5 things you see.



4 things you hear.



3 things you feel.



2 things you smell.



1 things you taste.

Breathing technique



4 → 7 → 8

Breathe in through your nose for **4** seconds.

Hold your breath for **7** seconds.

Then breathe out through your mouth for **8** seconds.

Repeat this several times.

Emergency kit

Create your own suitcase or small bag with things that are good for you and important to you. These items should give you support in difficult times.



Feeling good and your strengths

Here you can focus on your comfort areas and strengths.

What defines you?
With whom or what do you feel comfortable?
What do you still feel secure in, even after difficult experiences?

If you like, feel free to work with colors, photos, and symbols.

Places that do me good:

People who are good for me:

I am:

My strengths/ what I am
proud of:

I find that fun:

3. Find help

Where can I find help?

There are various places you can go.
Help is available anonymously or in person.



Immediate help over the phone

You can call these numbers at any time – anonymously and **free of charge**:

For all situations:

- Telephone counseling **0800 111 0 111** or **0800 111 0 222**

In cases of violence and abuse:

- Helpline for violence against women: **116 016**
- Sexual Abuse Helpline: **0800 22 55 530**
- Weißer Ring (in cases of domestic violence, stalking, rape): **116 006**

For children and young people:

- „Number against grief”: **116 111**
- Help for traumatized children: **040 63 64 36 27**

For parents

(if you are worried about your children):

- „Number against grief”: **0800 111 0 550**





Find a therapy spot – here's how:

You can search for suitable therapists on [therapie.de](https://www.therapie.de).

Enter your zip code and select:

Ort oder PLZ

- 1 Ort oder PLZ
- 2 Worum geht es?
- 3 Welche Methode?
- 4 Abrechnung
- 5 Für wen?
- 6 Therapeuten-Geschlecht
- 7 Sprache (weitere)
- 8 Freie Plätze

Freie Suchbegriffe

Therapeuten-Suche starten



What exactly is "therapy"?

- In therapy, you regularly talk with a specially trained person about what's bothering you.
- Many costs are covered by health insurance.

Explanation of the individual points:

- 1 Enter your postal code
- 2 **„Trauma – Gewalt – Missbrauch“**
- 3 **„Traumatherapie“**
- 4 **„GKV: Kassenzulassung“**
- 5 Here you can choose the type of therapy, whether individual therapy or couples therapy etc.
- 6 Gender of the therapist
- 7 Here you select your preferred language
- 8 **„Freie Plätze vorhanden“** or **„Bei Krisen freie Plätze“**



You can also call the therapy hotline: **116 117**

They can help you find therapy.



Trauma clinics near Cologne (inpatient)

- You can also go to an inpatient hospital, where you will stay and sleep for a while.
- There, you will receive 24-hour support and therapy:

Rhein-Klinik

Luisenstraße 3, 53604 Bad Honnef
phone number: 02224 185 0

Janus-Klinik Hürth

Kranzmaarstr. 25, 50354 Hürth
phone number: 02233 619 88 0 80

Gezeiten Haus Schloss Eichholz

Urfelder Straße 221, 50389 Wesseling
phone number: 0228 7488 101

Outpatient care in Cologne

- You can also receive therapy at a trauma outpatient clinic.
- You won't stay there, however you'll sleep at home:



Caritas Therapiezentrum für Menschen nach Folter und Flucht

(For refugees)

Spiesergasse 12, 50670 Köln

phone number: 0221 16074 0

(If necessary, the consultation can be carried out with interpreters in your language.)

Kliniken der Stadt Köln gGmbH

(For children and young people)

Florentine-Eichler-Straße 1, 51067 Köln

phone number: 0221 89072011

Uniklinik Köln

(For children and young people)

Robert-Koch-Straße 10, 50931 Köln

phone number: 0221 4786109

Deutsches Institut für Psychotraumatologie e.V.

(For adults)

Marienburger Str. 2, 50968 Köln

phone number: 0221 39090311

LVR-Klinik Köln

(For adults)

Wilhelm-Griesinger-Straße 23, 51109 Köln

phone number: 0221 8993830



4. Checklist (for initial self-assessment)

Am I perhaps traumatized?

Please check off what applies to you or what you experience frequently.

If you have checked off several points and you feel stressed, talk to someone you trust and get support.

Note: This list is not a substitute for medical advice.

Self-check

- I have images or thoughts in my head that remind me of the trauma, that just pop up and pull me out of the moment.
- I avoid certain places or situations that might be related to the trauma.
- I feel like I'm reliving the traumatic situation.
- I quickly become overwhelmed and react very irritably (Example: I yell at my child).
- I often think there is something wrong with me.
- I have trouble sleeping.
- I suddenly get scared (example: racing heart, sweating).
- Sometimes I'm physically present, but a part of me is somewhere else. It sometimes takes a while for me to fully arrive in the here and now.
- I withdraw and don't want to see anyone.
- I hurt myself.



My personal emergency card to take with you



My personal emergency card

If I'm not feeling well, I can contact these people or agencies:

Confidant

Name: _____

phone: _____

Therapist/Psychiatrist

Name: _____

phone: _____

Crisis hotline

Name: Telephone counseling _____

phone: **0800 111 0 111** or **0800 111 0 222** _____

What helps me when I feel bad:

(e.g. music, exercise, retreat ...)



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