

## Traumatic events

Many things that happen to people may have a traumatic effect, think of accidents, crimes, insults, bullying, abuse, etc. It is not possible to predict the impact of such events, that varies from person to person. Sometimes these traumatic events seem to follow you around, giving you an intense feeling of anxiety, helplessness or revulsion. The memories they evoke can be persistent, affecting your imagination, thoughts and perceptions. You may also be plagued by nightmares, reliving your memories as if they are actually happening. Because these images are so traumatic, people affected by them often have a tendency to avoid thoughts, feelings, conversations, situations etc. that remind them of them. Other symptoms such as sleeping problems, irritability, anger, loss of concentration, excessive vigilance and exaggerated reactions of shock, are not uncommon. These symptoms usually occur soon after the trauma, but may also emerge much later.

### QuickScan

- Have you had a traumatic experience (possibly repeated) that had a far-reaching effect on you?
- Are you unable to escape from the memories of negative events/experiences ?
- Do you avoid things that remind you of negative events/experiences?
- Do you feel anxious or helpless when you think about the traumatic experience(s)?

### Approach

#### What can you do yourself?

If memories of a traumatic event trouble you, it can help to talk extensively about it with someone you trust and to devote some time to dealing with it, for example in a diary. This may help you cope with it. You can also try telling yourself that this traumatic event happened in the past and find some symbolic way of achieving closure.

#### What can we do for you?

If the event from the past is still affecting you in the present, psychological treatment could be useful. Cognitive behavioural therapy and/or EMDR can significantly help to reduce these memories. We can offer you short-term individual consultation and/or help you look for a suitable treatment outside of TU Delft. Visit <http://psychologists.tudelft.nl>.

### More information

- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/posttrauma.asp>