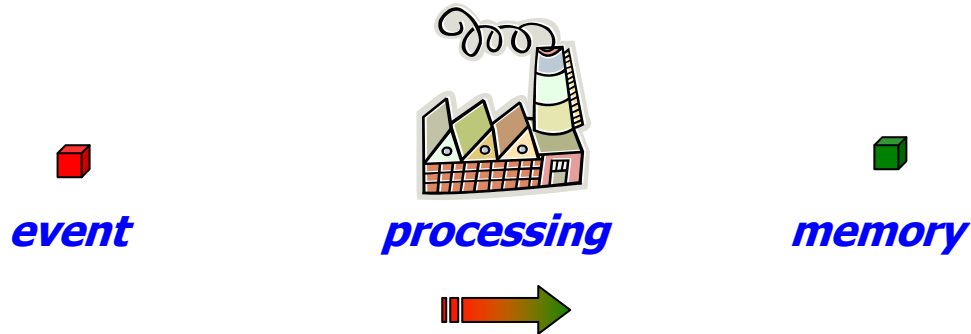


processing trauma: the factory metaphor

The factory metaphor can often help when we're trying to understand how we can best process difficult traumatic memories. So the mind can be thought of as being a bit like a factory. One of its jobs is to process life events so that they become memories. Most life events are of a size and type that the "mind factory" can quite easily cope with:



However, sometimes events occur which are too difficult to process in the normal way. This is likely to be because the event itself is too traumatic, and the difficulty may also be contributed to because the person experiencing it is too young to understand adequately what is happening.



Because the event isn't properly processed, it is prevented from becoming a normal memory – hence the symptoms of re-experiencing & arousal that may occur, while avoidance is because the "mind factory" doesn't want to keep running into the problems that arise each time an attempt is made to process the trauma. This is why working with these difficult traumatic experiences so often needs to be done carefully and methodically, breaking them down into smaller pieces that can be adequately processed and turned into the kinds of memories that are not nearly so overwhelming.

