



## VICTIMIZATION AND TRAUMA

Victimization is a stressful situation .

A traumatic event can be a painful emotional experience that can create lasting effects. The traumatic event can often feel:

***Sudden:*** The event often occurs without warning. It is impossible to predict.

***Arbitrary:*** There does not appear to be a reason or an explanation for the event. The event often will leave you with the question: Why me?

***Unpredictable:*** No one ever knows if it will happen. The event cannot be anticipated.

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**IF YOU OR SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU HAS EXPERIENCED TRAUMA:**

**YOU MAY BE HAVING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.**

**THIS PAMPHLET IS INTENDED TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND AND/OR ANTICIPATE WHAT TO EXPECT**

**THIS IS A GUIDE ONLY**

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## COMMON REACTIONS TO TRAUMA

You may experience stress reactions . These reactions may occur for a short or long period of time.

### EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

anxiety            shock  
fear                hopelessness  
guilt                sadness  
depression        vulnerability  
anger                hyper-sensitivity

### PHYSICAL REACTIONS

shortness of breath  
sweating  
nausea/vomiting  
increased heart rate  
heightened startle response  
increased sensory perception  
change in appetite  
change in sleep patterns  
fatigue  
general health problems

### THOUGHT CHANGES

recall of similar experiences  
frequent thoughts of event  
memory loss of some or all of event  
confusion  
poor concentration

### RELATIONSHIPS

not wanting to be alone  
withdrawal from family and friends  
alienation  
decreased libido

### SENSE OF LOSS

safety  
innocence  
personal boundaries  
power and control  
trust  
hope

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**THESE REACTIONS ARE NOT UNCOMMON BUT MAY BE UNIQUE TO YOU.**

**THESE REACTION MAY OCCUR IN ANY ORDER AND AT ANY TIME.**

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## AFTER TRAUMA HAPPENS

While these reactions may be painful, they are part of the healing process. Below are some recommendations to help you through these times.

- Attempt to maintain your normal routine.
- Maintain a good diet: eat well-balanced meals high in carbohydrates and low in sugar.
- Avoid excessive use of caffeine, alcohol and recreational drugs.
- Take time for leisure activities. Exercise may help alleviate some of the physical reactions.
- Spend time with supportive family, friends and co-workers, talking about the incident.
- Keep a journal.
- Expect that you will be bothered by "unusual" feelings that may not be normal for you
- Give yourself permission to feel bad about the events that have occurred.
- Allow yourself time to recover from the shock.
- Wait before you make any major life changes.
- Be aware of your thinking and that your reactions are normal.
- Ask for help if you need it.

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**EXTERNAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS WILL HELP THE RECOVERY PROCESS.**