



# WHEN THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES TRAUMA

Stephanie Mobley, MSW, LCSW

HURT PEOPLE  
HURT PEOPLE



# Trauma and the Professional

Examples:

Workplace Violence

War or Political Violence

Major Surgery/Health Crisis

Violence

Serious Injury

Abuse

Sudden Unexpected or Violent Death of Someone Close

Natural Disaster

Accident

Witnessing an Event

Secondary Experience...Trauma of a Loved One



traumatic events, by definition, overwhelm our ability to cope

When the mind becomes flooded with emotion, a circuit breaker is thrown that allows us to survive the experience fairly intact, that is, without becoming psychotic or frying out one of the brain centers.

The cost of this blown circuit is emotion frozen within the body. In other words, we often unconsciously stop feeling our trauma partway into it, like a movie that is still going after the sound has been turned off.

We cannot heal until we move fully through that trauma, including all the feelings of the event.

John Pease Banitt, The Trauma Tool Kit: Healing PTSD from the Inside Out

**ebook/TraumaAndDissociation**

[www.dissociative-identity-disorder.net/wiki/PTSD](http://www.dissociative-identity-disorder.net/wiki/PTSD)

image adapted from [kethwef.deviantart.com/art/rainbow-comet-213](http://kethwef.deviantart.com/art/rainbow-comet-213)



AND JUST LIKE THAT  
everything was suddenly

DIFFERENT.

[soitsbeensaid.tumblr](http://soitsbeensaid.tumblr)



# Taking a Personal Inventory

Physical Pain

Nightmares or Flashbacks

Depression or Anxiety

Withdrawal

Avoidance

Repression

Emotional Numbing


Hypervigilant

Irritability

Guilt and Shame



# Inventory Test



You're not a victim for sharing your story, you are a survivor for setting the world on fire with your truth. And you never know who needs your light, your warmth, and raging courage.

