

# TRAUMA LABELS

When we experience an acute trauma, we are usually immediately given some labels that can include things such as being brave, strong, a victim, a survivor. We may be called courageous, inspirational and unfortunate; all of which dictate how we feel about ourselves.

After an acute trauma it is normal to be unsure about how to respond or react and we may feel things we don't fully recognise. The labels other people give us often shape how we recognise and respond to our thoughts which can be limiting and dangerous in both the short and long term.

**INSIGHT**



## THIS IS ACUTE TRAUMA

This worksheet helps to critically evaluate the labels that are given to us when we experience acute trauma and what they can mean for our emotional well being.

### SELF FULFILLING PROPHECY

A self-fulfilling prophecy is the socio-psychological phenomenon of someone "predicting" or expecting something, and this "prediction" or expectation coming true simply because the person believes it will and their resulting behaviours will align to fulfil that belief

### Worksheet Activity

Think about all the labels that others have given you and list them on a piece of paper.

Highlight the labels that you can most relate to and for each label write a word with the opposite meaning.

Take each of the words and think about what you might feel if you were given that label. How would you think about yourself? What emotions might you have? What thoughts would you share?

Changing the way we respond to labels will take time and effort. Consistency is important and making small steps regularly will be the most effective approach to facilitating change.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PERMISSION

Labels have a complex relationship with our thoughts. When we accept one label we lose the opportunity to think and feel things associated with another.

For example, if we label ourselves as a survivor, it makes it difficult for us to express our anger, hurt and sadness as a victim. If we label ourselves as strong, it can be difficult to feel vulnerable.

As we respond to our acute trauma, it is vital that we have permission to feel a full spectrum of thoughts and feelings regardless of how we or society label them.

