

## Dealing with Trauma and Restoring Well-Being

Prof. Dennis Bautista<sup>1</sup>, Rose Ann D. Hugar<sup>2</sup>, Alisha Matela<sup>3</sup>, Erica A. Miralles<sup>4</sup>, Charie Ann C. Padullo, MAT<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Instructor, Social Science Unit, Tacloban City, Leyte Normal University

<sup>2,3,4</sup>BSED Values Education-SV21

<sup>5</sup>Research Adviser, Social Science Unit, Tacloban City, Leyte Normal University



**ABSTRACT:** This study examines several therapy techniques and treatments that are helpful in treating trauma and treatments that are helpful in treating trauma and increasing well-being. By conducting a thorough analysis of the body of the research, it seeks to shed light on the complex process of trauma recovery and identify the critical elements that play a pivotal role in regaining people's general well-being. The study recommends ways that can help in dealing with traumatic experience that individuals can use as coping mechanism.

### INTRODUCTION

Trauma is experiences that cause intense physical and psychological stress reactions. "Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being" (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative,). Although many individuals report a single specific traumatic event, others, especially those seeking mental health or substance abuse services, have been exposed to multiple or chronic traumatic events. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5), trauma is defined as when a person is exposed "to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence" (American Psychiatric Association 2013, p. 271).

Psychological trauma is not limited to diagnostic criteria, however. In fact, some clinicians have moved away from considering trauma-related symptoms as indicators of a mental disorder and instead view them as part of the normal human survival instinct or as "adaptive mental processes involved in the assimilation and integration of new information with intense survival emphasis which exposure to the trauma has provided" (Turnbull, 1998, p. 88). These normal adaptive processes only become pathological if they are inhibited in some way (Turnbull, 1998), or if they are left unacknowledged and therefore untreated (Scott, 1990).

Trauma-informed care (TIC) involves a broad understanding of traumatic stress reactions and common responses to trauma. Providers need to understand how trauma can affect treatment presentation, engagement, and the outcome of behavioral health services. Trauma, including one-time, multiple, or long-lasting repetitive events, affects everyone differently. Some individuals may clearly display criteria associated with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but many more individuals will exhibit resilient responses or brief subclinical symptoms or consequences that fall outside of diagnostic criteria. The impact of trauma can be subtle, insidious, or outright destructive. A variety of reactions are often reported and/or observed after trauma. Most survivors exhibit immediate reactions, yet these typically resolve without severe long-term consequences. This is because most trauma survivors are highly resilient and develop appropriate coping strategies, including the use of social supports, to deal with the aftermath and effects of trauma. Most recover with time, show minimal distress, and function effectively across major life areas and developmental stages. Even so, clients who show little impairment may still have subclinical symptoms or symptoms that do not fit the diagnostic criteria for acute stress disorder (ASD) or PTSD. Only a small percentage of people with a history of trauma show impairment and symptoms that meet the criteria for trauma-related stress disorders, including mood and anxiety disorders.

A number of risk and protective factors for trauma and for traumatic stress reactions (particularly PTSD) have been identified in the literature. Some of these factors are likely true risk/protective factors in that they increase or decrease risk in and of themselves, whereas others (e.g., elevated heart rate following trauma exposure) are likely indicative of other underlying risk factors, but both types of factors are discussed together in this literature review. As Layne, Warren, Watson, and Shalev (2007) observed in their review on PTSD-related risk and resilience, there is a lack of general agreement in the literature as to what defines protective or resilience factors, making it difficult to evaluate the relative importance of such factors.

## Dealing With Trauma and Restoring Well-Being

### Research Questions

1. What is the most traumatic experience/frightening experience you had in your life?
2. What coping mechanisms or strategies have you used to deal with the trauma?
3. What kind of support can you give to those people who are suffering from trauma?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This qualitative research study mainly used phenomenological research design. Specifically descriptive phenomenology. According to Deakin University (2023), descriptive phenomenology is used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon. It is a powerful way to understand subjective experience and to gain insights around people's actions and motivations, cutting through long-held assumptions and challenging conventional wisdom. It aims to provide a rich, detailed description of subjective experiences to uncover essential structures and meanings inherent in those experiences.

