

EXPERIENCING A TRAUMATIC EVENT

Certain life events can be traumatic. These include the death of a spouse, a divorce, or a natural disaster like a hurricane or tornado. Living through one of these events affects people. Reactions can be physical, mental, or emotional. We all react differently. It is important to remember that there is no right or wrong way to feel.



Some of the reactions to a traumatic event include:

- Feeling numb
- Being in shock
- Feeling very sad, even crying
- Being irritable
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Having bad dreams about the event
- Noticing unexplained aches, pains, fatigue, decreased energy
- Changes in your appetite – eating a lot more or a lot less
- Changes in your sleep – sleeping a lot more or a lot less

These reactions are normal. But sometimes they signal a more serious depression.

Talk with your primary care provider if:

- The symptoms last longer than a couple of weeks; or
- The way you feel begins to interfere with daily life; or
- You start drinking too much or using illegal drugs; or
- You have thoughts of suicide or death.

Depression is an illness and it can be treated. Most people respond to treatment and can bring their lives back into balance. Be watchful to changes in your feelings and moods. Allow yourself time to heal and feel free to get help. This can include medications, counseling or talk therapy, or support from people who have experienced similar things.

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Things you can do for yourself ~

- Get help for yourself if you need it.
- Don't try to rush your recovery, allow yourself time.
- Ask for support from people you trust.
- If the event is always in the news, don't watch the news or read the newspaper as often.
- Find and join a support group.
- Stick to your daily routine.
- Stay physically active.
- Don't make major decisions until you feel better.
- Don't use alcohol or illegal drugs as a way to deal with the stress.
- Spend time doing things you like.
- Continue to take your regular medicines.

Things you can do to help others ~

- There is no right or wrong way to feel. Friends and family members may react differently.
- Give support and companionship.
- Avoid telling someone to "get over it".
- If someone is in need of help, assist in getting that help if you can. Make an appointment for them, drive them, or go with them to the appointment.
- Take people seriously if they talk about suicide. Call 911 if you think someone needs urgent help.



Remember, everyone reacts differently. There is no right or wrong way to feel. If you, your family, or a friend are having a hard time dealing with what happened – get help.