

# 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, and 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 are probably experiencing a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. Some responses to traumatic events are listed below:

## Physical Reactions:

- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Hyperactivity
- Pain in the back or neck
- Headaches
- Heart palpitations or pains in the chest\*
- Dizzy spells\*
- Appetite changes

## Emotional Reactions:

- Flashbacks or reliving the event
- Excessive jumpiness
- Tendency to be startled
- Irritability
- Anger
- Feelings of anxiety
- Feelings of helplessness
- Feelings of vulnerability

## Effects On Productivity:

- Inability to concentrate
- Increased incidence of errors
- Lapses of memory
- Increased absenteeism
- Tendency to overwork

\*If symptoms persist, see a physician.

Usually, the signs and symptoms of trauma will lessen with time. If you are concerned about your reaction to a traumatic event, note the duration and intensity of each symptom:

**Duration:** Normally, trauma 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 want to seek help.

If you are concerned that your trauma is too intense, or is lasting too long, please seek counseling.

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