

We can't talk about sustainable economics and sustainable development and sustainable sustainability and then not talk about sustainable activism. That would be hypocrisy.

We have to take care of ourselves and each other, because it's not better to burnout than fade away; rather it's better not to fade away at all.

There will be several excellent workshops at the camp on burnout avoidance, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, physical techniques for staying centred (Soma, Chi Gong) and some truly excellent physical spaces put together by the safety and well-being working group.

## **Creating a climate of change.**

Trauma work is part of resistance.

One of the amazing things about activists is that we often deliberately expose ourselves to brutality when we believe it necessary. What is sometimes equally surprising is how little we know about the psychological effects of this violence. We need to prepare ourselves and learn how to support each other through the physical and emotional consequences of trauma.

Even the police are informed about the consequences of violence in political protests and a lot of the times they work with peer group schemes to deal with it. Firemen debrief after every operation.



It's not that we need to follow the example of the police, it's just to say that this problem exists and is taken very seriously in society. We wonder why we, as activists, still think we can live through situations of severe police brutality without showing any emotional response.

And, in fact, we don't. A lot of people drop out, disappear, stop being active, feel excluded because of their fear or because they are suffering from post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). Even after obvious incidents like the Diaz school in Genoa, there was no emotional support set up for the victims. A lot of them suffered more from the emotional consequences than the physical injuries.

Traumatic experiences can result in isolation, flashbacks, lots of crying, not being able to cope with life any more, suicidal thoughts, loss of interest in life, etc. and can take a long time to heal.

A lot of the time we don't even know the symptoms to be able to recognize what's happening and we don't know how to help ourselves and how to support our friends and comrades.

If we want to be effective as a movement, we need to be able to support each other when we are facing police violence. We need to be conscious that what we are doing is potentially dangerous and could be life threatening. This is not to scare people off, in contrary, but we need to face reality and deal with our fears. If we know we will be supported afterwards and we are aware of what can happen to us emotionally in consequence to police brutality, we will be able to feel more secure and prepared in our actions.

activist-trauma.net [activist-trauma@riseup.net](mailto:activist-trauma@riseup.net) or 07962 406940