



The Village Family Service Center is here to help.
Please call 1-800-627-8220 or visit www.thevillagefamily.org

COMMON SIGNS & SIGNALS OF A STRESS REACTION

You have experienced a traumatic event. Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing or may experience later, some strong emotional or physical reactions. It is very common and quite normal for people to experience aftershocks when they have passed through a horrible event.

Sometimes the emotional aftershocks (or stress reactions) appear immediately after the traumatic event. Sometimes they may appear a few hours or a few days later. In some cases, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions appear. The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last days, months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event. With understanding and support from you co-workers, family and friends the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be helpful. This does not imply craziness or weakness but it simply indicates that this particular event was just too powerful to manage alone.

HERE ARE SOME COMMON SIGNS AND SIGNALS OF A STRESS REACTION

| PHYSICAL | MENTAL | EMOTIONAL | BEHAVIORAL |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Fatigue | Tendency to blame others | Anxiety | Changes in normal activities |
| Insomnia | confusion | Survivor guilt/self blame | Change in speech |
| Muscle tremors | Poor attention | Grief | Withdrawal from others |
| Twitches | Inability to make decisions | Denial | Emotional outbursts |
| Difficulty breathing | Heightened or lowered alertness | Severe panic (rare) | Change in communication |
| Rapid breathing | Poor concentration | Fear of loss/of going crazy | Suspiciousness |
| Elevated blood pressure | Forgetfulness | Uncertainty | Inability to rest |
| Rapid heartbeat | Trouble identifying known objects or people | Loss of emotional control | Substance abuse |
| Chest pain | Increased or decreased awareness of surroundings | Emotional numbness | Intensified startle reflex |
| Headaches | Poor problem solving | Depression | Antisocial acts |
| Visual difficulties | Loss of a sense of time, place or person | Lack of capacity for enjoyment | Pacing |
| Nausea/Vomiting | Disturbed thinking | Apprehension | Erratic movements |
| Thirst | Nightmares | Intense anger | Decreased personal hygiene |
| Hunger | inescapable images | Irritability | Diminished sexual drive |
| Dizziness | Flashbacks | Agitation | Appetite disturbance |
| Excessive sweating | Suicidal ideas | Helplessness | prolonged silences |
| Chills | Disbelief | Mistrust | Accident proneness |
| Weakness | Change in values | Feelings of worthlessness | |
| Fainting | Search for meaning | Apathy/boredom | |