



Post-Trauma/Disaster Stress

Post-trauma/disaster stress can occur when people have been exposed to a traumatic event.

A trauma event can be **human-made**, such as a car accident, school shooting, street violence, family violence, etc. There are also **natural** trauma events, such as tornados, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, fires, etc. Trauma events may impact people directly or indirectly. Indirect exposure may include seeing the disaster on television or hearing stories about others' experiences, possibly including risk of physical harm or death. Regardless of how individuals experienced the trauma/disaster, it is during this time that people might experience intense fear, helplessness, and hopelessness that exceed normal coping skills.

After a traumatic event, some people may want to avoid remembering or feeling things that remind them of the traumatic experience, such as wanting to talk about the experience or going to the place of the event.

Other things that people might experience after a traumatic event include:

- Sleeping difficulties
- Flashbacks
- Intense memories
- Feeling sad and depressed
- Feeling angry
- Feeling helpless
- Physical problems such as headaches, stomach aches, and dizziness
- Difficulty with being close to others
- Feeling numb
- Feeling that life is very short and wanting to do things put off in the past, such as getting married, traveling, going back to school, etc.
- Wanting to be close to family and friends
- Overeating or undereating
- Memory and concentration problems which can make an "A student" suddenly becoming a "D student" (This is only temporary, and normal.)
- Finding that old beliefs and values about oneself, others, and the world have been impacted

These are just some of the things people might experience. If you or a loved one experiences such things for more than one month, you might want to consider contacting a professional for assistance. Other things that should be attended to by seeking professional help include:

- Feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- Self-harm such as cutting, substance abuse, etc.
- Wanting to hurt others

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