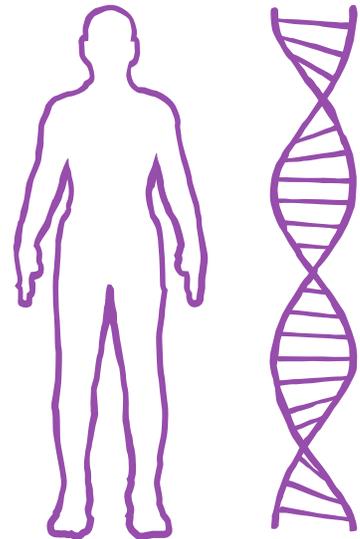


Untreated Trauma: The Signs, Sources, and Science



The 5 Telltale Signs of Untreated Trauma

Trauma is so much more common than most people realize. We often think of 'trauma' showing up as severe PTSD where one might have had extreme experiences like flashbacks and unexplained fits of rage, which does happen, but the reality is that untreated trauma comes in many forms, from many sources that may not seem traumatic on the surface, and so the way this survival stress shows up isn't always so obvious.

SO HERE ARE 5 TELLTALE SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE UNDIAGNOSED TRAUMA IN THEIR SYSTEM.

As you read, take a moment to notice if you relate to any of these experiences, or if you know clients or folks in your life who do.

1. The first sign is resistance.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

- being stuck all the time and not being able to move forward in life
- severe procrastination and knowing we need to do something, but just not getting it done
- using common behavior change strategies such as goals, routines and external accountability and having these not work or take a LOT of effort
- feeling passive, invisible, or like they can't find their drive

WHAT'S THE UNDERLYING SURVIVAL STYLE?

This is usually a sign that someone is living more or less in that freeze portion of their autonomic nervous system.

2. The next one is folks who eat super healthy but are still unwell.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

- eating well (a lot of unprocessed and whole foods) and/or exercising regularly
- maybe seeing traditional and "alternative" medical practitioners and following their advice relentlessly
- still having digestive troubles

- still having all sorts of chronic health troubles
- not being able to lose body fat

WHAT'S THE UNDERLYING SURVIVAL STYLE?

What's occurring in a lot of these people, and the research backs this up, is that these folks have a physiological system that's also in that freeze response.

Their metabolism is super low, they don't get enough oxygen to their cells, and there's this threat mechanism inside, signaling DANGER! So even though they are active in their pursuit for better health, these behaviours lose over the primitive nervous system physiology that only wants to hide and hibernate.

3. The third is SO prevalent these days, it's those folks who feel anxiety and fear - and even panic attacks - for no apparent reason.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

- having a mindfulness practice or a cognitive based practice (e.g. positive thinking) and still being anxious, even having panic attacks
- setting up the day to win with strategies and good healthy routines and still being filled with fear and uncertainty
- feeling a lot in the body - butterflies, agitation, tightness in the solar plexus, chest, throat, jaw,

or not feeling much at all in the body

- loud, more negatively focused (or obsessive) thoughts

WHAT'S THE UNDERLYING SURVIVAL STYLE?

The autonomic nervous system is looking for threat on the outside and is wanting to fight or flee. And these survival patterns will keep showing up over and over again until they are faced and worked through because they are not coming from the outside and the present moment, they are coming from the inside physiology that is still stuck in the past.

4. The fourth is being caught in a cycle of toxic relationships and self-sabotage.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

- staying in unsatisfying or toxic relationships
- not knowing why they can't change unhealthy relationship patterns
- finding it hard to set clear (or any) boundaries or to make choices swiftly
- may also be disconnected from the "gut" instinct and what feels instinctively safe or unsafe
- being toxic to oneself as well as having the inability to push ahead in the realms of career and self-expression
- tough to be a reliable witness for oneself

WHAT'S THE UNDERLYING SURVIVAL STYLE?

When our body and nervous system is living in a lot of survival stress, and all it knows is danger and threat, it is next to impossible to accurately judge the environment and know what is safe and not safe. This is often a sign that someone may have experienced early trauma or misattunement. With this sign there's often a combo of fight, flight, and freeze.

