



Common Reactions Experienced After A Traumatic Event

Please note that following a traumatic event, people commonly experience a number of reactions that may seem negative and not feel normal. The following lists reflect normal reactions to an abnormal situation.

Physical Effects

- Fatigue, exhaustion
- Increased physical pain
- Sleep disturbances
- Cardiovascular strain
- Reduced immune response
- Decreased appetite
- Decreased libido
- Hyperarousal
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Increased startle response
- Muscle tremors
- Profuse sweating
- Digestive problems
- Somatic complaints
- Ritualistic behavior
- More accident prone

Emotional Effects

- Shock
- Fear/terror
- Irritability
- Anger
- Grief or sadness
- Depression
- Despair
- Loss of pleasure from familiar activities
- Nervousness
- Blame
- Guilt
- Emotional Numbing
- Helplessness
- Identification with the victim
- Difficulty feeling happy

Interpersonal Effects

- Increased relational conflict
- Reduced relational intimacy
- Impaired work performance
- Impaired school performance
- Feeling abandoned/rejected
- Social withdrawal
- Alienation
- Decreased satisfaction
- Distrust
- Externalization of blame
- Externalization of vulnerability
- Over protectiveness

Cognitive Effects

- Impaired concentration
- Impaired decision-making ability
- Memory impairment
- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Distortion
- Self-blame
- Decreased self-esteem
- Decreased self-efficacy
- Worry
- Dissociation (e.g., tunnel vision, dreamlike or “spacey” feeling)

Spiritual Effects

- Spiritual disconnection with God
- Questioning God and theological beliefs
- Anger at God
- Spiritual emptiness
- Withdrawal from the faith community
- Increased awareness of morality
- Guilt for feelings, i.e. anger, desire for vengeance