

# HANDY GUIDE TO RECOGNIZING TRAUMA STORED IN THE BODY



Feelings of disconnection from some areas of your body or not being able to access internal sensation. Dissociation at the time of trauma causes a disconnect in our brains and bodies.

Physical pain and tension that is not the result of any other medical condition. This can happen anywhere in the body, and for trauma survivors, it is most commonly held in the core of the body, the stomach, abdomen, and low back, as well as the upper torso, chest, shoulders, and spine.

Gastrointestinal (GI) issues. It is common for trauma survivors to experience GI issues. Being “stuck” in the sympathetic nervous system (aka fight vs. flight) means that metabolic processes in the body, such as digestion, turn off, while your nervous system maintains the hyper-vigilance it thinks you need to stay safe.

Feelings of tightness and constriction with breath, and difficulty taking a full deep breath that expands the rib cage, moves down the spine, and opens through the entire torso. Difficulty extending the spine and lifting the chest and sternum. Being stuck in the sympathetic nervous system creates faster, more shallow respiration. Many trauma survivors instinctively collapse the front of the body for protection.

Difficulty relaxing your body enough to get a good and full night of sleep.

You can experience these symptoms for many reasons; none of this is intended to treat or diagnose any condition, but rather to help people identify their own internal sensations that MAY be connected to trauma.