



A common misconception about trauma is that people only experience it after a life-threatening event or illness. In fact, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, while trauma may result from such an event, it may also result from any event or set of circumstances experienced as physically or emotionally harmful, and which has a lasting adverse effect on an individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

If you are treated in a way that severely impacts your life, whether you are constantly dealing with an aggressive co-worker or emotional abuse from a partner, you may experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress as a result. June is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month, so this month we're exploring trauma's impact on our lives and ways you and your loved ones can cope through traumatic experiences.

The Impact of Trauma on Everyday Experience

Since we are all different and experience events differently, the way in which individuals experience trauma (and whether they will experience something as traumatic or not) is unique to them. Factors that affect the severity of trauma include:

- The nature of the event itself
- The proximity of the event (whether it was directly experienced, a witnessed event, or an event experienced through media)
- The personal impact of the event
- The after-event impact (how it disrupts one's life moving forward)

Some common ways in which trauma may impact everyday life include:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Inability to concentrate
- Fear or feelings of anxiety or depression
- Difficulty carrying out daily routines

EAP as a Support for Trauma

If you think that you or someone in your household has experienced trauma, there are resources available to you immediately through EAP. Through your EAP, you can access up to four confidential sessions of counseling at no cost to you, and referral to trusted community providers when additional support is needed. Traumatic events may have an impact on an entire family by decreasing the sense of safety and support, so remember that anyone in your household has access to counseling through EAP.

Also remember the other services EAP provides, including nutritional counseling and legal, financial, child care, elder-care, and tobacco cessation consultation. Trauma can impact individuals' lives in a variety of ways, so make sure you are taking advantage of any resource that can help you.

Call 716-681-4300 or visit our website at eap.cfsbny.org to schedule an appointment. As an employee, your EAP username is EAP4U and your password is 716employee.

Take Care of Yourself

When you have experienced a traumatic event directly or indirectly, it is important to pay attention to how you feel and learn to manage your feelings in a productive and meaningful way. Here are some first steps towards developing your "resiliency," your ability to cope and 'bounce back' from a traumatic event:

Get back to routine: this will allow you to feel control over your life and give you a sense of safety.

Stress reduction techniques: these include deep breathing, taking breaks to calm your mind, or taking regular walks throughout the day.

Utilize your close supports: turn to your friends and family for support—they can be an outlet for talking about the event in a safe space.