

The right treatment works

In October 1994, Stuart Tripp's life was turned upside down by a car accident. After weeks in a coma, Stuart faced months of confinement, multiple operations, indescribable physical pain, emotional anguish and finally, the loss of his leg.

Last year, Stuart sought psychological help for posttraumatic stress disorder. At the time, Stuart likened his treatment to weekly dental appointments but knew it was helping to free him from his traumatic memories.

"No matter how well I began to cope with my injuries, I just couldn't get away from the memories," Stuart explained. "It's like they were trapped inside me, holding me back from getting on with my life."

Stuart found confronting those memories and his reactions to them difficult.

"My psychologist used exposure and cognitive therapy with me. He told me what to expect; I trusted him and it was done in a safe environment," Stuart said.

"I knew it was doing me good, but I have to admit, it was like going to the dentist every week."

"But if it was tough for me, I reckon it must be pretty hard for the therapist as well," Stuart added. "And that's why these Guidelines are so important. They will help all health practitioners help people in the same way I was helped."

Stuart shared some of his experiences with guests at the launch of *The Australian Guidelines for the Treatment of Adults with Acute Stress Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* in Canberra in May, 2007.

Stuart has written about his experiences in *Travelling Hopefully*, which he released in April 2007 (www.travellinghopefully.com).

Information for People with ASD and PTSD is available for free download:

www.acpmh.unimelb.edu.au/Resources/guidelines/ACMPH_GuideForPeopleWithASDandPTSD.pdf.