

Trauma

A **traumatic event** is usually defined as experiences which are life threatening, or where there is a significant threat to a person's physical, emotional or psychological safety.

Some examples of traumatic events:

- sexual assault
- physical assault
- domestic violence
- community violence e.g. shooting, mugging, burglary
- physical pain or sudden serious injury or illness.
- war
- natural disasters e.g. cyclone, flood, fire, earthquake
- parental abandonment
- witnessing a death

Some **possible reactions** to a traumatic event. People respond to traumatic events in different ways. Often there are no visible signs, but people may have serious emotional reactions including:

- Shock
- Disturbed sleep – sleeplessness or nightmares
- Flashbacks – a sense you are reliving the traumatic event
- Intrusive and unwelcome thoughts
- Feeling unsafe, fearful and worried
- Emotional numbness
- Depression
- Feelings of shame and embarrassment
- Anger
- Feeling violated
- Having thoughts of suicide
- Feeling isolated and alone

Some ideas on **how to recover** from your trauma experience:

- Remember everyone deals with trauma differently.
- Give yourself permission to experience your reaction to what has happened.
- Allow yourself time to rest and recover.
- It is normal to be angry.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Try not to make big decisions while you are working through the traumatic event.
- Other memories may surface due to the trauma; try to deal with them at your own pace and one at a time.
- Try and maintain your normal routine and give yourself downtime
- Pursue hobbies or other interests that make you feel good
- Communicate the experience with someone you trust or in a journal
- Try talking to a counsellor
- Visit your doctor and seek help.

Information sourced from:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/traumatic-events#seeking-help>

https://www.psychology.org.au/publications/tip_sheets/trauma/#s1