

## Common Reactions to Traumatic Events

Individuals suffer a significant degree of physical and emotional trauma during, immediately following, and for a considerable time after experiencing a traumatic event. Every individual responds uniquely to the traumatic event, and the recovery process is different for everyone. The following is not a comprehensive list, but rather a sampling of common post-traumatic symptoms. The recovery process is not linear, and individuals can expect to experience some or all of these symptoms in varying degrees during the recovery process and may re-experience symptoms.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Physical Responses</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in Eating/Sleeping patterns</li> <li>• Eating Disorders (Anorexia/Bulimia)</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Flashbacks</li> <li>• Hyper vigilant “Startle Response”</li> <li>• Nightmares</li> <li>• Nausea or Vomiting</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• “Self-Medication” with Alcohol or Drugs</li> <li>• Muscular Tension</li> <li>• Physical Injuries (cuts, broken bones, bruises)</li> <li>• Somatic Illness</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Emotional Responses</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anger (at self or other) or Irritability</li> <li>• Numbness or trouble experiencing emotions</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Denial</li> <li>• Depression, Sadness, Despair</li> <li>• Embarrassment (feeling exposed or humiliated)</li> <li>• Fear or Phobias</li> <li>• Helplessness or Hopelessness</li> <li>• Loss of Control</li> <li>• Low Self-Esteem</li> <li>• Mood Swings</li> <li>• Obsessions/Compulsions</li> <li>• Shame, Guilt, Self-Blame</li> <li>• Feeling Dirty, Polluted</li> <li>• Shock</li> <li>• Vulnerability</li> <li>• Feeling Abandoned, Alone</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Cognitive Responses</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If I don’t think about it, it will go away</li> <li>• I am being punished for what someone else did</li> <li>• There is no justice in my case</li> <li>• My body betrayed me</li> <li>• I should have done _____ differently</li> <li>• I deserved it because _____</li> <li>• Who knows about it?</li> <li>• Will others reject me?</li> <li>• Are people blaming me?</li> <li>• Could have prevented it if I _____</li> <li>• Why me?</li> <li>• If it happened once, it could happen again.</li> <li>• Bad things happen to bad people</li> <li>• There is something wrong with me</li> <li>• If it’s not my fault, why am I being blamed?</li> <li>• I will never be the same again</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Social Responses</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in lifestyle</li> <li>• Difficulty getting things accomplished</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating</li> <li>• Problems with intimacy</li> <li>• Fear around the opposite sex</li> <li>• Discomfort around people in general</li> <li>• Disruption in sexual relations</li> <li>• Fear of being alone</li> <li>• Fear of leaving home (especially alone)</li> <li>• Feeling “different” from everyone else</li> <li>• Hypersensitive when relating to others</li> <li>• Loss of trust in self and others</li> <li>• Withdrawal from people, relationships, activities</li> <li>• Loss of enthusiasm or apathy</li> <li>• Hyper sexualization</li> <li>• Difficulty setting/maintaining boundaries</li> </ul>