

BACP | Working with critical incidents

17th April, Hilton Grosvenor Hotel, Edinburgh

12 years of Trauma

Post trauma support and self-care



Psychosocial Support and Trauma Specialist Services

Aims

My background

- From the 7/7 bombings (2005) to the Grenfell Tower fire (2017)

Impact of Trauma

- Characteristics and risks to the carer

Post support services

- Recommendations

Caring for the carer

- Resilience toolkit – Acronym RESPECT

Post traumatic growth

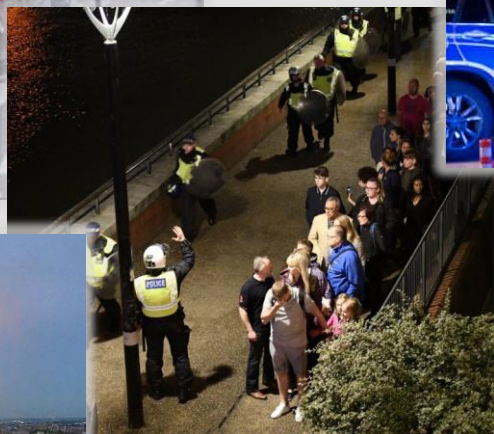
- Stories of resilience

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR HUMANITARIAN AID WORKERS

A Roadmap of Trauma and Critical Incident Care



Emergency First Responders



Humanitarian Aid



The Characteristics

- **Responsibility absorbers*
- Martyr/sacrificial/saviour/hero/fixer/carers
- What are they leaving behind?
- **Takes a lot to seek help and little to turn them off*
- **Action orientated people, hate confinement*
- Resilient and adaptable
- Emotions get compartmentalised/no room for vulnerability (focus is on the greater cause)
- **Solidarity, dependence for survival on colleagues (Peer support)*
- Attachment patterns
- Adrenalin junkies

*Dr. Roger Solomon

First responders, Police agencies, war veterans (PCIS)

Risk to carers/vicarious trauma

- Feelings of helplessness (rescuer, overstepping boundaries)
- Feeling angry or despair, risk of joining 'them' against 'us'.
- We are special and the only one that can help (over responsibility)
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling useless and unskilled
- Feeling the world is no longer safe
- Having no energy for self or others
- Mental pictures related to events/intrusive thoughts
- Numb/disconnected/compassion fatigue
- Feeling jumpy, on edge and unorganised
- Overworking, changes to smoking, drinking, eating habits
- Sleep disturbance
- Niggling physical complaints

Trauma management programme

Post Support services

- Immediate crisis management
- Screening
- Family liaison support
- Peer support
- Psychological First Aid
- Psychological debriefing
- Trauma assessments
- Specialist trauma counselling
 - EMDR/TF-CBT (NICE, WHO, APA)
- Closure/Follow up
- Trainings: Sexual violence awareness, family liaison, Psychological first aid, peer support.

Caring for the carer

Trauma continues to intrude with visual, auditory, and/or other somatic reality on the lives of its victims. Again and again, they relive the life-threatening experiences they have suffered, reacting in mind and body as though such events were still occurring.’ (Rothschild)

‘We can directly train our arousal system by the way we breathe, chant, and move, a principle that has been utilised since time immemorial in places like China and India, and every religious practice.’ (Van Der Kolk)

Caring for the carer

RESPECT

- **Relaxation:** *finding a way to calm and relax the body*
- **Education:** *understanding the mechanics of trauma*
- **Social:** *making and keeping supportive social connections*
- **Physical:** *coming into contact with our physical body*
- **Exercise:** *staying active*
- **Creativity:** *activating the creative part of the brain*
- **Thinking:** *challenging the negative thinking that can consume the mind after trauma*

Caring for the carer

RESPECT - Relaxation

Balanced breathing is thought to have many benefits; such as helping nutrients be absorbed, boosting the immune system, contributing to bone growth, increasing circulation, strengthening organ functions, and even relieving pain. Relaxed, balanced breathing has even been shown to sometimes help panic attacks and migraines or to lessen the symptoms of asthma. With every deep breath, internal organs are massaged, circulation is enhanced, and lymph flow is increased.

In short good breathing promotes good health.

