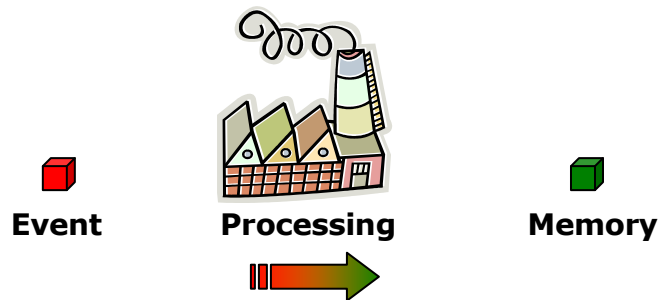


Treating Traumatic Memories

The mind is like a factory, and one of its jobs is to process life events so that they can become memories. Most life events are of a size and nature that the factory can cope with:

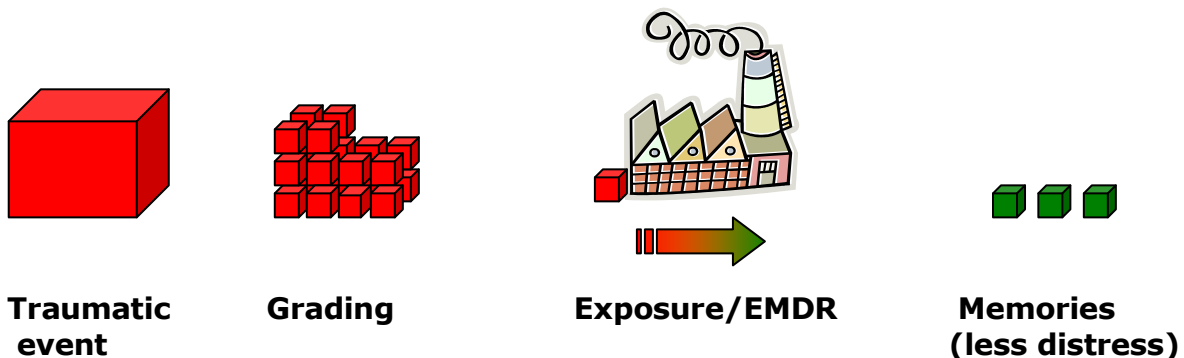


However, sometime an event occurs, such as a trauma, which is simply too large or difficult to process.



Because it isn't processed, the event is prevented from becoming a memory – this means that it remains a current problem, rather than one that's in the past. Current situations or events that remind us of the original trauma, trigger us to have 'flashbacks' which means we re-live and re-experience the emotions and physical sensations that were experienced at the time of the original trauma. At those distressing times, we tend to press the factory's STOP button. We also avoid situations which are likely to trigger these 'flashback' experiences, reinforcing the lack of processing.

Effectively treating the traumatic event so that our 'factory' can process them into memories, means exposing ourselves to thinking about and imagining the traumatic event, and/or gradually exposing ourselves to real situations which we normally avoid. This will result in experiencing distress, but will also cause the factory to effectively process the traumatic event, which will greatly reduce the distress in the long-term.



Mike Davison