



# How does trauma affect us?



Trauma affects everyone differently

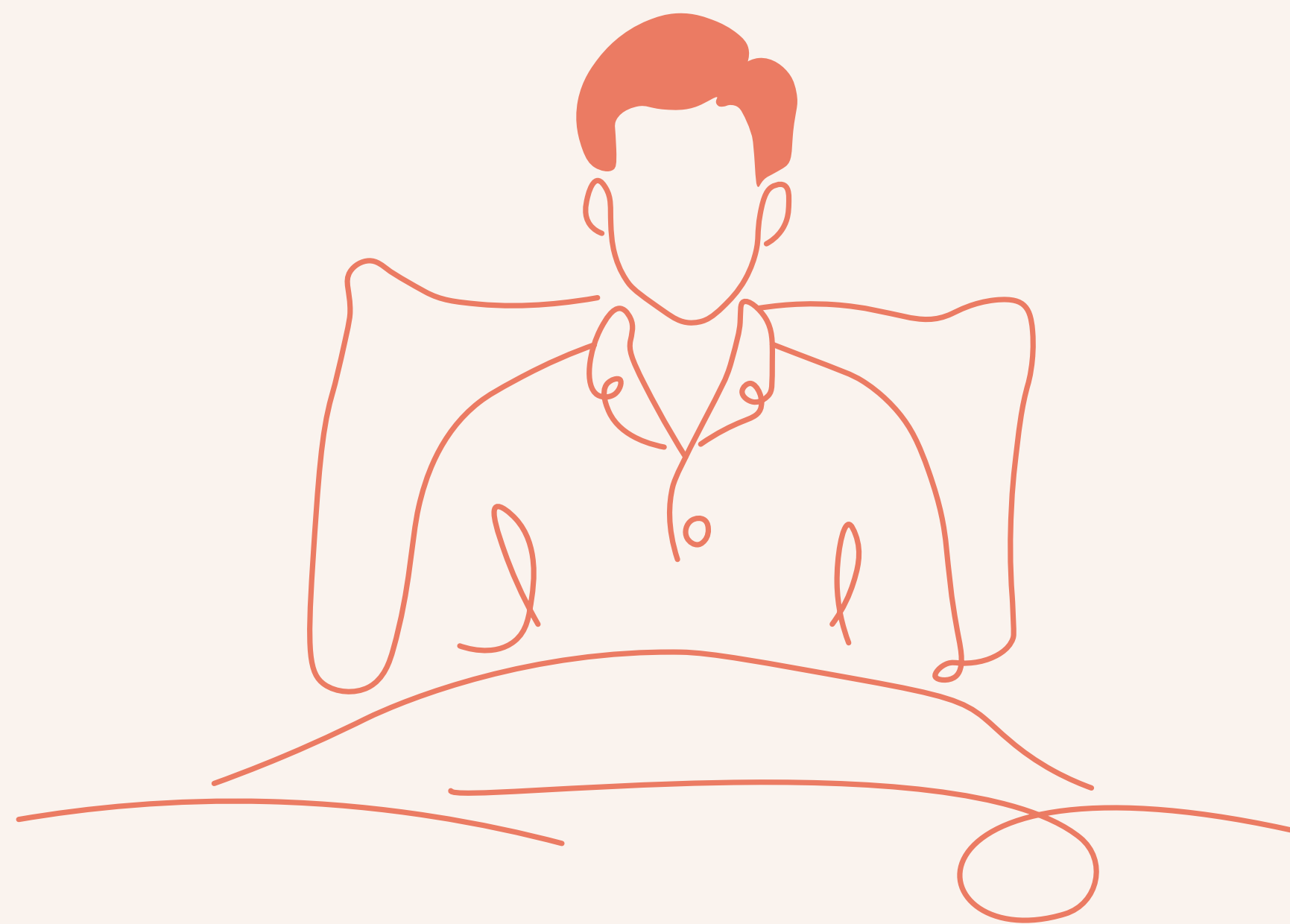
Experiencing a trauma is upsetting and it can be common for people to experience difficulties after the event has ended.

At times, people are able to recover with the support of friends or family, but for others they may need support from professionals to help them to recover.



## How Trauma affects our bodies:

- Trouble sleeping – may be due to nightmares
- Feeling tired and run down
- Feel on edge or jumpy or stressed all the time – heart racing





How trauma effects how we feel:

