



# Prolonged Exposure

Proven to be effective at addressing trauma, and is best for young people between the ages of 12-22. Many people who have experienced a trauma try to avoid thoughts and feelings associated with that event such as situations, places, and activities.


- Imaginal exposure is where you re-live the trauma repeatedly in your mind
- In-vivo exposure is where you confront situations that you avoid because you become afraid of them after your trauma

There are between 6-8 therapy sessions and each lasts 90 minutes. With the support of your therapist you will first work through imaginal exposure. You will tell your trauma story 3 times during each session, and these will be recorded for you to listen to while at home.



## **Benefits:**

- Re-living the trauma in imagery may help you to gain control over the memories.
- Thoughts may be less likely to pop up at a time you don't want them to.
- Flashbacks, nightmares and intrusive thoughts that many trauma survivors experience may occur less often.
- After you re-live the trauma many times, memories may be less upsetting.



Individuals will be asked to take their recordings home with them to listen to them throughout the week. By doing these steps a few things happen:

- You may be able to process and make sense of the experience.
- You may realize that thinking about a traumatic experience is not dangerous, and neither is being upset or anxious.
- You may become less afraid of other situations that remind you of your trauma.
- You may learn that you can handle your fear and anxiety and you feel better about yourself.
- You may learn that when you confront memories or situations you have avoided, the fear and distress go down.

During in-vivo exposure individuals are again asked to go to a place that will increase your anxiety and remain in that place until you are able to calm yourself. This is started out slowly, and then increased as you continue therapy.

