

Health Threats in Tourism Course  
Lecturer: Mahmoud Abdou  
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Assignment 7



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**1. Explain, in no more than 500 words, how past traumatic experiences can trigger panic attacks during travel.**

**Ans:** The psychological processes that can enormously heighten the susceptibility to develop panic attacks when travelling pertain to prior effective experiences with trauma. Once a person has been traumatized, his or her nervous system will be over-controlling, surveying the environment at all times and expecting danger despite being in a condition that has nothing to do with danger.

Traveling is something that contains numerous factors that may be used as triggers of trauma. Both claustrophobia and a sense of loss of control, as well as the unfamiliar environment where there is a loss of control over the schedule and environment and overloading of airports and airplane cabin, can trigger the alarm system in the body of trauma survivors. In case a person had some previous experience of trauma related to transportation (car accident, turbulence), confined environments (abuse, being trapped), or loss of control, such travel factors might unintentionally evoke a memory of the initial traumatic event to their mind.

The part of the brain, the amygdala, which identifies threats is unable to differentiate between threatened figures of the past and that of the present. When activated it sets in the same fight-or-flight response that came about during the traumatic event. This brings a chain reaction of physical symptoms: the heartbeat races, one sweats after it, has difficulty in getting a breath, is dizzy, extremely afraid - such is a so-called panic attack.

The triggers that surround travel tend to be a sense of being trapped (on a train or plane or in traffic), being lost out of safety networks, sudden change of schedule that subconsciously reminds the individual of the helplessness they felt previously or even the sensation of sight or sound (plane engine, crowds) that remind the individual at a subconscious level of the trauma that occurred.

There are also other factors such as travel stress as going through stressful situations without a history of trauma may reduce the threshold to panic attacks. This is a recipe with mixed in unresolved trauma creating a perfect storm. There can also be the precipitation of a trip when the individual can anticipate the preparation of the trip and the imagination begins to repeat things that may happen and are unsafe to the trauma-sensitized system.

These associations are very important to trauma survivors plotting to travel. Acknowledging that panic attacks on the occasion of traveling are perhaps the manifestation of the nervous system defense clinging to the previous instances, can decrease self-improvements and help react more productively.

## **2. Describe, in no more than 500 words, how isolation from family and social environments during travel can lead to depression.**

**Ans:** Although long-distance travel may be enriching, it can also sometimes lead to depression due to isolating and disconnecting a person with his or her previously established sources of support. Human beings are naturally social animal and keep on depending on the consistent relations and familiar settings to proceed with emotional directive and psychological wellbeing. In the case of travel, more so when it is over a long duration, individuals are kept out of contact with their major social support systems: families, close friends, and the community which usually introduces emotional validation, instrumental aid, and a feeling of belongingness. This lack of familiar signs and associations can provoke the sensation of loneliness and aloofness, the main roots of depressive periods.

This isolation is magnified by the failure of normal social contacts. Such normal routines as a family dinner, coffee with friends, or participating in the community give a sense to everyday life. Unless the anchoring of relationships and activities is present, the traveler can be left with feelings of existential emptiness and meaninglessness, which are pre-depressive conditions.

Isolation can be aggravated by the cultural barriers in traveling abroad. The inability to communicate or understand others, language barriers, and cultural norms we do not know anything about might become an insurmountable obstacle, and a traveler may become a person whose eyes are not opened. This dislocation in culture may result in a feeling of being nowhere. Although the technology can be of assistance in terms of establishing certain contact, it is not a substitute to actual presence and personal emotional support. Captured video calls and messages do not offer the finer emotional touch and the physical reassurance of the face-to face interactions, and the traveler can be left with a greater sense of isolation.

They affect solo travellers badly as they do not even get a companion to travel with to provide them with socializations every day. The fact that the student is always at the edge of travelling new environments, taking decisions on his/ her own, and Passing through experiences without instant emotional support can prove tormenting.

Moreover, the social expectations to always be happy and make the best out of any traveling experience may result in inner disharmony once we begin to feel sad or lonely, which may hinder the outcomes by pushing away this part of our physiology that has to be addressed through a healthy mechanism, instead of by bottling it up.

The mix of social isolation, disruption in routines, cultural detachment, and emotional engagement superimposed had caused the biggest problem.