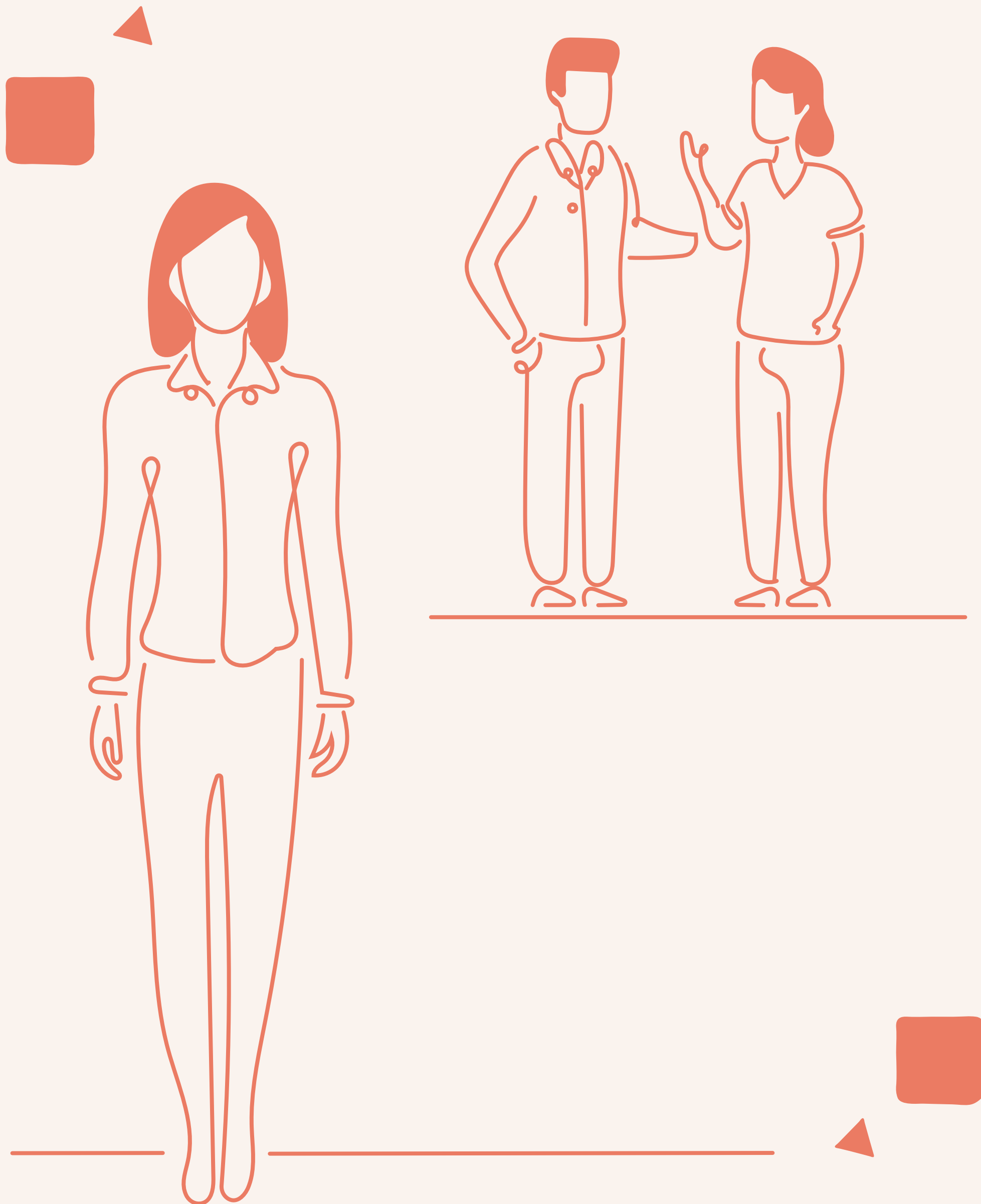
- Feel scared, sad or angry – intense emotions
- Feel numb or not feeling anything
  - Mood swings
- Feel unsafe, even in safe places
  - Feel self blame or shame



How trauma affects our thoughts:

- Trouble concentrating
- Re-experiencing memories or flashbacks of the event
  - Believing trauma was your fault
  - Having a low opinion of yourself





How trauma affects our behaviour:

- Avoid people places anything that reminds you of the trauma
- Isolating yourself from others
- Unable to relax and unwind – having to keep busy/distract
- Use of drugs or alcohol to cope
  - Giving up hobbies



Here are some of those  
difficulties in a bit more detail:





## Flashbacks

Intense, vivid experiences which often feel like you're re-living a past traumatic event. They can feel like the memory is happening again in this moment. You may feel, hear, see or smell things that were happening during the event, as though it were happening now.





# Nightmares

Whilst you are asleep you may experience nightmares that replay the event, or have nightmares that are clearly linked to what happened. These nightmares often wake people up, leaving them feeling scared or frightened and they are likely to impact on one's ability to sleep at night.



## Feeling 'on edge'

After a trauma, sometimes people feel especially alert and watchful - looking out to make sure there are no further threats that may harm them. They may feel more 'jumpy' or 'on edge' or feel more nervous and anxious doing things that they usually would in their day-to-day life.



## Avoidance

Often people want to avoid reminders of what has happened such as thoughts, memories, people, places or things that linked with the traumatic event in some way. Its understandable why you want to avoid reminders but this may impact on your day-to-day life, preventing you from doing the things you would like to do.



## Difficulties in relationships

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Experiencing a trauma can sometimes change how the person sees themselves and other people. For example, if you have been harmed by someone else it would make sense for you to now be cautious of who you can trust, and you may distance yourself from others as a way of trying to protect yourself.



## Difficulties managing feelings

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After a traumatic event, particularly where the event has happened over time and as a child, people may experience difficulties in understanding managing their feelings and struggle to cope. This is not surprising, trauma triggers intense and overwhelming feelings.

Some people find it hard to cope when they get distressed and they may therefore try to manage by using alcohol or drugs or by cutting off or 'dissociating' from their feelings.



Most important to remember  
-its not your fault

- Trauma is never your fault
- Difficulties or symptoms you experience after a trauma are your brain and body's way of trying to cope and protect you
- Help and healing are possible



## Healing/recovery from trauma

- Talk to someone you trust
- Try coping activities on this site
- Healing takes time and that's okay
  - Professional help can make a big difference.