5. The fifth is chronic physical and mental health conditions.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

- chronic illness (conditions such as fibromyalgia, burnout, crohn's disease, IBS, autoimmune problems, depression, anxiety, migraine headache, insomnia and other sleep abnormalities)
- chronic fatigue (chronic fatigue syndrome, CFS) and/or chronic pain
- anything where the system is lacking energy, poor immune system health, and the body struggles to recover, regenerate and repair
- seeing many health providers without getting real answers or lasting results
- hearing that what they are experiencing is "all in their head"

WHAT'S THE UNDERLYING SURVIVAL STYLE?

Stored up survival stress physiology is causing the autonomic nervous system to be dysregulated and that dysregulation is impacting physical systems. What is often the case here is fight and flight that's BURIED under the freeze.

BOTTOM LINE: WHEN THAT SURVIVAL ENERGY IS FRONT AND CENTER, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.

Did you recognize yourself or any of your clients here? If so, you're in good company because most of us do.

The good news? Now you know what's really going on and what's really behind those stuck, stubborn, hard to change symptoms and behaviors.

The Sources of Trauma

We dove deep into the sources of trauma in the second video, *Untreated Trauma: The Signs, Sources, and Science* so here's a quick recap for your reference. Be sure to (re)watch the video to dive deeper.

1. Shock trauma

Shock trauma is what we tend to think of most of the time when we think of trauma. We think of an accident, like a crazy downhill ski racer that crashes or a kid that falls off their bike and breaks an arm. They had a bit of a shock, their body got a little hurt and they had to recover from it. Natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes can lead to shock trauma, as can physical and sexual abuse. Even verbal abuse is considered shock trauma over the age of five years old.

2. Accumulated stress

Accumulated stress is something most people wouldn't think of as traumatic, but over time just living in industrialized cultures can be traumatic. We accumulate our stresses due to our work environment, not enough down time, bills to pay, families to take care of, not enough sleep, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. If you think back to that swimming pool, with too many beach balls inside - this would be accumulated stress that's going to wreak havoc on the nervous system as well as all body systems over time.

3. What I'll call 'medical and more' trauma

What I call 'medical and more' trauma is a broader category, but it's important to tell you about it because all too often it goes overlooked as a possible reason someone might be struggling in their life even years after an incident took place. That's what we'd classify as medical and/or anesthesia trauma, as well as ****near-death**** experiences and experiences where something happens to someone when they are unconscious, for example if they've been drugged. Medical procedures that might be considered routine, such as a tonsillectomy or setting a bone after it has been broken, or even a routine doctor's appointment with a doctor who has really poor bedside manner, can lead us to trapping our survival stress reactions, those fight, flight and freeze reactions, inside.

4. Early and developmental trauma, which is actually the most common type in the industrialized world.

This is a big category so for the sake of simplicity let's consider it as scary things that happen to us under the age of 3 or while in utero. Another type of early and developmental trauma, while lesser known to most, is actually one of the more common types and that is not having secure attachment and healthy attunement from a reliable parent or adult caregiver. This type of trauma has a LOT to do with why we get stuck in survival mode and why it can be so hard to heal.

You CAN Heal

What I really want you to know is that you CAN heal from these experiences - and help your clients heal - even years or decades after the traumatic experiences occurred. You can also learn what to do so you are better prepared to avoid trauma when stressful things happen in the future.

I've worked with folks with all kinds of past experiences and while every person (and nervous system) heals differently, in their own way and on their own timeline, EVERYONE has the potential to turn on their healing DNA and to grow their ability to heal.

In Video 3, *The Unorthodox Healing Blueprint: what it takes to really heal*, I'll dive into the specific details of what it takes to heal and what must be put into place and practiced so this healing potential can be turned on and most importantly, STAY on.

(To give you a hint, it has to do with properly sequencing neuroplastic healing and implementing some essential 'keys' that I've found time and time again are mandatory to create lasting change at the nervous system level, so don't miss the third and final video of this training.)

IF YOU'VE MADE IT THIS FAR IN THE WORKSHEET, CONGRATS!!

There is a lot of information here and within Video 2, Untreated Trauma: The Signs, Sources, and Science, and as you'll see, one of THE most important steps in healing trauma is education and understanding what is going on in the body's physiology.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

[Come on over to Irene's Nervous System Facebook Group and leave a comment!](#) Let us know what you learned about untreated trauma and how this might be showing up and impacting your life or those you work with.

To your nervous system health,

Irene