

# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

You have experienced a traumatic event (an injury, loss of a loved one or property or a serious threat, or any overwhelming emotional experience). Even though the event may be completed, you may be experiencing or may experience later, some strong emotional or physical reactions. It is very common, in fact, quite normal for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have experienced a tragic event.

Sometimes the emotional aftershocks (or stress reactions) appear immediately after the event. Sometimes they may appear a few hours or a few days later. And, in some cases, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions appear.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or a few months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the event. With understanding and the support of loved ones, the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This does not imply weakness. It simply indicates that the particular traumatic event was just too powerful for the person to manage by themselves.

Here are some very common signs and symptoms of stress in a traumatized person.

<b>Physical</b>	<b>Thinking</b>	<b>Emotional</b>
Nausea	Slowed thinking	Anxiety or fear
Upset stomach	Difficulty making decisions	Guilt or grief
Tremors (lips, hands)	Difficulty in problem solving	Depression
Feeling uncoordinated	Confusion	Sadness
Profuse sweating	Disorientation (especially to time & place)	Feeling lost or abandoned
Chills	Difficulty calculating	Feeling isolated
Diarrhea	Difficulty concentrating	Worry about others
Chest pain (may check at hospital)	Difficulty naming common objects and/or persons	Wanting to limit contact with others
Rapid heartbeat	Memory problems	Wanting to hide
Rapid breathing	Seeing the event over and over	anger
Increased blood pressure	Distressing dreams	irritability
Headaches	Poor attention span	Feeling numb
Muscle aches		Startled
Sleep disturbances		Shocked

# HELPFUL HINTS FOR RECOVERY

Trying some of the following hints may help to alleviate the emotional pain associated with a traumatic event. For the next few days you should consider eating and/or drinking less caffeine, salt, sugar, and eating and/or drinking more wholesome foods. Give your body a chance to recover too.

<b>For Yourself</b>	<b>For Family Members &amp; Friends</b>
Try to get more rest	Listen carefully
Talk to friends	Spend time with your loved one
Spend time with loved ones	Offer your assistance and listen actively (even if they don't ask)
Try not to be alone for a while	Reassure them that they are safe
Maintain as normal a schedule as possible but take breaks	Help them with everyday tasks
Eat well-balanced & regular meals (even if you don't feel like it)	Give them some private time but check on them occasionally
Try to keep a reasonable level of activity	Don't take anger or other feelings personally
Fight against boredom - physical activity is helpful	Don't tell them they are "lucky it wasn't worse" rather tell them you are sorry this happened and you want to help
Reestablish a normal schedule as soon as possible but don't push too hard	Don't be surprised if your loved one only wants to talk about the incident with friends, colleagues or others affected by the incident
Express your feelings as soon as they arise	
Talk to people that you trust and who love you	