



Trauma Recovery Center

*Mental Health Services
for Victims of Crime*

“WE ARE HERE TO HELP”

- by Stephen C. Matzel, TRC Clinical Director

Siren blaring, lights flashing and an ambulance safely delivers a trauma victim to the hospital where medical professionals treat trauma related injuries. In another instance, an injured soldier is evacuated from the battlefield to safety. Much later, once the traumatic event is over, many victims turned survivors heal and move on with their lives. Some, require additional help addressing trauma-related mental health symptoms and may engage in one or more of the numerous evidence-based interventions designed to address mental health issues related to their past trauma. With the additional intervention, many of these individuals are able to move on from the traumatic event and resume their lives.

Many domestic violence survivors actively seek help to address their emotional and mental health traumas, even though they have not been taken to the comparative safety of a hospital or been evacuated from a battlefield or have safety in a domestic violence shelter. Often times, the threat of ongoing abuse is very real and their ability to address trauma-related issues in a safe post-trauma environment is limited or does not exist. Safety, confidentiality, coercion, custody, restraining orders and other legal issues, social support and financial needs are intertwined.

For the survivor still actively in the middle of the dangerous conflict, interventions may need to take on a different focus. Some interventions designed to examine the past traumatic event, have the potential to increase the survivor's distress as they are still living the trauma in the present.

Instead, initial interventions might focus on alleviating the crisis through assessment, immediate safety needs, and future safety planning, meeting basic needs, addressing legal dynamics, developing rapport, and mourning losses. From this platform the survivor can move into exploring trauma recovery with overall goals of living in a present and future that is not driven by a traumatic past and can focus on building a life that is not defined by trauma and its impact on the survivor.

Whether a survivor finds safety in the ADV shelter, or is outside of the shelter, intensive outreach and case management is available as well as trauma informed, evidence based individual treatment to allow the survivor to harness their strengths, demonstrate their resiliency, and make positive changes in their lives. We are here to help.

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