

Common Reactions to Trauma – Adults

Below are some common symptoms and reactions of adults who have been through a trauma.
(Mark those you are experiencing.)

Behavioral	Affective (Emotions)	Somatic (Physical)
Avoidance behaviors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using alcohol or medications to numb • Wanting to leave or escape the current living situation • Overly involved in work as way of not thinking about what happened Abandonment of fun activities Less productive Losing or misplacing things Easily startled Hyper-alert to environment Tearful Slowed down Pacing Aimless wandering Risky/self-destructive behavior	Numb/Emotionally shut down Shocked Anxious/Fearful Fear of recurrence Agitated Frustrated Overwhelmed Anger (at self, others, God) Resentment Mood swings Sad Helpless Guilty Loss of sense of humor	Difficulty sleeping Nightmares Stomach problems Pounding heart Shortness of Breath/Hyperventilation Chest Pains Loss of appetite Muscle Tremors Loss of Coordination Headaches Muscle soreness Dryness of mouth and throat Frequent need to urinate Grinding teeth Weight change (gain or loss) Feeling of exhaustion and fatigue Change in sexual functioning or desire

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Interpersonal (Relationships)	Cognitive (Thoughts)	Spiritual
Irritable Insensitive Loss of interest in others Isolated/withdrawn Violent/aggressive Critical of others Insecure Avoiding intimacy Suspicious Clingy Hypersensitive (feelings easily hurt)	Disoriented Confused Poor concentration Poor decision-making Trouble prioritizing Poor memory Poor attention (not retaining information) Preoccupied with trauma memories Increased rigidity and closed thinking Absolute thinking <i>(I will never; this always)</i> Negative/critical judgments against self <i>(I am such a failure)</i> Hindsight thinking <i>(If only; why didn't...)</i> Flashbacks or other intrusive imagery	Feeling God is punishing you Feeling God doesn't love you Feeling God is distant Disappointed with God Questioning long-held beliefs

Conclusion: Each person is unique in how they respond to a trauma. Your response may not be the same as another person who has gone through the same or a similar experience. With time, after you work through these reactions, it's very likely that you will be even stronger than you were before the crisis. Even after many of the memories are gone and you are feeling much better, there may still be things which "trigger" these reactions and painful memories. If these symptoms become very intense and persist over a long period of time, or if you are noticing impairment in your work or relationships, you may want to consider talking with a counselor who specializes in trauma.