

Reactions that can occur after a traumatic event

If you are reading this, you may have been involved in a traumatic event. This event may have resulted in the loss of, or injury to a loved one. You may have received an injury; have been exposed to a serious threat; witnessed a terrible event; have experienced property loss; or have been part of a difficult event in other ways.

As a result of this exposure you may experience some emotional and physical reactions, including feeling overwhelmed. It is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience these emotional aftershocks when they have been involved in a difficult event.

How long these stress reactions last, will depend on numerous factors including the severity of the traumatic event; how closely involved you were to this event; how long you were exposed to the trauma; and how you have been effected by past traumas in your life.

These stress reactions usually pass - even more quickly when you talk about the event with someone who is important to you in your life. Sometimes talking to a professional about this event and your reactions to this event can also be of assistance.

physical •

- fatigue
- thirst
- nausea
- headaches
- muscle aches
- weakness
- visual difficulties
- dizziness
- diarrhea
- chills
- feeling uncoordinated
- rapid heart rate
- vomiting
- rapid or difficulty in breathing
- increased blood pressure
- tremors (lips or hands)

** Any of these symptoms may indicate the need for medical evaluation. When in doubt, contact a physician.*

thinking

- confusion
- slowed thinking
- nightmares
- poor attention span
- hyper vigilance
- uncertainty
- poor concentration
- disorientation
- difficulty in thinking and in making decisions
- heighten or lowered alertness
- the event is replayed over and over in your head

emotional

- numbness
- disbelief
- denial
- fear
- guilt
- anger
- sadness
- anxiety
- panic
- feeling overwhelmed
- feeling isolated
- irritability
- feeling lost or abandoned

behavioral

- sleep disturbances
- withdrawal
- inability to rest
- intensified pacing
- uncontrolled emotional outbursts
- erratic movements
- changes in speech pattern
- change in social activity
- increased alcohol consumption and/or drug use
- loss or increase in appetite