### Sampling Method

This qualitative research study used purposive sampling as the sampling method. According to Capmbell et al. (2020), purposive sampling is a strategic method for obtaining a representative sample by deliberately focusing on population deemed relevant to the study's objectives. Purposive sampling is used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information (Kelly, 2010: 317) and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that will use limited research resources effectively (Palinkas et al., 2015).

### Research Participants

The participants of this study are the Bachelor of the Secondary Education Major in Values Education students from Leyte Normal University. There were three (3) participants of this study consisted of first year, second year, and third year. Researchers choose one (1) participant from first year, one (1) from second year, and one (1) from third year. The researchers created a pre-survey about trauma using google form to determine who among the students from Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Values Education had the most traumatic experiences.

### Research Locale

This study was conducted at Leyte Normal University. The respondents are from Bachelor of Secondary Major in Values Education. The respondents were interviewed in their respective classroom or in any place that they feel comfortable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. *Most traumatic experience/frightening experience you had in your life?*

*"The most traumatic and frightening experience I had in my life was during Typhoon Yolanda way back in 2013. Because of that experience, I get scared every time there is a typhoon. I recall all the bad things that happened during that time, and it makes me traumatized. This event makes me really traumatized, even though it was just raining. It makes me scared, and I feel like it will happen again. Though that experience has had a negative impact on me, I still wonder how I will forget that traumatic experience."*

*"The most traumatic and frightening experience I had in my life was when the super typhoon Yolanda destroyed many lives. I felt so hopeless when I saw that everything was destroyed and there seemed to be nothing left. I thought that I would not be able to see the sunrise again. I have a fear inside that maybe this will happen again. This impacts me today because it makes me feel anxious about uncertain things, like what happened during Typhoon Yolanda. I remember that many people died and suffered from hunger because of the typhoon. The most challenging situation that I faced during that time was seeing my family cry because we had no food to eat, water, clothes, or shelter. I wasn't able to do something knowing that I was only 11 years old at the time. This event makes me realise that we have no choice but to face the fact that, whatever position we are in, whatever achievement we've achieved, and no matter how successful we are, if death is always chasing us, we have no choice but to face it. This event I've faced has influenced my entire well-being to always be ready for every uncertain thing that might come, believing that "life is too short and our time is always chasing us."*

*"The most traumatic/frightening experience in my life was years ago when I was a kid. I had this traumatic experience when I was hit by a car, and that caused a near-death experience of mine. In that experience, it reminds me every day that whenever I cross the street, I'm very careful to avoid the occurrence of any risks that might happen. It was very challenging for me to face that kind of experience because, at that time, I chose to isolate myself inside our house for a couple of months because of that happening. Even today, I still have that fear of crossing streets full of vehicles. In that bad experience that happened to me, it really influenced me to be more cautious about whatever actions I'm taking because one mistake may lead to lifetime trouble."*

## Dealing With Trauma and Restoring Well-Being

### B. Coping Mechanisms or strategies have you used to deal with trauma

*“One of the things that I did was read words of encouragement like the Bible that would help me overcome the bad experiences I had in my life. Another thing is that I communicate often with my family so that I will not remember those bad things, and I also socialize with my friends and others. As time went by, I realized that I had overcome the trauma that I had experienced. Dealing with trauma is not easy, but always remember that you need to help yourself overcome the trauma you have experienced in your life. I isolated myself as my coping mechanism; I didn’t seek help from the professional therapist; all I did was always pray to God to help me overcome the trauma that I had.”*

*“The coping mechanism that I used was to think of solutions to every problem, especially being resilient to that specific event. I’ve done this because this is how I think I can overcome this trauma. This coping mechanism helps me deal with my trauma. Personal therapy helps me deal with trauma, believing that there’s always a solution to every problem. I can say that my coping mechanisms are effective because they help me a lot, especially in building my stronghold for every problem. And I see how the coping mechanism has brought me out of it. The coping mechanism that I used was to think of solutions to every problem, especially being resilient to that specific event. I’ve done this because this is how I think I can overcome this trauma. This coping mechanism helps me deal with my trauma. Personal therapy helps me deal with trauma, believing that there’s always a solution to every problem. I can say that my coping mechanisms are effective because they help me a lot, especially in building my stronghold for every problem. And I see how the coping mechanism has brought me out of it.”*

