

Health Threats in Tourism Course
Lecturer: Mahmoud Abdou
June 20, 2025
Assignment 7

Monika
DE240057



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

Ans. A person's emotional and physical reactions can be greatly impacted by past traumatic experiences, especially in new or stressful situations like when traveling. Certain circumstances, sights, sounds, or even smells that remind one of a traumatic event in the past can cause panic attacks while traveling. The way the brain interprets and retains traumatic memories is the cause of this.

Trauma changes how the brain works, particularly in the prefrontal cortex (which controls and thinks rationally), hippocampus (which processes memories), and amygdala (the brain's fear center). When someone experiences a trigger, like being stuck in a crowded airport, being delayed, or being confined on an airplane, the amygdala may mistakenly perceive these stressors as threats that are comparable to the initial trauma. The classic symptoms of a panic attack, including a fast heartbeat, perspiration, shortness of breath, lightheadedness, and a sense of impending doom, can result from the body going into "fight or flight" mode and releasing adrenaline and cortisol.

For instance, similar situations like traffic jams, loud announcements, or abrupt turbulence may unconsciously remind someone of a violent crime or auto accident they have previously experienced while traveling. Even in situations where there is no actual threat, the brain may react as though the danger is reoccurring due to this involuntary memory retrieval.

Furthermore, traveling frequently entails uncertainty, a lack of control, and being separated from accustomed support networks, all of which can increase vulnerability. Dissociation or

flashbacks can occur in people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which causes them to feel as though they are reliving the trauma or are cut off from reality. In confined or overstimulating settings, such as buses, airports, or foreign cities, these reactions may be particularly noticeable.

For those whose trauma included a loss of safety or autonomy, cultural or linguistic barriers during travel can exacerbate feelings of powerlessness. Paradoxically, anxiety can be triggered by even positive anticipation, such as excitement for a trip, if it evokes memories of a similar but traumatic past event.

Both travelers and those who assist them should be aware of this connection. People can manage these triggers with the aid of methods like breathing exercises, grounding exercises, and therapy—particularly trauma-informed approaches like cognitive behavioral therapy or EMDR. Many trauma survivors can progressively regain their confidence and enjoy traveling once more with the right planning and coping mechanisms.

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

Ans. Feelings of loneliness, alienation, and, in certain situations, depression can be greatly exacerbated by being away from family and comfortable social settings while traveling. Even though travel is frequently linked to excitement and adventure, many people may experience emotional distress as a result of social separation, particularly if they are traveling for extended periods of time, for work, or to new locations.

People are social creatures by nature. Maintaining mental health requires regular engagement with friends, family, and familiar surroundings. Travelers may experience a lack of emotional connection and a sense of belonging when they are physically separated from these support networks. In times of stress or uncertainty, when one would typically turn to family or friends for support or guidance, this absence can be especially upsetting.

Language and cultural barriers frequently increase the impact, particularly when the traveler is in a foreign nation. Feelings of frustration, alienation, and low self-worth can result from simple interactions becoming challenging. Depressive thoughts are often preceded by feelings of being invisible or misunderstood, which can be exacerbated by an inability to relate to the local environment or communicate.

Although social media, messaging apps, and video calls can facilitate virtual contact, technology cannot completely replace the psychological comfort of in-person interactions and physical presence. Additionally, time zone differences or hectic schedules can make it challenging to communicate consistently, which exacerbates the feeling of alienation.

Long-term loneliness can cause symptoms like constant melancholy, lack of drive, exhaustion, and disengagement from once-enjoyable activities. In more severe cases, people may feel hopeless, anxious, or have a decline in their self-esteem—all of which are symptoms of depression.

Particularly at risk are travelers who are already at risk, such as expatriates, students studying overseas, or workers on extended overseas assignments. A feeling of emptiness or cultural disorientation may replace the initial excitement of being in a new setting. This emotional deterioration may develop into clinical depression in the absence of proactive support.

It is crucial for travelers to develop routines that promote connection in order to combat these effects. The psychological effects of isolation can be lessened by participating in familiar activities, keeping in touch with family, joining local social groups, and getting mental health help when necessary.

In conclusion, being separated from accustomed social and familial settings while traveling can weaken emotional fortitude and raise the risk of developing depression. Maintaining mental health while traveling requires being aware of the warning signs and creating support systems both domestically and overseas.