



<b>Behavioural reactions</b>	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• withdrawal from others and a need to be alone</li><li>• being easily irritated by others</li><li>• feelings of detachment from others, even loved ones</li><li>• loss of interest in normal activities and hobbies</li></ul>
	Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• not wanting to go to work</li><li>• poor motivation at work</li><li>• poor concentration and attention</li></ul>
	Lifestyle/habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• increased use of alcohol, cigarettes, or other drugs</li><li>• loss of appetite - or increased eating</li><li>• loss of interest in enjoyable activities</li><li>• loss of sexual interest</li></ul>

**Reactions are a sign of adaptation.** These signs and symptoms are common reactions to a life-threatening or value-challenging experience. Sometimes reactions may not occur until quite some time after the event. Most of these responses are part of the normal process of psychological recovery and they help the person adapt to the trauma. They can, however, be very unpleasant for those affected - and for their loved ones.

**How long do reactions to trauma last?** Usually these reactions will diminish over a period of days, weeks or months, although some may last longer, even for years. This is especially so if the experience was particularly disturbing. You may also find that these reactions get worse when you are reminded of the event or when you discuss your experiences with other people. Try not to let that stop you from talking about it - in the long term, sharing your experiences and feelings with trusted others will help.

**Reactions are quite normal.** Remember, it is common for people who have experienced highly stressful events or situations to have adjustment difficulties and to display some or many of the reactions described above. This is our normal way of attempting to resolve the psychological impact of such unusual experiences. If, however, these responses persist or are severe, then please seek support.

**When would further assistance be necessary?** Some people benefit from extra assistance in resolving the effects of a highly stressful experience. Needing such assistance is not a sign of weakness or an indication that you are losing your mind. Often, the help you receive will be brief and simple, and will reduce the chances that you will have longer term difficulties. You are encouraged to seek further assistance if:

- the problems described above are particularly severe, or if they continue for more than two or three months
- you feel numb or empty and do not have appropriate feelings
- you find yourself keeping busy all the time in order to avoid having time to think and explore your thoughts and emotions
- you are listless and continually depressed and cannot seem to get 'energised'
- you have no friends or family with whom you can talk about the experience and how you feel about it
- you are using alcohol or drugs to help you cope
- you have any other concerns about the way you, your family, or colleagues are coping

**What if I don't react at all?** It should be noted that some individuals may not experience any significant reactions to an event that generally may be considered traumatic. This should not necessarily be a cause for concern to them or to others. Some people, by virtue of prior experience, training, and/or personal qualities, may cope well with such incidents. Of course, coping well with one potentially traumatic event does not guarantee that you will always cope well. Individual resilience varies over time and across situations.