

Coping with a Traumatic Event

Common Symptoms Following a Traumatic Event

These symptoms are a **normal** response to the exposure to or experience of a traumatic event. The range of symptoms includes cognitive (mental) symptoms, emotional symptoms, physical (somatic) symptoms and behavioral symptoms.

- **Cognitive (Mental) Symptoms:**
Confusion; memory loss (especially short-term memory loss or forgetfulness); difficulty making decisions and keeping priorities straight; difficulty concentrating with limited attention span and tendency to be easily distracted.
- **Emotional Symptoms:**
Fear; anxiety; worry; grief; depression; anger; feelings of hopelessness; being easily irritated; anxiety and/or panic attacks; emotionally "numb."
- **Physical Symptoms:**
Marked increase in fatigue; stomach upset; headaches; sweating; backache; tension; decrease or increase in appetite; sleep disturbances; high blood pressure; dizziness.
- **Behavioral Symptoms:**
Social withdrawal; talking more or less; silence; jumpiness; difficulty relaxing; increase or decrease in food consumption; increase in alcohol and/or drug use; sleep disruption.
- **Prior Experiences:**
Exposure to a traumatic event can recreate old feelings of unresolved trauma from prior experiences, along with increased symptoms.

Coping with a Traumatic Event

Remember, many people will experience emotional consequences or symptoms after experiencing a traumatic event. These are normal. Ignoring them, hoping that they will go away or "numbing" them tends to make them worse over time. The most helpful way to deal with these immediate symptoms is to try to relax, and not put pressure on yourself - give yourself a break and lower expectations of what you are able to accomplish. Allow yourself to do things that feel good and are not destructive. Accept offers of help from others and allow others to provide you with care. When finding it hard to cope, you can do any or all of the following:

- Take advantage of professional assistance by calling your EAP. Research has shown that those who do not use this assistance recover more slowly. **Call Claremont at 1-800-834-3773.**
- Create a comfortable routine for yourself and your family. Even on days off from work, get up, get dressed, and plan activities and tasks for the day.
- Talk with others about how you feel.
- Understand that emotional recovery is much like rebuilding. It takes much more time than you expect.
- Don't place expectations on yourself that you will "get over it" in a certain period of time. Each of us will react differently and heal at different paces.

Coping with a Traumatic Event

Taking Care of Yourself

- Don't push yourself
- Get sufficient rest
- Eat nourishing foods
- Do exercise, as it relieves pent-up feelings and stress
- Don't force yourself to make decisions to do things that feel uncomfortable
- Allow yourself time alone or with others as you need it Find good listeners who are supportive
- Find ways to nurture yourself

Know When to Seek Professional Help

- You are having trouble coping with your daily life
- You don't begin to feel better over time
- You are abusing alcohol, drugs, or prescription medication as a means of trying to make yourself feel better, cope, forget, or numb your pain
- You have been having thoughts of suicide

Build your Stress Reduction Plan

Immediate Actions (Today):

- Identify at least one step you can take today to start reducing stress and set a date for when you will begin implementing your plan.
- Example: Take a 10-minute walk, practice deep breathing, or spend time doing a relaxing activity you enjoy.

Short-Term Goals (This Week):

- Outline specific actions you will take this week to help manage stress.
- Example: Set aside time for exercise, schedule breaks, or plan a calming evening routine.

Mid-Term Goals (This Month):

- Set broader goals to gradually decrease stress over the next month.
- Example: Create a work-life balance schedule, engage in a new hobby, or plan a weekend getaway.

Support Network:

- List the things you will ask for from family or friends to support your stress reduction efforts.
- Example: Ask for help with childcare, request a listening ear, or plan a shared activity.

Long-Term Strategies:

- Develop ongoing strategies to continue recovering and maintaining low stress levels.
- Example: Establish healthy habits, seek professional support if needed, or join a support group.

Additional Self-Care Ideas:

- Think of other ways to take care of yourself beyond the immediate and short-term plans.
- Example: Practice mindfulness, start journaling, or schedule regular self-care days.

Symptoms That May Develop After Exposure to a Traumatic Event

Emotional

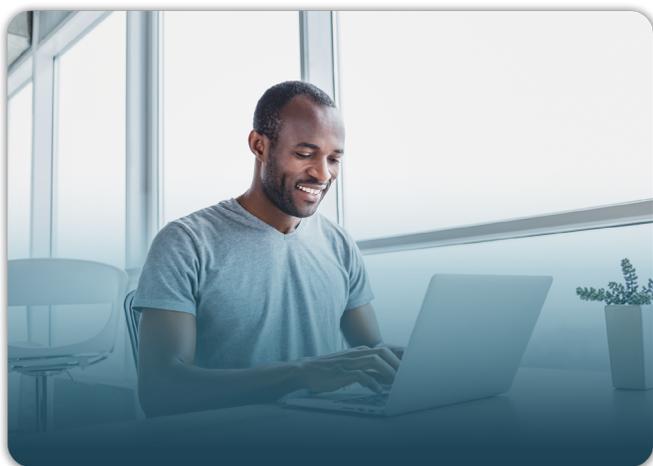
- Shock
- Anger
- Denial
- Sadness
- Depression
- Despair
- Intensified Emotional Reactions
- Generalized Anxiety

Cognitive

- Confusion
- Poor Concentration
- Blaming Someone
- Change in Alertness
- Difficulties in Decision Making

Behavioral

- Change in Activity
- Change in Speech
- Changes in overall health
- Increase in alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawal
- Angry Outbursts
- Disrupted sleep
- Increase or decrease in food consumption
- Changes in communication and or interaction with others
- Increased physical / somatic complaints



We're here to help.

Call: **1.800.834.3773**

Go to **claremonteap.com**

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