Woodfield Trauma Service
Helping forced migrants with
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
Welcome
The Woodfield Trauma Service provides psychological therapy and practical support for people who have been forced to leave their country and who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of traumatic events.

What is a traumatic event?
A traumatic event can be anything very bad that has happened to you that is deeply distressing. Often people feel intense fear at the time of the event and may also feel anger, shame, guilt or fear after.

What is Post Traumatic Stress?
If you have experienced a traumatic event, you may begin to suffer from common reactions, such as anger, fear, guilt or depression. If you feel like this for longer than a month, you may suffer from what is called PTSD.

What are the symptoms of PTSD?
There are three types of symptoms:

Re-experiencing the event
You may feel like the traumatic events happen again and again. This can happen when:

- You experience a ‘flashback’ when you are awake, during which you might see images or hear sounds of the and you can feel as if you are back in the event again
- You have vivid nightmares of the traumatic events and tend to wake up feeling scared.
- You may have a strong reaction in your body when you are reminded of the events.
Avoidance and numbing
It can be very upsetting for you to re-live these experiences over and over again. Because of this, you might:
• Avoid places and people that remind you of the traumas
• Feel emotionally numb and distant from others
• Have memory problems and forget things easily
• Find that time passes without you knowing where you were.

Being ‘on guard’
After a traumatic event, some people stay alert all the time, as if they are expecting danger. You may find that:
• You can’t relax and you always feel tense and alert for danger
• You find it hard to get to sleep or to stay asleep
• You are scared easily by everyday noises and get angry easily.

What can help?
There are some things that you can do to manage your symptoms:
• Concentrate on slowing your breathing
• Talk to a friend or family member
• Eat well and exercise regularly
• Don’t drink too much alcohol or caffeine
• When you have a flashback, concentrate on a good image or an object nearby or smell something strong like perfume.
How can the service help me?

This service offers three things that can help to reduce your symptoms:

1. **Teaching and workshops** that will help you learn how you can manage your symptoms, including how to relax, how to cope with flashbacks, how to feel safe and get better sleep. We also provide weekly activity groups to help you feel more confident with others and less lonely.

2. **Support** to help you identify and take steps towards new goals, such as going out more, becoming healthier, or starting new activities. Even though these things feel very difficult to do, we know that it can help to reduce symptoms of PTSD. We can also offer advice on any housing or benefits problems.

3. **Psychological therapy** that focuses on talking about what happened in a particular way to make it feel as if it is in the past. This happens weekly with a therapist for up to 20 sessions. This type of talking therapy can help to reduce or stop the nightmares, flashbacks and negative emotions.

I am interested in getting help for my symptoms. What happens next?

1. You will be offered an appointment (with an interpreter if necessary) so that we can assess whether the service will be helpful to you.

2. If you decide that you want to use the service, and if the person you meet with agrees, then you will be put on the waiting list for treatment.

3. Someone will contact you to help you complete a questionnaire that gives us more information about the severity of your symptoms.

4. You will be invited to learn more about PTSD and how to help manage your symptoms. You will also be invited to participate in the activity groups to help you feel more confident and less alone.
Points to remember:

• Although you might feel very upset by your symptoms, they do not mean that you are going mad. It is a normal response to a difficult experience.

• Although it may take some time, it is possible to regain control over your bad memories and other symptoms.

Contact us

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