

# COPING WITH TRAUMA

## Stress Management Tips

- Care for yourself by eating well, exercising, and resting when needed. Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and chocolate.
- Seek out comfortable, familiar surroundings and avoid spending too much time alone.
- Share your thoughts and feelings with those who are supportive and helpful - don't try to block recollections. It helps to talk about them. Feel free to set boundaries with people who have not been helpful in the past.
- Don't be anxious if reactions from past traumas re-emerge even though you may have felt those issues were resolved.
- Give yourself time to recover. Difficulties with concentration, memory or decision-making are common but short-term reactions. Seek help if reactions are interfering with job or school responsibilities. Focus on concrete, easily achievable tasks.
- Remember that difficulty sleeping, nightmares, flashbacks and feelings of being "hyper-alert" are common and will diminish in time.
- Avoid personalizing or taking responsibility for how others respond to the traumatic event. Do not compare or measure your reactions to those of other people - each individual's experience is unique and personal.
- Communicate your feelings clearly. Others may not know how to respond to you appropriately. Let them know which responses are helpful and which are not.
- Know that anniversary dates or a specific holiday may trigger feelings related to the trauma. This is normal.
- Seek help from a professional counselor if symptoms persist.

## COMMON REACTIONS TO TRAUMA

### Physical Responses

- Change in sleep patterns
- Change in appetite
- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Difficulty remembering details of event
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Muscle Tension
- Increased heart rate
- Stomach upset

### Emotional Responses

- Shock or numbness
- Anger toward others involved
- Fear
- Depression
- Guilt/Frustration
- Sadness
- Feeling unsafe or vulnerable
- Loneliness

### Mental Responses

- Confusion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering details of the event

### Behavioral Responses

- Withdrawal from others
- Angry Outbursts
- Crying
- Irritability
- Decreased energy/ambition
- Relationship conflict
- Fear of being alones

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