

## DID THE TRAUMA OF WORLD WAR ONE LEAD TO GREAT CREATIVITY?

## Video transcript - Victoria Tischler

I am at the Maudsley hospital in London, built in 1915 to treat soldiers suffering from shell shock.

Early research into mental disorders caused by war trauma was conducted here, and patients were encouraged to take up creative pastimes to aid their recovery.

Because their sense of safety has been shattered a traumatised person may avoid situations which remind them of the event and trigger unpleasant emotions. a person may be tormented by intrusive flashbacks or nightmares. They also may experience physical symptoms such as nausea and headaches.

These symptoms are a normal response to a traumatic event but if they persist longer term they can begin to interfere with people's day to day life.

Creativity can act as a coping mechanism and can be a powerful mode of narrating trauma. For example writing or painting can help to process traumatic experiences and negative emotions. For many, creative expression is not just therapeutic; it can empower them by offering a positive identity shift, from patient to artist.

Most people recover from traumatic events over a period of time and some find that their lives improve as a result. This is called post traumatic growth.

Since World War One our understanding of trauma has increased, and it's clear that then as now creativity is enormously helpful in aiding people's recovery from traumatic experiences.