

# Common Reactions Experienced After A Traumatic Event or Loss

Please note that following a traumatic event, emergency responders commonly experience a number of reactions that may seem negative and not feel normal. The following list reflects normal reactions to these traumatic reactions. Use this checklist to monitor your reactions, realizing that these are commonly reported by emergency responders just like you.

## Physical Effects

- Fatigue, exhaustion
- Increased physical pain
- Sleep disturbances
- Cardiovascular strain
- Reduced immune response
- Decreased appetite
- Decreased libido
- Hyper arousal
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Increased startle response
- Muscle tremors
- Profuse sweating
- Digestive problems
- Somatic complaints
- Ritualistic behavior
- More accident prone
- Grinding teeth

## Emotional Effects

- Shock
- Fear/Terror
- Irritability
- Anger
- Grief or Sadness
- Depression
- Despair
- Loss of pleasure from familiar activities
- Nervousness
- Blame
- Guilt
- Emotional Numbing
- Helplessness
- Identification with the victim
- Difficulty feeling happy

## Interpersonal Effects

- Change in speech patterns with others
- Reduced relational intimacy
- Impaired work performance
- Impaired school performance
- Feeling abandoned/rejected
- Social withdrawal or isolation
- Alienation from friends, family
- Decreased satisfaction with life in general
- Distrust
- Externalization of blame
- Externalization of vulnerability
- Over protectiveness
- Agitation, Irritability, Angry outbursts with others

## Cognitive Effects

- Impaired concentration
- Impaired decision-making ability
- Memory impairment
- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Distortion
- Self-blame
- Decreased self-esteem
- Decreased self-efficacy
- Worry
- Dissociation (e.g., tunnel vision, dreamlike or “spacey” feeling)
- Anxiety about routine tasks

## Spiritual Effects

- Spiritual connection with God
- Questioning God and theological beliefs
- Anger at God
- Spiritual emptiness
- Withdrawal from the faith community
- Increased awareness of morality
- Guilt for feelings (i.e., anger, desire for vengeance)