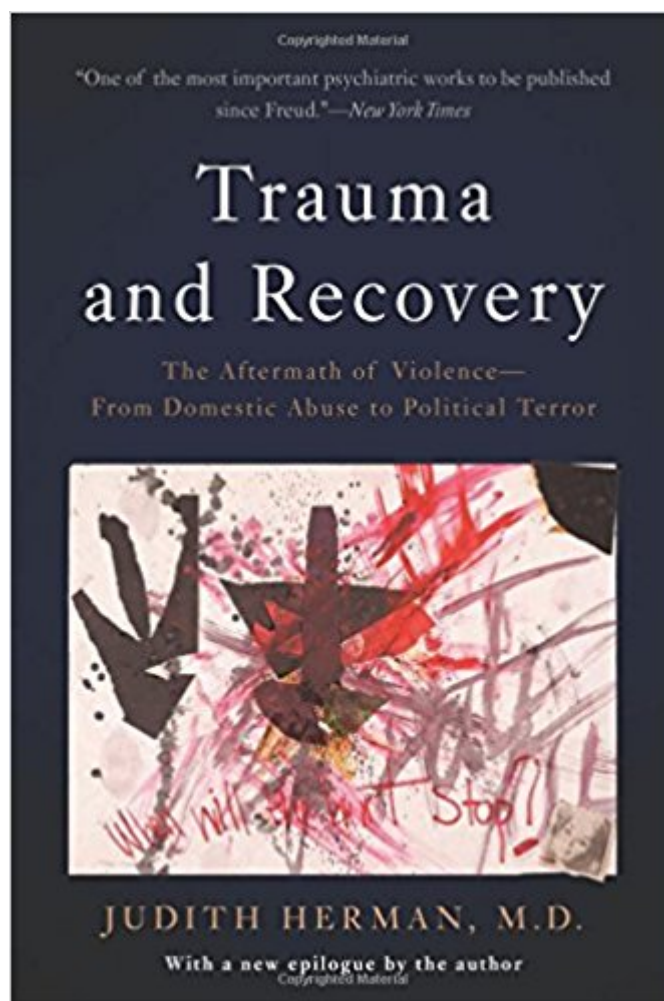


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# Trauma And Recovery: The Aftermath Of Violence--From Domestic Abuse To Political Terror



## Synopsis

When *Trauma and Recovery* was first published in 1992, it was hailed as a groundbreaking work. In the intervening years, Herman's volume has changed the way we think about and treat traumatic events and trauma victims. In a new afterword, Herman chronicles the incredible response the book has elicited and explains how the issues surrounding the topic have shifted within the clinical community and the culture at large. *Trauma and Recovery* brings a new level of understanding to a set of problems usually considered individually. Herman draws on her own cutting-edge research in domestic violence as well as on the vast literature of combat veterans and victims of political terror, to show the parallels between private terrors such as rape and public traumas such as terrorism. The book puts individual experience in a broader political frame, arguing that psychological trauma can be understood only in a social context. Meticulously documented and frequently using the victims' own words as well as those from classic literary works and prison diaries, *Trauma and Recovery* is a powerful work that will continue to profoundly impact our thinking.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Excellent, in-depth book on various types of trauma and the effects & treatments. There is some political slant, but it is not the focus of the book. If you are serious about understanding trauma and people, this is an incredible book. I'm amazed how thorough it is. I'm amazed this much information can be in one book that is only 276 pages long and not a text book. It's well-written. There is some sophisticated vocabulary in it...Several times I had to look up words in my online dictionary to fully

understand what the author is communicating. She is wonderfully gifted in her approach to this subject. She starts with history, goes into trauma and various treatments. She delineates differences of acute trauma of a single event vs chronic traumas. She delineates further on how even just one good support can help someone with trauma, vs the results of someone experiencing trauma yet having no validating support. One of her key points is Chapter 6... "A New Diagnosis"... discussing that complaints of chronically traumatized people are not well-understood. For example:...

"Survivors of child abuse who become patients appear with a bewildering array of symptoms.... They may collect a virtual pharmacopeia of remedies: one for headaches, another for insomnia, another for anxiety, another for depression. None of these tends to work very well, since the underlying issues of trauma are not addressed". She talks about getting the correct diagnosis. Investigating under the symptoms, thoroughly knowing the history. After that, the treatments are not just medication or psychotherapy. It's often both, but in a certain way... Safety first, then trauma work, then reconnection.

I read this for work purposes and found it a helpful and thought-provoking resource, a book I'll likely want to refer to again in the future. First published in 1992, this was apparently a ground-breaking work, but while there's been plenty of research into trauma since then (if you can recommend a good follow-up to this one, please let me know!), it has stood the test of time so far. Certainly it rings true to my experience. As you would expect from the title, the primary focus of the book is on describing the effects and symptoms of psychological trauma, and the stages of a successful recovery. It can at times be tough reading emotionally, even though it's not a book focused on case studies or anecdotes (indeed, my only quibble with the book is that I would've liked to see the specific cases, set off in short blockquotes, expanded and integrated more into the book). But the educated reader will find it accessible; this is an academic book, but of the best kind, written in clear and engaging language. It would make worthwhile reading not just for therapists and students, but also for trauma survivors, their loved ones, and other professionals. The author sees the big picture - only a small part of the book is geared specifically to therapists - and I found that very helpful in providing a framework for understanding things I have seen and heard from various people. Another aspect of this book that bears mentioning, and which I appreciate, is Dr. Herman's unabashedly feminist perspective. The book addresses and draws on research from many sources of trauma, from combat to concentration camps, but the author's experience seems to be primarily with survivors of sexual abuse in childhood, and it is the unfortunately more everyday sorts of trauma that the book comes back to.

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