



## Traumatic Event Information

You have experienced a traumatic event. First responders have different reactions to these types of events. It is possible that due to personal variables (your personality, view of reality, personal history, and coping abilities) you may react differently to a traumatic event than your Peers. Your mental “trash can” content will also play a role. This may be your first traumatic event, or it may be the one that causes your mental trash can to spill over.

The important thing to remember is that whatever your response, it is a normal stress reaction. You may have a mild reaction, severe reaction that requires intervention from a professional, or no reaction at all.

It is normal to experience emotional aftershocks following a horrible event. Sometimes these reactions occur immediately following the event or may appear hours to days later. Some cases, it may be weeks or months before reactions appear.

These reactions may last a few days, weeks or even months depending on the severity of the event and the personal and incident variables. With understanding and support of your Peers and loved ones, the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. However, occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary.

Some of the possible reactions include:

- Heightened sense of danger
- Anger, frustration, blaming
- Isolation and withdrawal
- Sleep difficulties
- Intrusive thoughts
- Emotional numbing
- Depression and feelings of guilt or conversely feelings of having done a good job
- Sexual changes
- Appetite changes
- Interpersonal difficulties
- Grief and mourning
- Desire to increase alcohol or substance use
- Second guessing and rethinking the incident

These are normal responses. But when they significantly interfere with your life, are prolonged, or severe, you may need more help through professional counseling. Help is available and is very beneficial.



## Common stress reactions:

<i>Physical *</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Behavioral</i>
Chills	Confusion	Fear	Withdrawal
Thirst	Nightmares	Guilt	Inability to rest
Fatigue	Hyper vigilance	Panic	Pacing
Nausea	Intrusive Images	Denial	Increased alcohol or substance use
Vomiting	Blaming	Anxiety	
Dizziness	Poor Attention Span	Agitation	
Chest pain	Poor Concentration	Irritability	
Headaches	Poor Memory	Depression	
Elevated B/P		Anger	
Rapid heart rate		Apprehension	
Sweating		Feeling Overwhelmed	
Difficulty breathing		Emotional Outbursts	
Muscle tremors		Crying	
Grinding of teeth		Defensiveness	
Visual difficulties			

Some of these reactions may be more concerning than others.

\*\*Physical symptoms may indicate the need for medical evaluation

\*\*\*Suicidal thoughts or plans must be addressed immediately.