



## Trauma

The outcome of traumatic events may range from an immediate mild stress reaction, through a moderate stress state during which normal coping mechanisms are temporarily impaired, to a prolonged and in some cases crippling post traumatic state. Stress reactions to traumatic events can occur immediately or they may be delayed for hours, weeks or even years.

Trauma can impact a person in a variety of ways, they include:

Thoughts	Feelings	Behaviour	Physical
disbelief	fear	withdrawal	nausea
denial	depression	avoidance	shaking
confusion	shock	difficulty sleeping	chill sensations
disorientation	anger	restlessness	rapid heart rate
slowed thinking	anxiety	pacing	increased breathing
poor attention	guilt	relationship difficulties	dizziness
difficulty making decisions	isolation	lethargy	'jelly legs'
memory problems	numbness	decrease in activity	sweating
intrusive Image	abandoned	erratic movement	sweating
nightmares	helplessness	eating less	headache
"If only...", "I should have..."	irritability	frequent crying	dry mouth
grief	sensitivity to noise	sadness	tight in the chest

It is important to remember that the above symptoms experienced 'post trauma' indicate that a person is dealing with and recovering from a traumatic experience, and are typical reactions to an unusual and highly stressful threatening event.

A road accident can result in not only physical stress and injury but also emotional shock and injury. Much of the distress experienced after an accident is due to the unexpected nature of road accidents and the threat they pose.

It is interesting that generally people do not hesitate to seek help from others for physical injuries, and yet are often reluctant to seek support when emotionally recovering from a traumatic experience. It takes a great deal of courage to seek out professional assistance and is a step which ought to be respected. If the experience of a post trauma reaction is significantly interfering with a person's lifestyle it may be wise to seek professional support.



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