

MANAGING A TRAUMATIC OR STRESSFUL EVENT

What Just Happened?

When we learn about or experience a traumatic event, we can often have strong physical and emotional reactions. It is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they pass through a horrible event.

Sometimes these reactions may appear a few hours or a few days later. And, in some cases, weeks or months later. A variety of emotions (sadness, relief, joy, anger) or lack of emotion is normal. While everyone is affected differently, below are some common reactions people may experience after going through a stressful situation.

Common Reactions

Physical

- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Nightmares
- Hyperactivity
- Exhaustion
- Startle Reflex
- Appetite Changes
- Headaches
- Tension
- Pounding Heart
- Accident Prone
- Muscle Aches
- Teeth Grinding
- Weight Change
- Colds/Illnesses
- High Blood Pressure
- Substance Use

Emotional

- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Depression
- Fear
- Numbness
- Over Sensitivity
- Anger
- Mood Swings
- Worry
- Bad Temper
- Crying Spells
- Discouraged
- Helplessness
- Amnesia for Event

Relational

- Isolation
- Resentment
- Loneliness
- Lashing Out
- Withdrawal
- Intolerance
- Irritation
- Distrust
- Lowered Sex Drive
- Using People
- Clamming Up
- Lack of Intimacy

Mental

- Forgetfulness
- Poor Concentration
- Low Productivity
- Negative Attitude
- Confusion
- Lethargy
- Whirling Mind
- Boredom
- Spacing Out
- Negative Self-Talk
- Obsessive
- Indecision
- Perfectionism



Things to Do to Take Care of Yourself

- **Talk to people.** Talk is the most healing medicine.
- Emotional responses are varied, **do not judge yourself.**
- **Exercise.** Periods of exercise and relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions.
- **Structure your time.** Keep busy.
- **Spend time with others.**
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and **share your feelings with others.**
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.**
- **Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.**
- **Keep a journal;** write your way through sleepless.
- **Do things that feel good for you.**
- Realize those around you are also under stress. **You are not alone.**
- **Don't make any big life changes.**
- **Get plenty of rest and sleep.**
- **Eat well-balanced and regular meals** (even if you don't feel like it).
- **Drink lots of fluids.** Stick with water and juices. Caffeine can increase stress.
- **Deep breathing.** Proper breathing is one of the best ways to reduce stress.
- **Get involved in the community.** Being involved is a good way to escape for a while.
- **Manage your time wisely.** Make time for yourself.
- **Paint, draw, color, dance, create music.**
- **Take breaks from tasks** you are working on.
- **If you are a student,** seek support with our office.
- **If you are an employee,** seek support from our EAP.

Student Resources

Center for Mental Health Care and Resources
404.894.2575 | mentalhealth.gatech.edu

Campus Police
404-894-2500

Dean of Students
404.894.2565
studentlife.gatech.edu/about/office-dean-students

Employee Resources

Employee Assistance Program
844.243.4440
usg.mylifeexpert.com

Human Resources
404.385.1111
hr.gatech.edu

Community Resources

Dial or text 988
(for 24/7/365, nationwide mental health,
substance use, or suicide crisis assistance)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Veteran's Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Georgia Crisis & Access Line

Crisis Text Line

Crisis Text Line (BIPOC)

Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQIA+)

Transline

Disaster Distress Helpline

National Hopeline Network

National Domestic Violence Hotline

National Sexual Assault Hotline

988

800-273-8255

800-273-8255, Press 1

800-715-4225

Text HOME to 741741

Text STEVE to 741741

866-488-7386

877-565-8860

800-985-5990

800-784-2433

800-799-7233

800-662-4357