

Domains of Impairment in Complex Trauma

ATTACHMENT

- Uncertainty about the reliability and predictability of the world
- Problem with boundaries
- Distrust and suspiciousness
- Social isolation
- Interpersonal difficulties
- Difficulty attuning to other people's emotional states
- Difficulty with perspective taking
- Difficulty enlisting other people as allies

BIOLOGY

- Hypersensitivity to physical contact
- Sensorimotor developmental problems
- Problem with coordination and balance
- Somatization: headaches, stomach aches, chronic pain etc.
- Increased medical problems across a wide span (e.g. pseudoseizures, asthma, skin problems, and autoimmune problems)
- Difficulty sleeping

AFFECT REGULATION

- Difficulty with emotional self-regulation
- Difficulty describing feelings and internal experience
- Problem knowing and describing internal states
- Difficulty communicating wishes and desires
- Predominant negative affect

DISSOCIATION

- Distinct alterations in states of consciousness
- Flashbacks
- Amnesia
- Depersonalization and derealization

BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL

- Poor modulation of impulses
- Self-destructive behavior
- Aggression against others
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse
- Excessive compliance
- Oppositional behavior
- Avoidance of trauma-related stimuli
- Difficulty understanding and complying with rules
- Communication of traumatic past by reenactment in day-to-day behavior or play (for children)

COGNITION

- Difficulty in attention regulation and executive functioning
- Lack of sustained curiosity
- Problem with processing novel information
- Problem focusing on and completing tasks
- Difficulty planning and anticipating
- Learning difficulties
- Problem with language development in children
- Problem with orientation in space and time
- Acoustic and visual perceptual problems
- Inability to recall key features of trauma
- Intrusive thoughts about traumatic event

SELF-CONCEPT

- Lack of a continuous, predictable sense of self
- Poor sense of separateness
- Disturbances of body image
- Low self-esteem
- Shame and guilt
- Exaggerated blame of self for causing trauma