Subjective realities of persons depend on their sociocultural context and psychological make-up. Differences in information processing as well as life experiences and resources available are critical factors to mental health and ill health. However, in recent times, the need to ensure objectivity and precision in diagnostic sciences has resulted in narrow definitions of various psychological disorders, especially trauma. Currently trauma is viewed through its most severe form—post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The criteria for diagnosing PTSD is limited to only very specific events and does not leave room for deliberation and acknowledgment of perceived distress. Treatment is therefore also restricted to only a specific group, with a large population receiving no or less attention for traumatic experiences.

This thesis institutes trauma within a vulnerabilities and cognitive processing framework to explore cultural influences, psychological processes and patient perspectives to formulate the nature of trauma and its interplay in the development and maintenance of psychosis. Stress, trauma, PTSD and psychosis is placed on a continuum and the need for trauma focused treatment approaches in psychosis using a similar framework is recommended. Various implications for future research and policy are elucidated.