

Q1ABSTRACT: The research showing how exposure to extreme stress affects brain function is making important contributions to understanding the nature of traumatic stress. Reminders of traumatic experiences activate brain regions that support intense emotions, and decrease activation in the central nervous system (CNS) regions involved in (a) the integration of sensory input with motor output, (b) the modulation of physiological arousal, and (c) the capacity to communicate experience in words. This includes the notion that traumatized individuals are vulnerable to react to sensory information with subcortically initiated responses that are irrelevant, and often harmful, in the present.