

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A TRAUMATIC EVENT

You have been exposed to a traumatic event. AS a result, you **may** experience noticeable changes in the way you feel, think, and behave. This may be occurring now or could occur later in the days, weeks, or even months to come. These symptoms of stress are simply **typical** reactions that **typical** people have to an **atypical** event. Some of the most typical reactions are listed below:

PHYSICAL	Nausea Upset stomach Diarrhea Tremors (lips, hands) Chills Muscle aches Lowered immunity	Chest Pain (see a physician) Headaches Increased blood pressure Rapid heartbeat Rapid breathing Dizziness Changes in appetite	Fatigue Inability to relax Less coordinated Dry mouth Profuse sweating Involuntary twitches
THOUGHT	Intrusive images Nightmares Flashbacks Lowered attention span Disbelief Blaming self or others	Difficulty concentrating Difficulty making decisions Difficulty solving problems Difficulty with calculations Increased worry Denial	Disorientation (to place & time) Confusion Slowed thinking Memory problems Suspiciousness
EMOTIONAL	Fear Anticipatory anxiety Survivor guilt Depression/despair Grief Anger Irritability	Feeling vulnerable Feeling lost Feeling abandoned Feeling isolated Feeling numb Feeling hopeless Feeling overwhelmed	Feeling powerless Feeling panicky Identifying with victim(s) Sadness Loss of motivation Temporary euphoria
BEHAVIORAL	Crying Withdrawal Hyper-vigilance Sleep disturbances Changes in food intake Changes in activity	Startle reactions Changes in communicating Changes in behavior Changes in social interaction Increased alcohol intake Increased smoking Excessive silence	Excessive humor Changes in behavior

Just as you would allow yourself time to recover from a physical injury, it is important to accept your reactions and allow the time you need to recover from your experience. This time will vary with each individual. Occasionally the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance may be necessary. This does not imply “craziness” or weakness; it simply indicated that this particular tragic event is just too powerful to manage alone.

Contact Macomb County Crisis Center at (586) 307-9100. The Crisis Center provides free telephone counseling, information, or referrals for ongoing assistance.