

# Understanding **Stress** and **Trauma** Responses

Emotional and behavioral responses to stressful or traumatic experiences are common and can occur after exposure to physical or emotional violence, pain, or other distressing events. These reactions may arise from a single incident or from multiple experiences over time.

## How Stress and Trauma May Feel

- Difficulty concentrating or feeling distracted
- Night terrors
- Stomach discomfort or pain
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Frustration
- Intrusive or distressing thoughts
- Feeling down or low

## How Stress and Trauma May Look

- Seeming distant or withdrawn
- Reluctance to talk or share
- Controlling behaviors
- Increased alcohol use
- Overworking or staying busy to avoid feelings
- “Shutting down” emotionally
- Appearing irritable or unapproachable
- Avoiding certain places, people, or situations
- Engaging in risky behaviors

A photograph of a man with a serious, distressed expression, looking off to the side. He is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

These are **normal reactions** to overwhelming stressors. You may experience a wide range of emotions—such as anger, confusion, sadness, or depression. While some people respond visibly, others may show few outward signs.



## The Following Tips Can Help

### 1 Remember, responses are different for everyone

- Colleagues, family members, and friends may each respond in their own unique way. Their reactions may mirror yours—or differ entirely—and that is okay.
- Sometimes others respond more strongly to your reactions than to the event itself. Understanding this can support healthier communication and connection.

### 2 Recognize the importance of talking

- Conversations with trusted people—family, peers, or support networks—can provide validation, comfort, and understanding.
- Talking helps shift from emotional overwhelm to clearer, more logical thinking.
- Open communication can also reduce the likelihood of “acting out” emotions through avoidance, isolation, or unhelpful behaviors.

### 3 Pay Attention to Your Baseline

- Notice what is typical for you in areas such as sleep, appetite, and energy.
- If things still feel “off” three to four weeks after the event, reach out for professional support.

## We're Here to Help

Through AllOne Health, you have access to counseling, mental health support, and a wide range of resources to help cope with grief and loss. Services are free to use, confidential, and open to your household members.

Learn more at [allonehealth.com/member-support](http://allonehealth.com/member-support).