**What is Trauma?**

Trauma is any past experience that you perceive as negative and that negatively impacts your present life. It creates extreme stress in your body and mind. Traumas can be perceived as horrific, helpless to prevent, and threatening to either your survival or the survival of others, or it can be when something happens to you that leaves you feeling distress and you are unable to process it for some reason. The effects can be long lasting and create distressing symptoms. All trauma manifests in physical and/or psychological and/or sexual symptoms, which can eventually lead to PTSD.

**Symptoms of Trauma**Here is a list of symptoms that can occur from experiencing trauma or life disturbing events:

* Have difficulty concentrating
* Experience sleep disturbances (difficulty falling or staying asleep), often in an effort to avoid nightmares associated with the event
* Find yourself hyper vigilant (feeling constantly on-guard)
* Over-react to noises or other environmental cues that didn’t bother you before
* Find yourself irritable, angry and experiencing outbursts
* Have nightmares
* Have recurrent and intrusive thoughts about the traumatic event
* Act or feel as if the experience is happening again in the present
* Experience intense psychological distress and/or physiological arousal when exposed to (internal or external) stimuli that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
* Experience flashbacks (suddenly feeling as though the event is happening in the present)
* Attempt to avoid thoughts or feelings associated with the traumatic event
* Attempt to avoid activities or situations that evoke memories of the traumatic event
* Find yourself unable to recall an important aspect of the traumatic event
* Feel detached or estranged from others and your daily life
* Sense you’re unable to feel as you once did; you feel numb or spaced out, unable to care or to love
* Feel less interest and pleasure in activities
* Feel a sense of foreboding and anticipate a limited future; you don’t expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a long life

As you can see by this list of symptoms, trauma can cause problems for people and be quite disconcerting. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, you may benefit from EMDR therapy.