

# Healing in the Aftermath: Coping with a Traumatic Event

A traumatic event can be an intensely personal experience, such as the loss of a loved one. It can also be something that happens on a much larger scale, such as a natural disaster. While these two types of events are very different, survivors of any tragedy can use some of the same coping techniques to get through a difficult time.

Feelings may surface for individuals at different times. Although a strong response may not be immediate, it can unexpectedly appear a week or even a month from the incident and that is normal. Everyone responds differently to trauma. It is normal to experience a wide range of emotions and even physical responses. Below is a list of common reactions to trauma.

## Emotional Responses

- Shock or numbness
- Anger toward others involved
- Depression and sadness
- Fear and frustration
- Feeling unsafe or vulnerable
- Loneliness
- Guilt

## Mental Responses

- Confusion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering details of events

## Physical Responses

- Change in sleep patterns
- Change in appetite
- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Dizziness and headaches
- Muscle tension
- Increased heart rate
- Upset stomach

## Behavioral Responses

- Withdrawal from others
- Angry outbursts, irritability
- Crying
- Decreased energy and ambition
- Relationship conflict
- Increased use of alcohol or medications
- Fear of being alone

## Regulate Feelings and Reactions

Intense emotions are perfectly normal after suffering a traumatic event. It is important, however, to maintain some control and keep emotions and behavior from running rampant. Maintaining a normal routine and avoiding excessive media exposure during a tragedy can help reduce stress, allowing survivors to keep their emotions from spiraling out of control.

## Some Days Are Better Than Others

Like anyone, a trauma survivor will have both good and bad days. Sometimes a good day can be the result of truly joyous experiences, such as a promotion at work or the birth of a child, while other times the beautiful weather and a perfect cup of tea might be enough to spark happiness. Bad days are much the same and can be exacerbated by experiences both small and large.

Taking solace in the good days and working through the bad is part of the healing process. Embracing the good days and sharing them with others can help remind survivors why they are fighting so hard to heal in the first place.

## Practice Coping Skills

Effectively using coping skills requires practice. Self-care, setting boundaries, practicing proper sleep hygiene, and other coping skills are often not instinctive and can sometimes require a laser-like focus to keep from drifting into unhealthy behaviors.

AOH's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to offer confidential, professional mental health support and covers to employees and all family members.

## Contact AllOne Health

855-RSL-HELP (855-775-4357)

<http://allonehealth.com/reliance-matrix>

Company Code: RSLI859

