

Unpacking meanings in PTSD – Teaching exercise

Part 1 – Detective work in pairs (5mins)

Information about Amar

Amar is a newly married, 46 year old Asian British man, having treatment for PTSD. He found his mother in law dead, she had passed away alone a few days earlier. He has flashbacks to the moment he found his mother in law and heard his wife scream behind him. Amar finds it hard to talk about this moment and often changes the subject when exploring his worst meanings. Your task is to try to identify what the worst meanings might be for Amar. To give you some clues, look through the PTCI below.

PTCI-s

On this page, you will find different thoughts that people may have after traumatic experiences. In this questionnaire we are interested in the way that YOU thought, IN THE LAST WEEK, in regard to your traumas. Please read each statement carefully and choose a number from the scale below which BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREED OR DISAGREED WITH THE STATEMENT in the last week.

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree very much	3 Disagree slightly	4 Neutral/ neither agree nor disagree	5 Agree slightly	6 Agree very much	7 Totally agree				
1.	My reactions since the event mean that I am losing my mind.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I have to be on guard all the time.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	If people knew what happened they would look down on me.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I feel different from other people because of my experience.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	My life has been destroyed by the event.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	People are not what they seem.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	If I think about the event, I will not be able to handle it.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I cannot accept the way my body has changed since the trauma.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	If I stop being angry, what happened to me will be forgotten.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Nobody cares about me.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	I have permanently changed for the worse.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I am inadequate.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Stopping feeling guilty is letting myself off the hook.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	I have to be especially careful because you never know what can happen next.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	There is something wrong with me as a person.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	I feel dead inside.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17.	The way I behaved/thought/felt during the event is unforgivable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	I will not be able to control my anger and will do something terrible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	Nothing good can happen to me anymore.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Since the trauma, I feel that my body is ruined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART 2 – ROLE PLAY (10min)

- One person be the therapist and the other the patient (as long as you are both happy to role play this type of trauma).
- The therapist needs to help Amar to unpack the meanings of this trauma. Clue there are more than one! If Amar finds it hard to give you much information, use the questionnaires to prompt for more details.

PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS ARE ON THE NEXT PAGE. PLEASE DO NOT READ THIS IF YOU ARE ROLE PLAYING THE THERAPIST.

Instructions for the patient (DO NOT READ IF YOU ARE THE THERAPIST)

- You find it difficult to talk or think about the worst moment of your trauma
- You are also embarrassed about your reactions and fear they mean you are losing your mind which also holds you back from talking about it.
- As your therapist helps you unpack how you felt and your concerns – using the questionnaires to prompt you, you start to open up about your worst meanings
:
- At the time of the trauma you felt overwhelming sadness and guilt as you believed you were to blame for your mother in law's death.
- Your wife moved out of her mothers' home recently and she had been concerned about her mother but you had reassured her all would be OK.
- When you found your mother in law your first thought was that **it was your fault that she had died.**
- You heard your wife scream and then **thought that your wife would never forgive you.**
- **That she might be so destroyed by her mother' death that she might take her own life, leaving you alone for the future – never to have a family of your own and your life would be destroyed.**
- This made you feel panicked, guilty and sad.