

# How the body remembers trauma?

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Trauma is not a definite event. It lingers on and echoes through body and mind, quietly shaping your experiences with life. It's a complex mix of sensations, responses and bodily changes too.

## **The Body Knows It All**

Do you feel uneasy when certain memories resurface? Or perhaps a sudden racing heartbeat triggered by a particular place? Bodies are witnesses to happy and traumatic events in your lifetime. It remembers, not just in your mind but in the very fibres of your being.

## **Somatic Memory: Negative Body Memories**

The memories aren't just mental; they manifest in our bodies, shaping our responses, sometimes without us even realising it. It can alter biological stress response, change hormone levels and cause long-lasting effects including chronic pain and dissociation.

Ever wondered why work stress will make your cold sores re-emerge? Or give you that pesky backache or make you sleep less even though you feel more tired? It's the body's way of speaking and communicating. Headaches, stomachaches, muscle tension – they're not always just physical; often, they're the body's expression of a deeper emotional struggle.

## **Traumatic Re-experiences: The Uninvited Flashbacks**

Do you feel a sudden gush of happiness while going through that old childhood album of pictures? It's amazing how our brain recalls specific emotions and responses to certain memories of the past.

Trauma works in a somewhat similar manner. Traumatic re-experiences serve as alarms from your brain, signalling your body to stay vigilant for potential threats, even in the absence of immediate danger.

These alert responses ringing throughout your body, triggered by sensory stimuli like smell or sight or even a memory linked to past trauma, tell you about the conditioned response of your brain preparing you for potential risks.

## **Dissociative Symptoms**

Ever gone through something traumatic and felt as if "this is unreal" or "it truly didn't happen" or even felt like it's a dream? This is what dissociation is like.

Dissociation is essentially a disconnection between the mind and body. Your body might be in the present, but your mind, influenced by negative body memories, takes a detour into the past or detaches entirely. You might forget about certain events or personal identity itself. It's a survival mechanism turned haywire, a way our complex beings navigate overwhelming experiences.

## **The Comfort in Awareness and Understanding**

Understanding how bodies remember trauma isn't about dwelling in despair; it's about shedding light on trauma and healing from it. Awareness is the first step toward healing. Acknowledge the echoes, the manifestations, and the dissociative symptoms. They're not weaknesses; they're testaments to your survival.

The next step is to seek help through appropriate support. Therapies that balance the body and mind can assist in effectively addressing and processing trauma stored in your body. Seeking the right professional help can make use of your cognition and certain healthy practices that de-condition your brain of the stress response.

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