



Mental Health Considerations The Impact of Trauma

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Fear and Trauma

“Fear needs to be tamed in order for people to be able to think and be conscious of their needs. A person’s bodily response of fear can be mitigated by safety of attachments, by security of meaning schemes.”

Bessel Van der Kolk



Existential Terror

Fear is central to the study of criminology and victimology, but it is the least studied. Fear of death, destruction of identity, and destruction of values drives the search for safety and security both at an individual level and in the consolidation of individuals in communities and cultures. The human species is the only living organism that can conceive of things in the future and can understand that its own death, while unpredictable in its timing, is inevitable. This knowledge is at the root of existential terror in human beings as they confront their ultimate helplessness and possible meaninglessness.



Fear and Society

The innate fears of the individual result in the need for emotional attachment to others, which leads to the building of societies and cultures. Societies become a critical reference for feelings of safety and security. The communal dynamics are a source both of protection and assistance as individuals negotiate the dangers of existence.



Terrorist Events

- **Matsumoto Incident (June 28, 1994),
Subway Sarin Incident, Matsumoto &
Tokyo, Japan (March 20, 2005)**
- **Subway Bombings or 7/7 Bombings,
London, England (July 7, 2007)**
- **Mumbai, India (November 26-9, 2008)**



Crisis Reaction

- Shock
- Fear and Terror***
- Anger
- Confusion and Frustration
- Shame
- Guilt
- Grief***



Crisis Intervention

- Safety and Comfort
- Security and Justice
- Telling the Story
- Reassurance
- Needs and Concerns
- Practical Assistance
- Social Support
- Education and Referrals



Long Term Reactions

- Acute Stress Disorder
- P.T.S.D.
- Bereavement
- Dissociation
- Anxiety Disorders
- Substance Abuse
- Resiliency



Long Term Care

- Reassurance
- Spiritual Care
- Addressing Physical Symptoms
- Community, Family and Friends
- Education
- Justice
- Pharmacotherapy



Hope, Faith and Love

“Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love.”

Reinhold Neibuhr, *The Irony of American History*