

I am being the best person I can be in the present moment...

In the course of our work, we can experience emotional trauma. No one is immune. With some traumas, our coping skills and resiliency can be overwhelmed. There are a wide range of normal responses to a traumatic experience. Listed are common physical and emotional reactions to trauma; NORMAL reactions to ABNORMAL events followed by coping strategies and resiliency resources.

EMOTIONAL/SPIRITUAL REACTIONS

- shock and disbelief
- fear and/or anxiety, irritability, restlessness, outbursts of anger or rage
- grief, disorientation, denial
- hyper-alertness or hypervigilance
- emotional swings -- like crying and then laughing
- worrying or ruminating -- intrusive thoughts of the trauma
- Nightmares, flashbacks -- feeling like the trauma is happening now
- feelings of helplessness, panic, feeling out of control
- increased need to control everyday experiences
- minimizing the experience, attempts to avoid anything associated with trauma
- tendency to isolate oneself, feelings of detachment
- concern over burdening others with problems
- emotional numbing or restricted range of feelings
- difficulty trusting and/or feelings of betrayal
- difficulty concentrating or remembering
- feelings of self-blame and/or survivor guilt
- shame
- diminished interest in everyday activities or depression
- unpleasant past memories resurfacing
- increased use of alcohol or drugs and/or overeating
- loss of a sense of order or fairness in the world; expectation of doom and fear of the future
- anger towards religion or belief system; loss of beliefs
- desire for revenge

PHYSICAL REACTIONS

- aches and pains like headaches, backaches, stomach aches
- sudden sweating and/or heart palpitations (fluttering)
- changes in sleep patterns, appetite, interest in sex
- constipation or diarrhea

- easily startled by noises or unexpected touch



COPING STRATEGIES AND RESILIENCY BUILDING - SOME SUGGESTIONS THAT ARE KNOWN TO HELP:

- Create a self-care plan to reduce caregiver fatigue and stress
- Mindfulness – pay attention to what you are doing, thinking and feeling
- Engaging in activities that promote positive emotions (optimism, humor, feeling hopeful)
- Limit corrosive, negative feelings and experiences, negative self-talk
- Engage your fear through non-avoidance
- Be willing to challenge limits, beliefs, assumptions, values, beliefs and meanings
- Be willing to let go over what you can't control
- Cognitive flexibility (positive attitude and acceptance)
- Mobilize a support system – talk about the traumatic experiences with empathic listeners □
Seek out the chaplain or clergy for counsel and support
- Cry
- Hard exercise like jogging, aerobics, bicycling, walking
- Relaxation exercise like yoga, stretching, massage
- Humor
- Read what you enjoy
- Read and reflect on the sacred scripture of your faith
- Engaging in religious and spiritual practices; prayer and/or meditation; listening to relaxing guided imagery; progressive deep muscle relaxation
- Hot baths
- Aromatherapy
- Listen to music or play music you
- Connect with the arts; engage in a particular art form
- Maintain balanced diet and sleep cycle as much as possible
- Avoidance of over-using stimulants like caffeine, sugar, or nicotine
- Make a commitment to do something personally meaningful and important every day
- Hug those you love, pets included
- Write about your experience – in detail, just for yourself or to share with others

Spiritual Care Services is available to listen and be present to you. If you wish to talk about the impact of an emotionally traumatic experience, please call us at 443-6431375. All calls are confidential.

We wish you peace and wellness, Chaplain Allen and Spiritual Care Service
{ Adapted with permission from Patti Levin, LICSW, PsyD, www.drpattilevin.com }

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