

Understanding Trauma Myths vs. Facts

Misinformation About Trauma

A 2025 investigation by *The Guardian* found that more than half of the top 100 TikTok mental health content included inaccurate and unscientific information, including tips for healing trauma in one hour. The popularity of social media content is not a reliable indicator of its accuracy.

In effect, the chance of finding truly helpful content for mental health is worse than a coin toss. More importantly, such advice may cause actual harm to the layperson.



Fact Checking Trauma Myths

Myth: Trauma is stored, imprinted, or lived inside the body.

Fact: This is now a popular idea of “the body keeps the score.” **This idea is not supported by science.** The body does not keep the score. Neuroscience indicates it is the brain that runs our body budget and keeps the score. Our brain constantly makes predictions to allocate energy resources, outside of our conscious awareness. Trauma may alter this process so that our brain overbudgets in preparation for threats rigidly across contexts, depleting our resources. While body-based treatments may be helpful, their effectiveness is due to opening ourselves to new experiences in a safe environment, and not because of unlocking body-stored trauma.



Scan the QR code for a list of helpful resources about trauma science and trauma therapy.

Or visit perfecttherapygroup.com/trauma

Fact Checking Trauma Myths

Myth: Experiencing a potentially traumatic event will develop into PTSD.

Fact: Studies of the general population do not support this idea. Recent review of trauma research indicates an average estimate of **two-thirds of individuals exposed to potential trauma are resilient and do not develop mental health problems**. Resilience and recovery are the norms.

Myth: Trauma is the single root cause of distress.

Fact: Often this unhelpful idea extends into categorizing “X is a trauma response” (e.g., fawning, procrastination, etc.) described by wellness influencers. It is important to raise awareness of the distressful effects of experiencing a potentially traumatic event. At the same time, many symptoms and distress more often than not are caused by multiple factors in complex contexts. **Oversimplification about root causes may do more harm than good** to those who genuinely require care and treatment.

Myth: PTSD is diagnosed by checking boxes on a list.

Fact: Not everyone experiences similar distress with trauma. A valid clinical diagnosis involves a more nuanced process. **Diagnosis requires a trained clinician with experience and judgment** to discern salient patterns and relevant contexts. It also involves efforts to reduce the likelihood of a false positive and false negative diagnosis.

We Are Here For You

The Perfect Therapy Group offers trauma-focused assessment and therapy.

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202-952-7105