

Recover from major emotional life events

Doctor Sarah Niblock, CEO of the UK Council for Psychotherapy, and psychotherapist Alivia Rose discuss how to navigate overwhelming feelings in the wake of unexpected and life-changing occurrences



THE CYCLE OF emotions that we experience when a momentous life event

takes place can leave us feeling out of control. If we've lost a loved one, a job or experienced isolation as a result of the pandemic, a chain of emotions can take hold. In the accompanying podcast with UKCP psychotherapist Alivia Rose, I seek to uncover what this emotional cycle looks like, and how therapy can offer a safe space in which to explore our emotional state.

Sarah

CEO of the UK Council for Psychotherapy

Therapist Alivia Rose explores the psychological effects of unanticipated crises that throw us into turmoil

Sometimes, things happen that turn our world upside down. A bereavement, job loss and the pandemic are all significant and unexpected events that trigger waves of emotions that can feel crushing. So, how can we find ways to cope?

It's important to remember that waves come and go. However, it's useful to have a road map of what to expect – although everyone's map will be unique. Generally speaking, we may experience anxiety and fear, and when we are scared or worried, our mind can take us to the worst-case scenario.

We might feel anguish, upset and

grief, asking the question: 'Can I bear this pain?' We may feel anger and frustration, or denial – cutting ourselves off from what's happening. We might feel depressed, rendering us numb to give us a break from the pain. Then, we can feel acceptance, when we are no longer ruled by our strong feelings, and we begin to accept what has happened and find new strength.

Path to healing

It may seem daunting to look at the road map, but the more we understand that these emotions come and go in their own sequence, the quicker the wave will pass over us.

If we feel extremely fearful or isolated, friends and family can bring a sense of support and space that is necessary to process what we are going through. However, there are times when those we love try to distract us or relieve

our emotional waves, which can make us feel disconnected.

If you are in need of support after a bereavement, job loss or any other significant event, psychotherapy can help. Psychotherapists are trained to support you at your most difficult time and offer understanding and assistance in finding ways to help you contain and understand your strong emotions. Emotions need to be expressed and acknowledged so they can pass. The psychotherapeutic space offers calm in the eye of an emotional storm.



The podcast

Has a big life event caused you to feel a range of emotional states? Perhaps you have lost a loved one,

been made redundant or feel at a loss in terms of your identity? UKCP's Sarah Niblock and Alivia Rose discuss the cycle of emotions that come into play when something happens that is out of our control. Listen at psychologies.co.uk/recover-major-emotional-life-events-podcast-ukcp

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HOW I BECAME A THERAPIST



Learning more about herself during therapy attracted Alivia Rose to the profession

I WAS IN MY LATE TEENS when I realised that meditation alone wasn't helping me understand my feelings or why I felt the way I did. I was introduced to psychotherapy by a friend and it became a space where I could open up about my deep and painful feelings without judgment. I was fascinated and excited to learn more, and I chose to study the Gestalt psychotherapy model. I was interested in the attention to being in the present, the therapeutic relationship and the importance of the whole person. By understanding myself, I was drawn to work with others, so I could support them, often in their darkest hour.

During my career, I have integrated other therapeutic models. I ran the Gestalt Training Studio in North London and, 36 years after qualifying, I still feel privileged to listen to people in an authentic way every day and help them navigate difficult terrain. aliviarose.co.uk

How does a therapy session unfold?

Talking about your feelings in psychotherapy can be scary at first, but understanding your emotional road map with the help of an expert can, over time, leave you feeling reassured

1 *When a client first comes into my consulting room, they are usually ready to explore what is happening to them. The first thing I ask is what specifically brings them to therapy at this time, and they begin to open up.*

2 *As you start therapy and speak honestly about what is going on for you emotionally, sometimes for the first time, it can be unnerving. But, as a client starts to talk, I can see where they are in their cycle of emotions, and can initiate a*

conversation about the emotional road map. This often reassures a client about my ability to understand them and hold them in the psychotherapeutic space.

3 *As a psychotherapist, it is important that I articulate how normal it is to feel overwhelmed at certain times in our lives. Our work together aims to provide the space for free and frank conversation, so we can work through difficult feelings, realise that they are manageable and move to a happier state of being.*

About UKCP and how to find a therapist

• **The UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)** is the leading research, innovation, educational and

regulatory body working to advance psychotherapy for the benefit of all. We have a register of more than 8,000 individual members, who offer a range of therapy approaches for couples, individuals, families and groups. We also have more than 70 training

and accrediting organisations for those who wish to become psychotherapists.

• **To find the right therapist for you** or learn how to become a therapist, visit psychology.org.uk



