

Recovering from a Traumatic Event



After the pieces have been picked up following a traumatic event, many emotions linger on. The feelings of fear, stress, anxiety, and depression that often remain can take months, or even years to disappear.

What Happens After A Traumatic Event?

Thoughts and behaviors may be affected by the trauma.

- Flashbacks may affect your eating or sleeping habits, as well as your decision-making abilities.
- Your relationships with friends and family may become strained.

Feelings may intensify and become unpredictable.

- You may notice dramatic mood swings.
- Recurring emotional reactions are common. Reminders of the event may trigger upsetting memories of the traumatic experience.

You may experience physical symptoms.

- You may experience headaches, nausea, or even chest pains. Please seek medical attention if you are concerned about these symptoms.

What changes can I expect?

There is no standard or set time for recovering from a traumatic event. Some people may recover quickly, while others may have reactions months or even years later. The intensity of the loss can affect the length of time for recovery. Longer-lasting events, which pose a great threat, may take a longer to recover from than a more minor event with less personal impact. Signs of recovery can include:

- Accepting that the traumatic event has changed you.
- Being able to ask for help, or extending help to others.
- Gradual relief from symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Increased communication with family and friends.
- Improvement in self-esteem.
- An increase in energy levels.

Recovery Strategies for You and Your Family

For you:

- Give yourself time to recover.
- Share your feelings with a trusted friend or family member.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- Get back to your daily routines. Your daily routines may have been changed after experiencing a traumatic event. For example, patterns in your eating and sleeping habits and your home and/or work life may have been altered. Consult with your doctor or a mental health professional if you have any questions about how to return to your daily routines.

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For your children:

- Encourage older children to talk about their thoughts and feelings. Don't push them, and look out for signs that they are ready to talk.
- For younger children, be aware that their thoughts and feelings may be expressed through non-verbal reactions, such as whining, crying, or acting out. Recognize that they may need extra understanding, love, patience, support and attention during and after a traumatic event.
- If possible, spend some time with your children in relaxing activities such as going to the park, watching a movie, or a low-stress activity of your choice.

It is always difficult dealing with a traumatic event. If you and or your family are experiencing prolonged difficulty or are concerned about your situation, consult with a mental health professional. As you continue your process of recovery, remember to give yourself credit for the positive changes you've made in your life while dealing with a traumatic event.

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