*“The coping mechanisms I have used to deal with the bad experiences I encounter or the trauma are: I usually talk to my parents every time I feel anxious because I feel that I’m safe if they are around me and checking me up. These coping mechanisms have assisted me in managing my trauma in such a way that they teach me to be more careful and mindful of those things that might take me risks. I didn’t seek help from a professional therapist because I didn’t have that much money to seek help from professionals. That’s why I conditioned myself to just rely on my parents, who’re there for me always, and to do self-healing. I can say that my coping mechanisms are effective because now I’m more cautious about my actions.”*

### C. Support that you can give to those people who are suffering from trauma

*“For those people who are experiencing trauma, I just want to say you need to share what you feel with those people who can give you words of encouragement and people who can help you overcome your trauma.”*

*“For those people who are suffering from trauma first, think rationally because everything happens for a reason. Second, always look for solutions for every problem; third, be resilient; do not settle for the present because there’s always a future and a day after tomorrow.”*

*“To the person who’s suffering right now from trauma, I can say that they need a person whom they can talk to and a person who can lend their ears and can offer a shoulder to lean on because it takes time to surpass each trauma. Don’t isolate just because you’re scared; try to open up to trusted individuals like our parents. Be strong and stand.”*

## DISCUSSION

The three main results address the statements of the problem. The first main result answers the first statement of the problem, the second main result presents the second statement of the problem and the third main result explains the third statement of the problem. The findings indicate that their most traumatic experience throughout the good years was during a tragedy. According to the respondents, it was difficult to move on when they were in a scenario where they felt hopeless that it might happen again. Trauma can leave us feeling helpless and overwhelmed when faced with hardship. But deep within our suffering is the capacity for tremendous fortitude and resiliency. Cited by, Danielle Bernock, Pain, and the Love that heals (2015), Trauma is personal. It does not disappear if it is not validated. Extremely stressful experiences that break your sense of security and leave you feeling helpless in a frightening environment can cause emotional and psychological trauma. You may struggle with persistently uncomfortable memories, feelings, and anxiety as a result of psychological trauma. You might experience numbness, disconnection, and a loss of trust in other people as a result of it. Even though there is no physical danger involved, trauma can nonetheless arise from any circumstance that makes you feel helpless and alone. Traumatic events sometimes involve threats to one's life or safety. Your subjective emotional experience of an incident determines whether or not it is traumatic, not the actual conditions. You are more prone to experience trauma if you feel more terrified and powerless. When it is ignored or invalidated the silent screams continue internally heard only by the one held captive. When someone enters the pain and hears the screams, healing can begin. Recovering from trauma is a difficult process that is unique to each person. Developing a solid support network, taking care of oneself, and

## Dealing With Trauma and Restoring Well-Being

learning mindfulness practices can all aid in the recovery process. During this journey, you must get expert support and practice self-compassion.

In addition, the respondents indicated that one of their coping mechanisms is to read inspirational quotes, such as the bible, which will enable them to get past difficult experiences. Create a network of support where you may confide in close friends or family members and to express yourself, you can use painting, music, or journaling as ways to let out your feelings.

### RECOMMENDATION

Recovering from trauma and restoring well-being is a complex journey that demands resilience, support, and self-discovery. It involves acknowledging the pain, seeking professional help, and fostering a holistic approach to healing. Firstly, recognizing and understanding the impact of trauma is crucial. This often requires individuals to confront painful memories and emotions, a challenging but essential step in the healing process. Seeking therapy or counseling provides a supportive space to explore these emotions and develop coping strategies. Rebuilding well-being and recovering from trauma is a difficult process that calls for fortitude, guidance, and introspection. It entails accepting the suffering, getting expert assistance, and promoting a holistic recovery strategy. First and foremost, it's critical to acknowledge and comprehend the effects of trauma. This frequently necessitates people facing up to unpleasant memories and feelings, which is a difficult but necessary stage in the healing process. Seeking therapy or counseling offers a safe environment in which to examine these feelings and create coping mechanisms. Creating a network of support is just as crucial. Support networks, family, and friends may provide encouragement, understanding, and empathy. Connecting with people who have gone through comparable struggles allows people to feel less alone and more like they belong. Apart from psychological assistance, physical health is essential. Resilience is enhanced by regular exercise, a healthy diet, and enough sleep. Yoga and meditation are two mindfulness exercises that can assist people in managing their stress and reestablishing a connection with the present moment. Regaining a feeling of agency and control takes time. Achieving little victories, developing self-compassion, and setting reasonable objectives are all crucial parts of this path. A crucial quality that peoples need as they go through the highs and lows of rehabilitation is patience. In the end, expert advice continues to be essential to trauma rehabilitation. Experts in trauma-informed treatment, such as therapists, psychologists, or counselors, can offer customized therapies based on each client's requirements. Effective methods for healing from trauma include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR). Restoring well-being and recovering from trauma are complex processes. It calls for a mix of introspection, outside assistance, medical attention, and expert direction. Resilience, persistence, and the correct tools may open the door to a revitalized sense of self and well-being, even though the path may be difficult.

