

The Telegraph

Search - enhanced by Google

Friday 10 May 2013

HOME NEWS WORLD SPORT FINANCE COMMENT BLOGS CULTURE TRAVEL LIFE FASHION TECH Dating Offers Jobs
Politics Obits Education Earth Science Defence Health Scotland Royal Celebrities **Weird**

HOME » NEWS » NEWS TOPICS » HOW ABOUT THAT?

Emotional pain hurts more than physical pain, researchers say

Pain caused by emotional distress is more deeply felt and longer lasting than that caused by physical injuries, according to a new study.

By Chris Irvine
6:47PM BST 28 Aug 2008

In a finding that calls into question the old saying that "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me", psychologists used four experiments to discover how people get over emotional or physical pain.

In their paper "When Hurt Will Not Heal: Exploring the Capacity to Relive Social and Physical Pain", the authors propose recent discoveries suggesting social or emotional pain is as real and intense as physical pain.

The researchers asked participants to relive their past painful experiences by writing in detail what had happened and how they had felt.

In the first two studies, students were asked to relive both emotional and physical pain, answering a series of questions and then recalling in detail an experience of physical injury, or an experience of betrayal by a person who was close to them, or both.

Each experience was to have occurred in the previous five years.

Related Articles

[Exercise helps stroke victims recover](#) 28 Aug 2008

The students were asked to note how long ago the event happened, how much it hurt at the time, how many times they had talked about the experience, and how painful the experience felt now.

Participants in the emotional pain condition reported higher levels of pain than participants in the physical pain condition, found the researchers from Purdue University in the US and Macquarie University and the University of New South Wales in Australia.

The students also reported less pain when they relived the experience than they had reported before writing the account.

In experiments three and four participants were given cognitive tasks with different levels of difficulty after reliving a socially or physically painful event.

Again, those in the emotional pain condition performed worse than those



How about that?
News »

Elsewhere



Pictures of the day



Twenty MPs pocket up to £180,000 each on taxpayer-funded second homes

In How About That?



Flying with the sun

The Telegraph Unlimited website access START NOW >

More From The Web »



\$99+ pp/pn: Catalina Island Getaway Pkgs w/ RT Boat Ride, Hotel, Breakfast & More

Exclusive Deals

Click for More Offers

Powered By DunhillTravelDeals

More From The Web

Newsmax

- State Department Removed 'Terror' From Talking Points
- Tiger Tacos Next? Lion-Meat Lunch Pulled Off Menu
- Printable 3-D Gun Downloaded 100,000

thinking about physical injury.

One of the authors, Dr Kip Williams from Purdue, said: "While both types of pain can hurt very much at the time they occur, social pain has the unique ability to come back over and over again, whereas physical pain lingers only as an awareness that it was indeed at one time painful.

"Why aren't we always suffering pain by recollections of social betrayal and other forms of social pain? Because we are pretty good at keeping these memories at bay.

"We had to induce our participants to think about the details of the social painful event in order to get them to feel pain at the present. Merely saying, 'oh yeah, my boyfriend cheated on me once...' is insufficient to cause current pain. They have to steep themselves in the memory, and that's something we don't ordinarily do."

The results are published in the August issue of the journal Psychological Science.



Underwater surfers

Pictures of the day

Times

- **Do You Support Giving Illegals Citizenship? Vote Here Now**
- **Slow Down, Halt, or Reverse Arthritis**
- **Gen. Hayden: Continuing Benghazi Fiction Unforgiveable**
- **Gloria Allred: Arias Plea Is 'Ultimate Manipulation'**
- **Steve King: Obama Lowers American Values**

News Most Viewed

- | TODAY | PAST WEEK | PAST MONTH |
|---|-----------|------------|
| 1. Prince Harry arrives in Washington for start of US tour | | |
| 2. Twenty MPs pocket up to £180,000 each on taxpayer-funded second homes | | |
| 3. Ohio kidnappings: Michelle Knight forced to deliver Amanda Berry's baby on Christmas Day | | |
| 4. Russia showcases military pomp for Victory Day | | |
| 5. Cleveland kidnappings: Ariel Castro may face death penalty over miscarriages | | |

Ads By Google

3 Early Signs of Dementia

Doctor: Know These 3 Warning Signs You're About to Suffer Dementia
www.newsmax.com

New Sciatica Treatment

Read about our 30-minute, minimally invasive treatment for sciatica.
www.NorthAmericanSpine.com

Why Men Fall In Love

9 Powerful Words You Can Say That Remind Him Why He Needs You.
HaveTheRelationshipYouWant.com

More From The Web »

Latest Job Vacancies

- [Senior Programmer](#)
NCCI Holdings, Inc. - Boca Raton, FL
- [Programmer Analyst](#)
NCCI Holdings, Inc. - Boca Raton, FL
- [Research Economist](#)
NCCI Holdings, Inc. - Boca Raton, FL
- [Dentist](#)
U.S. Navy Reserve - United States
- [Physician](#)
U.S. Navy Reserve - United States
- [Physician Jobs](#)
U.S. Navy - United States
- [Dentist Jobs](#)
U.S. Navy - United States

What:

jobs by 

MORE FROM TELEGRAPH.CO.UK

WORLD NEWS



George W Bush in his own words

[View](#)

DUNHILL TRAVEL DEALS



Most competitive travel deals and vacation packages

[View](#)

FREE PRIZE DRAW TO WIN £1,000



Share with us your favourite place in the world and win £1,000

[View](#)

TELEGRAPH FOR IPAD FREE TRIAL



Try The Telegraph for iPad free for 30 days

[View](#)

[Back to top](#)



HOME

- News
- UK News
- Politics

Long Reads

Wikileaks

- Jobs

World News

- Europe
- USA
- China

Royal Family News

Celebrity news

- Dating

Finance

- Education
- Defence
- Health

Weird News

Editor's Choice

- Financial Services

Pictures

- Video
- Matt
- Alex

Comment

Blogs

- Crossword

Contact Us

- Privacy and Cookies
- Advertising
- Fantasy Football

Tickets

- Announcements
- Reader Prints



Follow Us



- Apps
- Epaper
- Expatriate
- Promotions
- Subscriber
- Syndication