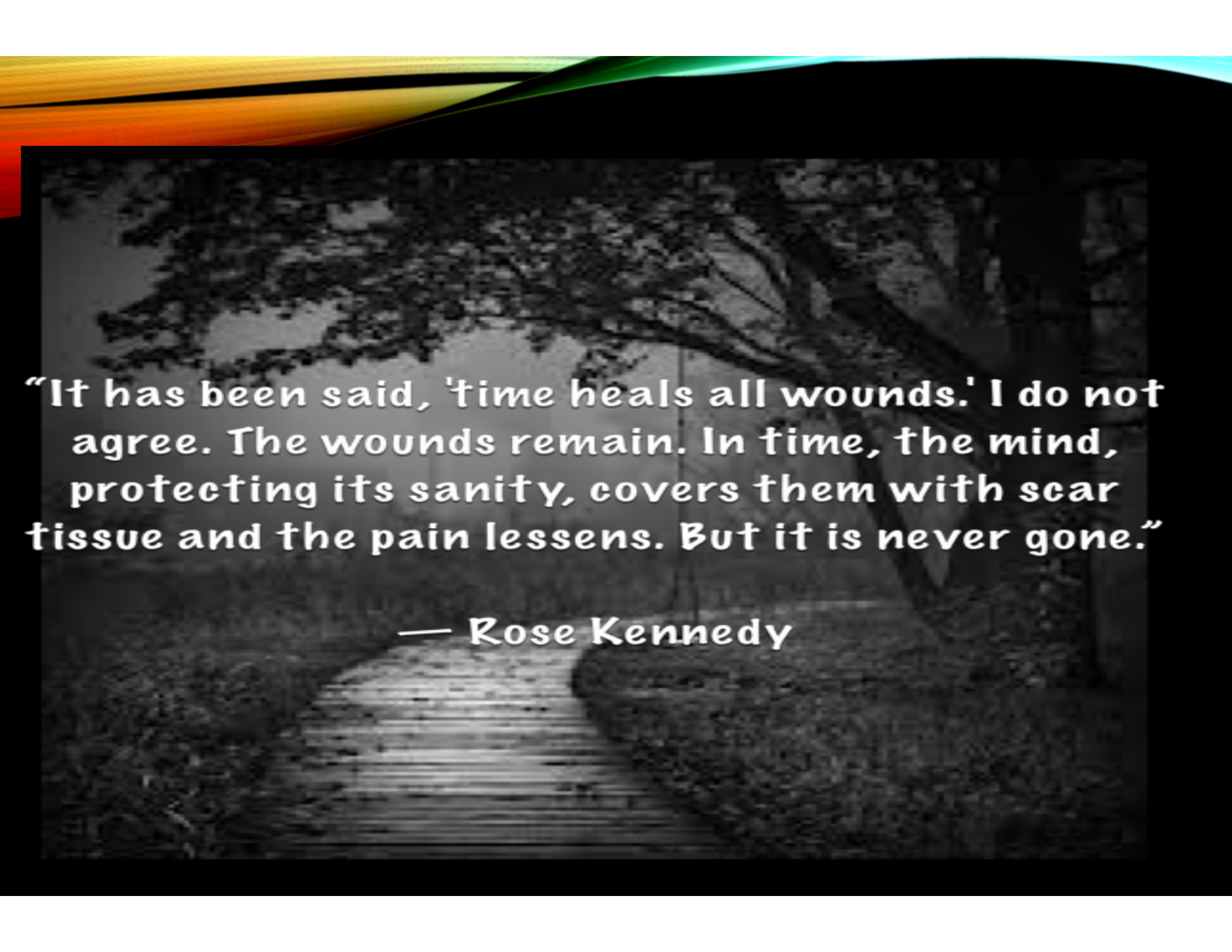
-Alex Elle



# My Story

Often don't realize there's a  
difference between general anxiety  
and anxiety associated with PTSD.  
For most of us with PTSD, it's not  
about what might happen. It's about  
what has happened. Telling a person  
with PTSD to "just let go because  
it won't fix anything" or "most  
things you worry about will  
never happen" can not only be  
harmful to us but it can also be  
helpful. Because the things that  
cause our anxiety already  
happened. For us, it's not so much  
about worrying, it's about  
remembering.





**“It has been said, ‘time heals all wounds.’ I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time, the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens. But it is never gone.”**

**— Rose Kennedy**



# COPING WITH TRAUMA

Active coping-accepting the results of trauma and taking action to improve things  
Active coping can only occur when there is no current crisis. It is a way to respond  
our everyday lives and is a habit that must be made stronger at this point.

Recovery is a process-takes time.

Having an ongoing response to trauma is normal.

Recovery is an ongoing process...daily. It does not happen overnight.

Part of healing is getting through the pain. You will still have pain and negative  
feelings, just easier to cope with. You will never forget. Trauma leaves a permanent  
imprint.



# COPING WITH TRAUMA CONT'D

Positive coping actions-even the professional needs to cope and be reminded how to cope!

Talking to others for support-keeps from isolating self and feeling less alone.

Reminding yourself they are just that, memories.

Don't deny the memories, realize it's natural to have them.

Remember eventually the memories will be less overwhelming.

Talk yourself through them, looking around, grounding yourself to the present.

# COPING WITH TRAUMA CONT'D

Get up and walk around, get a drink or walk outside.

Talk to a trusted friend when you are experiencing severe emotions.

If you're experiencing nightmares, remind yourself it's a dream. Get out of bed, get a drink, turn on the light, walk around the room. Journal if you have time in order to clear your mind.

Stick to a schedule.

Engage in calming activities before winding down for bed.

Avoid using any substances before bed such as caffeine, alcohol, or tobacco.

# COPING WITH TRAUMA CONT'D

Take time to pay attention to angry feelings and walk away from situations.

Get into a daily exercise routine.

Slow down-don't let distractions become your coping skills...it doesn't work and can be more harmful in the long run.

Take an inventory of emotions. It's easy to slip into depression without even realizing it.

Make sure to continue to take part in activities you enjoy or used to enjoy.



# COPING WITH TRAUMA CONT'D

Methods of relaxation:

Muscle relaxation

Spending time in nature

Listening to quiet music

Prayer

Swimming or yoga

Meditation exercises

# MEDITATION



© iStock.com / nullplus



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS