



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Psychological Services Center

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Trauma Services Clinic

at the
Psychological Services Center





Trauma Services Clinic

The Trauma Services Clinic is a specialty clinic located within the Psychological Services Center (PSC) at NIU. The PSC offers a full range of outpatient psychological services to the community as well as to NIU students, faculty and staff. The PSC is the primary training center for graduate students in the clinical psychology doctoral program at Northern Illinois University.

At the Trauma Services Clinic, we specialize in the assessment and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a disorder that may occur following trauma exposures such as accidents, disasters, combat exposure/deployment and interpersonal violence (e.g., assault, sexual abuse, sexual assault and intimate partner violence).

What is PTSD?

Shortly following trauma exposure, it is common to experience symptoms like nightmares or intrusive images. Most people do not go on to develop PTSD, and it's not clear why some people develop PTSD and others do not.

When a person experiences symptoms that last longer than four weeks, cause great distress or interfere with work or home life, they may have PTSD.

There are four types of symptoms of PTSD:

1. **Intrusive memories** such as upsetting dreams, unwanted distressing memories and reliving the event as if it were happening again (i.e., flashbacks).
2. **Avoidance** such as trying to not think or talk about the event, and avoiding places that are reminders of the event.
3. **Negative changes** in how one thinks about the world and mood such as negative feelings about yourself and feeling emotionally numb.
4. **Feeling keyed up** (also called hyperarousal), which can directly affect one's ability to sleep and concentrate.

Assessment and Treatment at the Trauma Services Clinic

As with all evaluations at the PSC, initial evaluations are conducted at no charge to both students and nonstudents. Evaluations are conducted at the PSC and all appointments are scheduled by calling the PSC at 815-753-0591.

The Trauma Services Clinic recognizes that our treatment programs are not for everyone. We begin with a two-session evaluation that helps us come to a better understanding of the problem. At the end of the evaluation process, we summarize our findings and the treatment options that are available and discuss the treatments that are likely to be helpful. These options often involve services available in our clinic, but may also be from other mental health professionals in the community, or some combination of services.

People who are experiencing distress following a trauma exposure often benefit from more specialized therapy than is available through a more general treatment method. Treatment at the Trauma Services Clinic usually consists of short-term cognitive behavioral therapy using evidence-based methods such as prolonged exposure or cognitive processing therapy. Both involve reprocessing the traumatic event and thus involve a substantial exposure component. Reprocessing the trauma can involve using writing or imagery to face the traumatic event, and a cognitive restructuring component to change the thoughts, feelings and behaviors associated with the traumatic memories. These approaches have been shown to be very effective in treating people in the aftermath of a distressing event and are considered the “gold standard” for treatment following trauma.

The Trauma Services Clinic can also provide more extensive evaluations related to the assessment and diagnosis of PTSD for use in litigation or disability claims.





For more information or to schedule
an initial evaluation:

Trauma Services Clinic at the Psychological Services Center

Psychology/Computer Science Building
Room 86

Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115
815-753-0591

Northern Illinois University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin. Disability status based on the Victims Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA) or status as a disabled or Vietnam-era veteran. Further, the Constitution and Bylaws of Northern Illinois University provides for equal treatment regardless of political views or affiliation and sexual orientation.

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois. niu.edu 53473 2/21



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Psychological Services Center

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences