

Flashbacks

Flashbacks are memories of past traumas

They may take the form of pictures, sounds smells body sensations, feelings or lack of them (numbness).

One may have the sense of panic feeling trapped, feeling powerless.

These experiences can also happen in dreams.

The flashback can make you feel like you are reliving your abuse all over again, it can feel so bad and so real that you feel like that child again and it can feel like the adult part of you has disappeared. The adult part that is available to you for reassurance, protection and grounding.

These intense feelings and body sensations can be so frightening, that you may start to feel that you are crazy and feel afraid to tell anybody what is going on, who would believe it!

Flashbacks are normal, you are not crazy you are remembering what has happened to you as a child and instead of just words building up a picture you are using all of your senses. You are healing from your abuse

What Helps?

Tell yourself that you are having a flashback

Remind yourself that this is the past when you were little and you survived

Breathe, when we get scared we can stop breathing, our body panics due to the lack of oxygen, breathe deeply, long deep breathes.

Get grounded, in the present , use your senses to bring you back to the present, what can you hear , what can you see, what can you feel

Reassure your "little one" as you become more aware of the adult side returning, speak to the little one, that it is okay to have these feelings but that you are here now. Wrap up in a blanket, hold a teddy, go to bed, what will help you at this time.

Take time to recover , flashbacks are powerful , you will feel emotionally drained and sore, you need to take time ,have a nap, take a bath, be kind and gentle to yourself.

Appreciate how much your little one went through as a child. As a child you survived this horrible time.

As an adult healing from childhood sexual abuse as you remember, you are honouring your experiences. Be patient it takes time to heal and this is part of healing.

