Treatment of Flashbacks

Initial Session

The need / aim is to educate the individual as to the reason for and meaning of flashbacks. They need to be recognised as a normal response to an abnormal and traumatic occurrence. This is known as ‘normalisation’. Explore with the individual how their experience of trauma has changed their view of the world.

Subsequent Sessions

These will involve the development of coping mechanisms. Usually there is a need to look at trigger factors.

There are a number of areas which can be explored with the individual:

- How the flashbacks present – client’s own description
- Can any causes / triggers be identified? Use of a diary can help here.
- When / in what circumstances did the last one occur?
- Is the flashback to any particular part of the trauma?
- What particular meaning does the flashback have for the individual?
- Do any thoughts / sensations precede the flashback, enabling it’s onset to be recognised early?
- Has the individual ever experienced flashbacks before?
- Have any coping mechanisms been developed so far?