



Promoting Prevention.  
Committed to Wellness.

# Key Terms

## Related to Realizing the Widespread Impact of Trauma

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### Ambiguous Loss

*Ambiguous loss* is a loss that occurs without closure or understanding. This kind of loss leaves a person searching for answers, and thus complicates and delays the process of grieving and often results in unresolved grief.

### Acute Trauma

*Acute trauma* is a one-time event that happens under a limited amount of time. This could include sexual or physical assault, going through a natural disaster, or possibly a car wreck. Examples include medical trauma, hate crimes, physical or sexual assault.

### Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

*Adverse Childhood Experiences* refers to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that examined the relationship of prevalence of traumatic experiences in childhood to a number of negative mental and physical health outcomes in adulthood, ([CDC, retrieved 2019](#)).

### Adverse Community Experience

*Adverse community experiences* refers to traumas that are experienced by entire communities, as opposed to individuals. The physical, socio-cultural, and economic environments all have an affect on how adverse community experiences proliferate, ([Prevention Institute, 2015](#)).

### Allostatic Load

*Allostatic load* is the term used to describe cumulative physiological wear and tear that results from repeated efforts to adapt to stressors over time, ([Danese, A. & McEwen, B. S., 2012](#)).

### Chronic Trauma

*Chronic trauma* is where an event may happen over and over again or it may be a multiple layering of events. For example, chronic trauma might apply in cases of ongoing abuse, neglect, domestic violence, human trafficking, or it might be that someone has multiple events happen to them. For example, they have cancer, they're in a tornado, and then they are in a car wreck—different types of trauma layering one on the other. What is important to understand about chronic trauma is that going through an event once may not be a protective factor but it can actually increase your risk factors for susceptibility when you go through another event.

### Collective Trauma

"The term *collective trauma* refers to the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society; it does not merely reflect an historical fact, the recollection of a terrible event that happened to a group of people. It suggests that the tragedy is represented in the collective memory of the group, and like all forms of memory it comprises not only a reproduction of the events, but also an ongoing reconstruction of the trauma in an attempt to make sense of it." War, genocide, slavery, terrorism, and natural disasters can cause collective trauma, which can be further defined as historical, ancestral, or cultural, ([Hirschberger G. \(2018\)](#)).

## Complex Trauma

*Complex trauma* is a lot like chronic trauma, except that it happens at the inactions or actions of the caregiver, the person that a child should be able to trust. This trauma generally starts in the early years, 0–6, even though it can go beyond that, that's where we generally see it starting. The importance of understanding complex trauma is because it doesn't end when the trauma ends, it doesn't end when the abuse ends, it doesn't end when the domestic violence or assault ends, or the neglect ends. That's really important to understand.

## Compassion Satisfaction

*Compassion satisfaction* is experiencing pleasure and satisfaction from work done in helping professions. Whereas many individuals experience compassion fatigue, where they absorb the suffering of their clients, compassion satisfaction is the ability to find enjoyment and fulfillment through helping others, ([ProQOL, retrieved 2019](#)).

## Developmental Trauma

*Developmental trauma* is multiple or chronic exposure to one or more forms of developmentally adverse interpersonal trauma (abandonment, betrayal, physical assaults, sexual assaults, threats to bodily integrity, coercive practices, emotional abuse, witnessing violence and death), ([ACEs Connection, retrieved 2019](#)).

## Historical Trauma

*Historical trauma* is cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma, ([Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart et al, 2011](#)). Although originally introduced to describe the experience of children of Holocaust survivors, the term has been applied to numerous colonized indigenous groups throughout the world, as well as African Americans, Armenian refugees, Japanese American survivors of internment camps, Swedish immigrant children whose parents were torture victims, Palestinian youth, the people of Cyprus, Belgians, Cambodians, Israelis, Mexicans and Mexican Americans, Russians, and many other cultural groups and communities that share a history of oppression, victimization, or massive group trauma exposure ([Mohatt, N. V. et al, 2014](#)).

## Intergenerational Trauma

*Intergenerational trauma* is a traumatic event that began years prior to the current generation and has impacted the ways in which individuals within a family understand, cope with, and heal from trauma, ([Hill, T. retrieved 2019](#)).

## Medical Trauma

*Medical trauma* can include symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in response to medical experiences such as “pain, injury, serious illness, medical procedures, and invasive or frightening treatment experiences,” ([Teach Trauma, retrieve 2019](#)).

## Post-Traumatic Growth

*Post-traumatic growth* refers to the process of individuals who have experienced trauma gaining “positive change and growth” through the healing process of coping with the trauma. It is important to note that post traumatic growth is not caused by trauma, but by the healing process that the individual takes part in, ([Trauma Recovery, retrieved 2019](#)).

## **Race-based Trauma**

Racial and ethnic minority individuals may experience racial discrimination as a psychological trauma, as it may elicit a response comparable to post-traumatic stress. Examples include macroaggressions, microaggressions, hate crimes, ([Carter, 2007](#)).

## **Systemic Trauma**

*Systemic trauma* refers to the contextual features of environments and institutions (including policies and laws) that give rise to trauma, maintain it, and impact post-traumatic responses, ([Goldsmith, 2014](#)).

## **Toxic Stress**

Prolonged activation of the stress response systems that can disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems, and increase the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive impairment, well into the adult years, ([Center on the Developing Child, retrieved 2019](#)).

## **Traumatic Grief**

*Traumatic grief* is a response to death and/or grief that is similar to other reactions to trauma. Individuals may ruminate on the details of the death, have difficulty with memory and development, and experience emotional and physical arousal symptoms, ([The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, retrieved 2019](#)).

## **Vicarious Trauma**

The term Vicarious traumatization (VT) was coined by Pearlman & Saakvitne (1995) to describe the profound shift in world view that occurs in helping professionals when they work with individuals who have experienced trauma. Helpers notice that their fundamental beliefs about the world are altered and possibly damaged by being repeatedly exposed to traumatic material, ([TEND academy, 2018](#)).

## **Resilience**

*Resilience* “is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways,” ([Trauma Recovery, retrieved 2019](#)).

## **Vicarious Resilience**

*Vicarious resilience* refers to the process of service providers experiencing positive personal development caused by witnessing their clients’ resilience and growth through adversity. By being a part of the healing process for their clients, service providers may experience their own healing and a shift in the way they are able to view their own struggles ([Hernandez, 2010](#)).

## **War Trauma**

This includes officially state-sanctioned acts of war; all methods of war for controlling populations including sexual violence and abductions, military coups and violent revolutions; as well as secret acts of violence perpetrated by governments and anti-government forces even when unofficially acknowledged.

The Production of Trauma from Violence from the Prevention Institute

