

Factsheet

I KEEP FORGETTING THINGS



Testimonials

“My memory plays tricks on me, I don't remember anything like I used to.”

“I forget so much, I have the impression that my memories are fading away.”

“Time flows differently.”

Exposure to trauma often leads to significant cognitive impairment. This can be disabling, making daily life difficult in intellectual, academic, professional and relational terms, which can lead to a sense of failure and suffering. Victims of psycho-trauma may trivialise the events they've experienced and even forget them for varying lengths of time.

Conversely, our memory may fail us when it comes to recognising a face, a first name or a place. This is accompanied by dissociation, where we may feel as if we're not involved in our own memories, as if they were a different me.

Exposure to extreme stress is accompanied by an emotional 'surge'. To cope, the brain 'switches off', which explains the 'black holes' and access to only some bits of information about events.

In the developing child, the symptoms are more likely to be somatic (pain, perceptions), emotional (fears, anxieties) and sensory (flashbacks, hallucinations). In order to escape intolerable suffering, the patient will engage in avoidance behaviours, control behaviours (of thought, recreational activities, sport, self, environment) and hyper-vigilance in order to continue to function 'normally' in everyday life. This type of amnesia can last for years, but can catch up with us when we experience a life event such as a romantic encounter, birth, accident, illness or death, as well as when we feel safe and confident.

This traumatic amnesia can last for years and when memories do reappear, they can be brutal and have the effect of an uncontrollable emotional bomb.