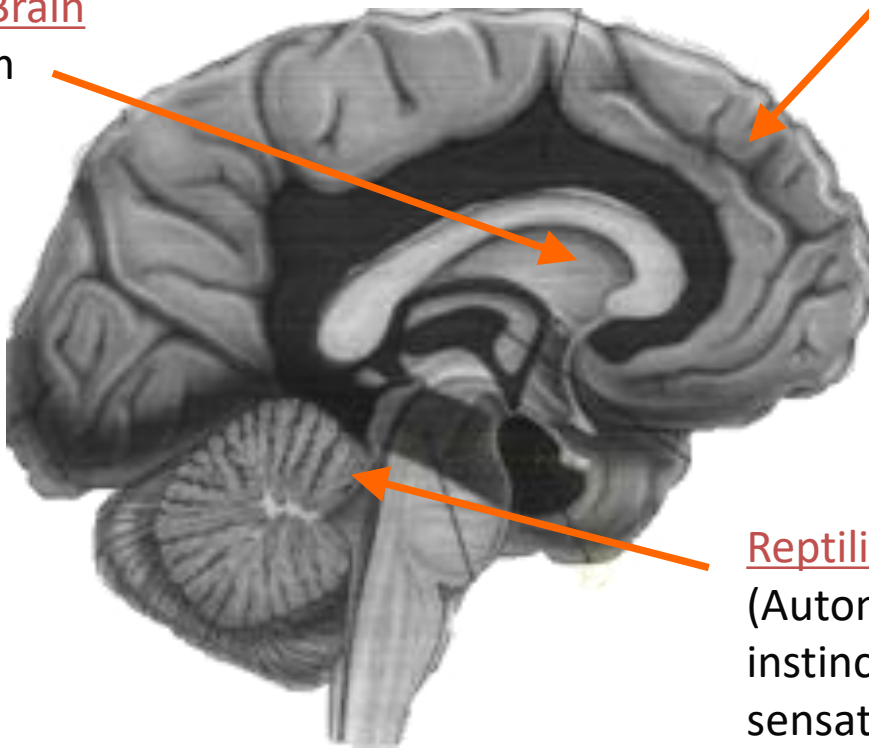
(Ogden & Fisher, 2015)

Caring for the carer

RESPECT - Education

Mammalian Brain

Limbic System
(emotions)



Frontal Cortex

(verbal language &
analytical reasoning)

Reptilian Brain

(Autonomic/automatic/
instinctive responses;
sensation & impulse)

From Ogden, 2005; Fisher, 2008

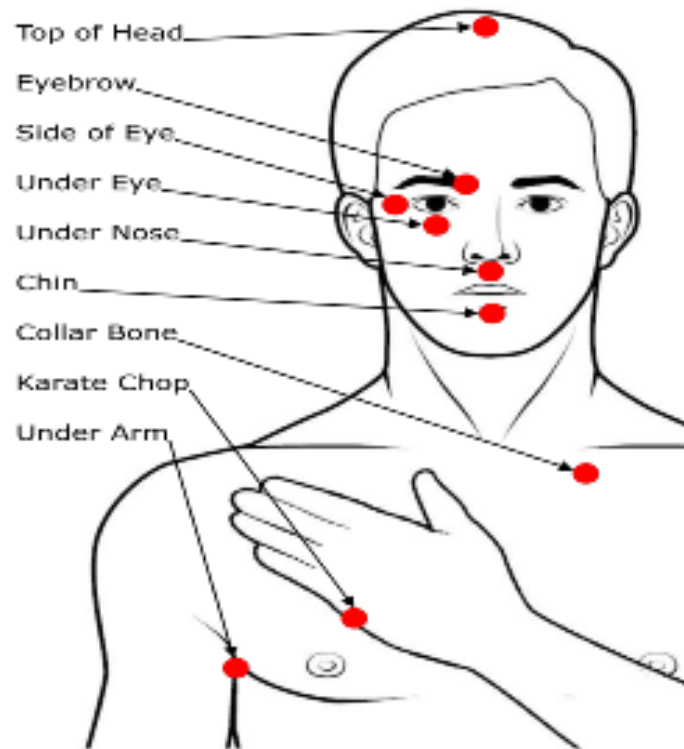
Caring for the carer

RESPECT - Social



Caring for the carer

RESPECT - Physical



Caring for the carer

RESPECT - Exercise



Caring for the carer

RESPECT - Creativity



Caring for the carer

RESPECT - Thinking



Post-traumatic growth

Stories of resilience

Cat Carter's story

Megan Nobert's story

Peter Moore's story

My story

Questions?

‘The most powerful relationship you will ever have is the relationship with yourself’.

Steve Marabodi

‘Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths’.

Etty Hillesum



Psychosocial Support and Trauma Specialist Services

References

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