### CONCLUSION

A research-driven approach to trauma recovery and well-being restoration emphasizes the significance of evidence-based treatments, a sophisticated comprehension of neurobiological mechanisms, and a dedication to establishing environments that are helpful and culturally aware. Continuous research endeavors lead to a developing and progressively efficacious strategy for tackling the complex obstacles associated with trauma rehabilitation. Recovering from a traumatic event can be facilitated by adopting a constructive coping strategy and drawing lessons from the experience. Asking friends, relatives, or a support group for assistance might also help. A mental health practitioner can teach coping mechanisms to someone suffering from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Traumatic events have been connected to various dangerous behaviors and mental health issues. It's critical to comprehend the causes and effects of trauma as well as the recovery process because behavioral health issues can pose difficulties in interpersonal interactions, the workplace, and other spheres of life.

The respondents of this research are most of them have trauma from typhoon Yolanda. Typhoon Yolanda's destruction, thousands lost their lives, 4.1 million people were left displaced from their homes, and 6 million workers were left without means to support their livelihood, many people were affected in their minds and have the trauma of this typhoon. The stress responses that follow a tragedy closely resemble the typical responses that follow any kind of trauma. A wide range of emotional and physiological responses can be triggered by disasters. In addition, you might react to triggers or reminders of the trauma as well as issues that arise after the incident. Restoring well-being and managing the conditions of trauma are complex, diverse processes that take into account many aspects of the individual's experience. The first step towards recovery is realizing the tremendous effects of trauma, which is followed by a dedication to all-encompassing therapy approaches and situations that are helpful. Regaining a sense of well-being and addressing trauma is a complex, individual journey characterized by important ideas and behaviors. The process entails first admitting the effects of trauma and then committing to all-encompassing tactics meant to promote mental health.

Recovering well-being and overcoming trauma is a dynamic, lifelong process that calls for a combination of resilience building, medical assistance, and introspection. It is evidence of the resilience of people who, in the face of hardship, strive to take back their lives and rediscover happiness and purpose. If you've gone through trauma, strengthen yourself. It takes tremendous fortitude to deal with the fallout from trying circumstances and respect your tenacity. Healing is a process, therefore it's acceptable if it seems difficult or sluggish at first. Recall that every step forward—no matter how tiny—is a win and that there is no time frame for recovery. Seek out the help and understanding from others in your immediate vicinity. One of the most effective tools in the

## Dealing With Trauma and Restoring Well-Being

healing process is social connection. Telling your story to a friend, relative, or mental health professional shouldn't be a scary thing to do. Speaking up and letting your emotions be known can be a vital first step on the road to recovery.

### REFERENCES

- 1) What is trauma? Types, symptoms, and treatments. (2020, June 3). In *Wikipedia*.  
<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/trauma>
- 2) (8). Understanding the Impact of Trauma (8th ed.). [HTML] nih.gov [HTML] Understanding the Impact of Trauma.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/?report=printable>
- 3) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US). Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Rockville (MD): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); 2014. (Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 57.) Section 1, A Review of the
- 4) Literature. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207192/>
- 5) Achim AM, Maziade M, Raymond E, Olivier D, Merette C, Roy MA. How prevalent are anxiety disorders in schizophrenia? A meta-analysis and critical review on a significant association. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. 2011;37:811–821. [PMC free article] [PubMed]
- 6) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207192/#section1.s30>
- 7) Danielle Bernock, *Emerging With Wings: A True Story of Lies, Pain, and the LOVE that Heals* (2015) Read more at: [https://www.blinkist.com/magazine/posts/10-empowering-trauma-quotes-inspire-healing-resilience?utm\\_source=cpp](https://www.blinkist.com/magazine/posts/10-empowering-trauma-quotes-inspire-healing-resilience?utm_source=cpp)



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.