



Re-enactment

Recreating the childhood dynamic expecting the same result but hoping for a different one. This strategy is doomed to failure because the need is in the past and cannot be resolved. Also you will interpret anything as confirmation that you have been betrayed once more.

Loss of safety

The world becomes a place where anything can happen.

Loss of self-worth

Trauma survivors can swing between feeling special—with grandiose beliefs about themselves—and feeling dirty and 'bad.' This self-aggrandizement is an elaborate defense against the unbearable feeling of being an outcast and unworthy of love.

Loss of danger cues

How do you know what is dangerous when someone you trust hurts you and this is then your 'normal?'

Loss of sense of self

One of the roles of the primary caregiver is to help us discover our identity by reflecting who we are back at us. If the abuser was a parent or caregiver, then that sense of self is not well developed and can leave us feeling phony or fake.

Loss of trust

This is especially true if the abuser is a family member or a close family friend.

Loss of physical connection to body

Survivors of sexual and physical abuse often have a hard time being in their body. This disconnection from the body makes some therapies known to aid trauma recovery, such as yoga, harder for these survivors.

Shame

Huge, overwhelming, debilitating shame. As a child, even getting an exercise wrong at school can trigger the shame. The child may grow into an adult who cannot bear to be in the wrong because it is such a trigger.

Dissociation

Often, to cope with what is happening to the body during the abuse, the child will dissociate (disconnect the consciousness from what is happening). Later, this becomes a coping strategy that is used whenever the survivor feels overwhelmed.

Loss of intimacy

For survivors of sexual abuse, sexual relationships can either become something to avoid or are entered into for approval (since the child learns that sex is a way to get the attention they crave) and the person may be labeled 'promiscuous.'