However, proceed with caution if you also have a physical injury and consult your GP for advice. Most complementary therapies have accreditation boards and councils and we advise that you choose a practitioner who is a member of one of these. As with counselling and psychotherapy you should check the qualifications and accreditation of your complementary practitioner.

Where can I find support after physical injury, brain injury, burns injury, hearing speech or sight loss, amputation, chronic pain as a result of Troubles-related trauma?

In general, first port of call for these sorts of concerns is your GP, who should discuss with you what options are available to particular needs. Following an amputation, spinal or head injury, you will be referred to rehabilitation services, and your needs regarding for example, prostheses, wheelchairs and other equipment will be addressed. If you are receiving services from an HSS Trust, ask about Direct Payments. They can give you more control over how the services are delivered. You may wish to consider seeking financial assistance from the NI Memorial Fund.

Your GP can make a referral on your behalf to occupational therapy, physiotherapy, audiology, low vision, psychological therapy, and pain clinic services. Specialist community-based support organisations are listed in the Services Directory.

Your GP can also refer you for a comprehensive assessment of the kind of support you or your family may need. If you have experienced sight, hearing or speech loss, you may wish to consider seeking help from one of the organisations listed in the Services Directory that have particular experience in this area.

AND FINALLY… If you need help, even if you are not sure what that help might be, ask for help and persist until you find it.

Contact:
TRAUMA ADVISORY PANEL
Champion House, 12-22 Linenhall Street, BELFAST BT2 8BS
Direct Line: 028 9055 3958
Switchboard: 028 9032 1313
email: bdevine@ehssb.n-i.nhs.uk
website: www.ehssb.n-i.nhs.uk

How Do I Find Help?

If you are unsure about what this help will be like, talk to your GP or the Trauma Advisory Panel. They will be happy to explain about:
• their qualifications
• times and number of appointments
• cost (if any)

If you have any problems, you can call the Trauma Advisory Panel on 028 9055 3958

How people react to a traumatic event or a series of events can vary greatly. Many people experience severe and distressing reactions including fear, feelings of helplessness, sadness, anger and guilt. There may also be physical and social impacts after trauma.

Most people cope with the help of family and friends, and the distressing psychological symptoms settle after a number of weeks. These are normal human reactions to abnormal situations.

Services for People who have Experienced TRAUMATIC STRESS

How do I find help?

Speak to your GP

Phone the Trauma Advisory Panel on
028 90 553958

Look at the Trauma Advisory Panel’s list of services in the directory or on:
www.ehssb.n-i.nhs.uk

How do I find help?
In this document we focus on the needs of people whose problems are persistent and cause disruption to their personal and family life, and how they might be helped.

Why might I need help?

You might need help if you are having ongoing problems such as those described below:

• Thoughts about the traumatic event continue to overwhelm you in intensity and frequency, making you to feel exhausted.

• You feel you must keep active in order to block out your thoughts.

• You still feel numb about the event or you sometimes have to replay it. It did not really happen at all.

• You continue to feel a strong sense of shame or guilt about the event or your reactions to it.

• You feel you are becoming increasingly withdrawn from people in social situations. You are continuing to have difficulties with sleep.

• You are becoming more irritable and angry or are in low mood.

• Your work performance is suffering. There is no-one you can really talk about how you feel.

Can my General Practitioner (GP) help?

Your GP may be able to help you to deal with your difficulties without having you to refer for more specialist support, and some GP practices offer counselling services. However, treatments and support for people who are traumatised are available through psychological health services, which are also accessible through your GP.

How do I find out about services?

A range of support services and treatments are available. These include drug therapy, psychological treatments (talking treatments), complementary therapies and different types of social interventions. Treatments can be used on their own, or in combination, depending on your particular needs. Again, depending on the individual, support may be provided by a counsellor, a psychiatrist, a psychiatric nurse, a befriender or volunteer, a social worker, a psychologist, an occupational therapist or psychologist.

How do I find a Practitioner, and what can I expect from Counselling or Psychotherapy Services?

Many people feel embarrassed about admitting that they have emotional problems. It is important that you do not avoid seeking help for this reason. It can be difficult to talk about other issues at a time of distress, but you should try to carefully consider the following before visiting a practitioner.

The relationship formed between you and your counsellor must be based on a clear understanding that you have agreed to together. With this in mind, you should be clear about two issues – the practitioner’s qualifications and the service they will provide:

* Ask about the practitioner’s qualifications and experience. It is helpful to ask about the qualifications of your potential practitioner and to use only those who are registered and who subscribe to their professional body’s recognised code of ethics and professional practice. For example, ask if they are a member of one of the following:

  - British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BABCP).
  - Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (IACP).
  - British Psychological Society (BPS).
  - British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapists (BABCP).

* Be clear about the service to be provided. A professional practitioner should offer a full assessment of your needs and the opportunity to agree what you hope to achieve by engaging in the work. There should be an agreement about the estimated number of sessions you might need, feelings.

Whatever the treatment you decide on, you have the right to withdraw from it at your request. It is important to be aware that this should be agreed at the beginning.

You may decide that other services – such as a support group, befriending or listening ear – can offer you the help you need. These are sometimes called ‘psycho-social’ services and should be provided by organisations whose volunteers and befrienders are trained ‘competent helpers’ to skills with Trauma – Awareness and Traumatic Grief. It is important to be aware that this is not counselling. A good competent practitioner should always be supportive of your needs, and should be able to refer you on to a more specialist service if that is what you need.

What are Self-help, Listening Ear and Befriending Services and what can you expect from them?

Some people do not need counselling or psychotherapy. However, it can be reassuring to meet with people who have had similar experiences similar to your own. You may decide that other services – such as a support group, befriending or listening ear – can offer you the help you need. These are sometimes called ‘psycho-social’ services and should be provided by organisations whose volunteers and befrienders are trained ‘competent helpers’ with skills in Trauma – Awareness and Traumatic Grief. It is important to be aware that this is not counselling. A good competent practitioner should always be supportive of your needs, and should be able to refer you on to a more specialist service if that is what you need.

Can Complementary Therapies be helpful, and what can I expect from these Services?

A wide range of complementary therapies is now available, and the physical and psychological impact of traumatic events (e.g. aromatherapy to help relax, massage to alleviate muscular pain etc) may be successfully managed through the use of such therapies – particularly in terms of relaxation and stress management.

What Might Help?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social intervention &amp; Community Based Support</th>
<th>Psychological treatments</th>
<th>Complementary Therapies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What might help?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Psychotherapy treatments</strong></td>
<td><strong>talking things out</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: A wide range of psychological treatments is now available.</td>
<td>Psychotherapy treatments include counselling, psychological therapies, and support for people who are traumatised</td>
<td>Complementary therapies include therapies such as aromatherapy, massage, and other therapies that can help alleviate physical and psychological distress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>