

COMMON RESPONSES TO TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Although trauma affects people differently, there are some common reactions that you may experience. These signs and symptoms may begin immediately or you may feel fine for a couple of days or even weeks, then suddenly be hit with a reaction. The important thing to remember is that these reactions are quite normal; although you may feel some distress, you're probably experiencing a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.

Some common responses to traumatic events are listed below:

Physical Reactions

Insomnia, nightmares
Fatigue
Hyperactivity, "nervous energy"
Appetite changes
Pain in the neck or back
Headaches
Heart palpitations or chest pain
Dizzy spells

Emotional Reactions

Flashbacks, reliving the event
Excessive jumpiness, easily startled
Irritability
Anger
Feelings of anxiety or helplessness

Effect on Productivity

Inability to concentrate
Increases incidence of errors
Lapses of memory
Increase in absenteeism
Tendency to overwork

Usually the signs and symptoms of trauma will lessen with time. If you are concerned about your reaction, note the specific symptoms that worry you. For each symptom, note the:

- ◆ **Duration:** Normally, traumatic reactions will grow less intense and disappear within a few weeks.
- ◆ **Intensity:** If the reaction interferes with your ability to carry on your life normally, you may wish to seek help.



If you are concerned that your response is too intense, or is lasting too long, please seek counseling. See the bottom of the page for counseling options in Washington County. Whether you choose to seek counseling or not, the following tips can help you keep your life in order while you experience the trauma response:

- ◆ Maintain as normal a schedule as possible, but don't overdo it. Cut out unnecessary "busyness" and don't take on new projects.
- ◆ Acknowledge that you'll be operating below your normal level for a while.
- ◆ Structure your time even more carefully than usual. It's normal to forget things when you're under stress. Keep lists and double check any important work.
- ◆ Maintain control where you can –in making small decisions - even if you feel that it's unimportant or you don't care.
- ◆ Spend time with others, even though it may be difficult at first. It's easy to withdraw when you are hurting, but now is when you need the company of others most.
- ◆ Give yourself time. You may feel better for a while and then relapse. This is normal.

Washington County Behavioral Health Resources

Life & Purpose Behavioral Health
(740) 376-0930

Hopewell Health Center
(740) 423-8095

Rigel Recovery Services
(740) 371-5160

Counseling & Wellness Center
(740) 401-3088

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-8255

Crisis Hotline: (740) 373-8240

