

# Inside Trauma



## A word from the Editor

Uncertainty is an unavoidable part of daily life. We can not see in to the future and therefore we can never be certain about what exactly is going to happen day to day.

We can develop an intolerance to uncertainty and we may try to plan and prepare for everything as a way of avoiding or eliminating uncertainty.

Ways that we may try to remove the uncertainty in our lives include the following actions:

- Seeking excessive assurance from others
- List making
- Double checking
- Refusing to delegate tasks to others
- Procrastination/avoidance
- Distraction



Though some of these actions may benefit us, these behaviours require a lot of time and energy. Needing to be certain about everything can often take the fun out of life since surprises and unexpected events may be viewed as threatening. In this newsletter, we will discuss what uncertainty is and how to manage the negative effects that may come as a result.

**Elizabeth Lourenco**

**Provisional Psychologist**

**NOTE\*\* Trauma Centre Australia is happy to introduce the introduction of the Trauma Institute. We are the leading educational provider in trauma counselling. It has been a long time coming and we have developed the Advanced Certificate of Trauma Counselling. If you would like more information please visit our website [www.traumainstitute.com.au](http://www.traumainstitute.com.au) for more information.**

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## What Makes Uncertainty-Traumatic?



In everyday life we rely on certainty to ensure we complete our day to day tasks with minimal stress. For many, the most 'minor' hiccup can often throw a day into disarray. Spinelli (2007) argues that existential uncertainty arises because everything we experience is interrelated and affected by external influences. Nothing can be ultimately concluded. Therefore, this uncertainty can be considered a trauma. However, it can be argued that the more we expect some degree of change in our organised lives, the less traumatic the experience. Thus, if there is a level of expectation. Eg., if the train will run late, we are more able to cope with this unsettling event and the resulting roll on effect.

The anticipation of a traumatic event can be considered low. As a result, these experiences can devastate our concept of normality and, therefore, create turmoil in understanding our own circumstances. The sudden death of a loved one, a missing person, unexpected illness, for example, elicits major uncertainty in one's life. It is the ambiguity of these particular events which promotes such distress. In particular, in the case of events which are indeterminate the client must address both the uncertainty of the outcome and of the consequential disruption to their organised lives.

From a therapeutic viewpoint, one must consider the client's perspective of the trauma. It is not the incident itself which can be described as the trauma, rather, the client's meaning of the incident (Brothers, 2008).

It can be determined that the insecurity arising from the knowledge that our lives are not as structured as we planned is in itself an experience of trauma. Yet, it is only one's perception of this uncertainty that will decide how traumatic the experience will then be.

**Hannah Fox**  
**Undergraduate Counsellor**

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**"Uncertainty is an  
uncomfortable position.  
But certainty is an  
absurd one."**

**Review of the past TAPIG  
seminar:**

**"It was a very informative seminar. I was glad that I attended the session. Damien was a great facilitator. His speech was fun and less formal when passing on information and life experiences in the military."**

**"The highlight for me was when Damien mentioned Tasmania has a high percentage of suicidal compared to other states in Australia."**

**"I highly recommended people to attend future TAPIG events for both educational and personal development."**



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## Leaving the fear of uncertainty behind!



I believed that I was safe and happy as long as I was anchoring myself with an abundance of security. I found myself becoming a security addict. I was not allowing for unforeseen changes to enter my life.

Mentally, I was able to get through the complexity of planning. But, emotionally I became unavailable to myself. I was thinking ahead, planning ahead, looking ahead and predicting ahead. I was very successful with my businesses by the age of thirty. Though, at the same time, I lost myself to a fear-based chaotic way of my life. Was I happy? At least I thought I was until I lost my grandmother to cancer.

Her death made me re-evaluate my life. My need for physical security is perhaps an outward gesture of my inner fear of uncertainty. What do I really have if I am not living my life? I realised that experiences of uncertainty are an inescapable feature of human experience. I decided to step into the discomfort, stare at fear face on.

Safe is not what I am looking for anymore. When safe is far from safe. I am looking for a journey where I can learn more about myself, develop and growth as a person. I am seeking the meaning in my life. I was told by a wise man once that I came into this world alone and empty handed and I will go out alone and empty handed. So, what do I have to lose? Two things in life are certain and that is tax and death, the rest of our life's journey is uncertain.

I decided to let go of the fear of uncertainty and start embracing adventure. I realised that fear of the uncertainty is a waste of time and a waste of a life that was given to me. As soon as I realised this, I came out feeling lighter and less fearfully. In turn, I now understand who I am and I became confident, free and totally adventurous.

**Jennifer Li**  
**Undergraduate Counsellor**

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## Can we be awake enough to see life's positively bright side?

Uncertainty is unpleasant. It makes us feel vulnerable, so we try to escape it in anyway we can. Sometimes we even settle for misinformation or bad news over not knowing. But can we be awake enough to see its positively bright side? It is possible to thrive amid uncertainty. This is not about getting advice you can trust; its about faith and self-trust—believing whatever happens, you'll find your way through it.

Here is a **special exercise** that can help you — “THE DARE”

1. Pay attention you what makes you feel better and worse. When we are feeling terrible, we get impatient with people who mean the most to us. I have learnt that sleep, exercise and eating healthy make me patient and calm. It can do the same for you.
2. Create an emotional quiet spot. Most times fears can drown us emotionally and mentally. Make time to go for a walk, meditation or a prayer – to reconnect with your gut and listen to the sound of your inner voice.
3. Get support. Instead of letting the whole world know about your problem, ask one or two loved ones to remind you that it is normal to feel vulnerable when you are going through a period of change.

Stay out of your habitual feelings. Let them go unobstructed. Work at “The Dare” – your inner alertness until the day you find this newness you once had to struggle to tolerate is now something you could not endure living without.



“For as surely as darkness must come before the break of a new day, so it's true: before the new light of faith and self-trust can have its gentle dawn in us—we must see that we have come to the end of what we know of ourselves”.

Emily Tokalau  
Undergraduate Counsellor

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Remain steady and  
allow the world to  
shape itself.

### Upcoming Events:

TAPIG seminar in Queensland in August 2014

Trauma Institute Open/  
Information Day—July 15th

### Volunteer Now:

Looking for a Support Editor.  
Please send applications to:  
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