

Do You Have Trauma and Not Know It?

*M*any times we are able to pinpoint traumatic events that trouble us – for example: the loss of a loved one, or a job or an unexpected event that shocks us. Grief, nightmares, and recurring frightening thoughts are telltale signs of post traumatic stress disorder. The passage of time may heal these issues and when it doesn't, many seek professional confidence in knowing the source of the problem.

What can be more troubling is when we have experienced traumatic events that we may not be aware of. Loved ones may also be at a loss as to why someone suddenly becomes irritable, anxious, depressed or dependent upon substances. Unknown trauma that troubles our subconscious mind can come from many directions including matters we thought we put to rest.



Kathleen Abbott,
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“Kate” has a Master Degree in Clinical Social Work from Florida State University and is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. She has over 25 years of experience as a therapist and as a business leader. She coaches managers on best practices, is a regular speaker on creative and practical life strategies and believes “transformation begins with a renewing of the mind.” Her clinical expertise is broad with specialties in eating disorders, PTSD, women, couples, teens and faith-based counseling. She is also highly experienced in providing counseling and crisis intervention training to various organizations in our community. A former licensed foster care parent and mother of two daughters, she is able to equip others in managing life's many changes and challenges.

“Jack” has an MBA from Columbia University, a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of North Florida, is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, a Clinical Hypnotherapist and a Certified Family Law Mediator. A former CPA with over 20 years of international business experience, he now specializes in working with teenage and adult substance abuse, family and couple discord, parental alienation syndrome, trauma, anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia. Practicing what he calls Cognitive Soul Therapy, dramatic results are sought using both science and spirituality. He is also familiar with the courtroom through his experiences as a Family Law Mediator, Guardian Ad Litem volunteer, licensed foster care parent, and adoptive father.

Jennifer grew up in a home with significant fighting between her parents but she was never directly abused and her parents thought they shielded her from it. Years later, after three failed engagements and several bouts with alcohol, she discovered in therapy her subconscious belief patterns had been formed by her parents' experience, thereby attracting abusive men or ones not her intellectual, emotional and spiritual equal. Therapy freed her from acting out her parents' experience and created expectations of a mate more suited to her own desires.

It's not the objective facts that determine whether an event was traumatic, but your subjective emotional experience of the event.

Mike's divorce had been messy but he felt satisfied with the agreement especially as to how they shared access to the children. Nine months later, his job performance declined and he returned to medications for sleep. His employer suggested he seek counseling wherein he learned the divorce had traumatized him not from missing his ex-spouse, but from the fear that the fairy tale no longer seemed real or possible. Deep down, he did not realize that this meant he could and would fail at everything. This perspective was quickly identified and corrected in therapy allowing dramatic improvement in all of his relationships and in his outlook for another romantic relationship.

It is not so much the traumatic event itself that troubles us as it is the meaning that the subconscious mind attaches to the event.

Cynthia was a straight A student in elementary and middle school. In high school, her school work began to suffer dramatically and she withdrew from friends and after-school activities. Little success came from individual therapy. Only when the therapist invited the parents to join the sessions, did it become known that a very silent but deadly *War of the Roses* was going on between her parents that Cynthia was not aware consciously. She had become the classic identified patient who felt subconsciously worthless as the source of her parents' dissatisfaction. Re-arranging her view of herself, allowed her to return to school and friends with a renewed passion and her parents entered marital counseling. *ng*

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