



UTEAP

Call us at (713) 500-3327 or toll free (800) 346-3549

Common signs of stress after a difficult event

You went through a difficult situation. Even though it is over, it may still affect you. Some people have reactions shortly after the event, some days later, and some not at all.

These reactions can go away more quickly with support from family and friends. You can also talk to an EAP counselor, mental health professional or your doctor. He or she can help you understand why you are feeling this way and what you can do about it. It helps if you continue with good habits such as exercise, rest and a healthy diet.

People have different reactions to a difficult event. You may have some of the common ones below.

Physical

- Change in appetite
- Chest pain (should be checked at a hospital)
- Chills
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Feeling uncoordinated
- Headaches
- Increased blood pressure
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Muscle aches/tremors
- Nausea/vomiting
- Profuse sweating
- Rapid breathing / heart rate

- Teeth clenching
- Thirsty

Mental

- Self-blame and guilt
- Blaming others & “finger-pointing”
- Changes in attitude
- Difficulty making decisions
- Difficulty paying attention
- Difficulty solving problems
- Disbelief
- Confusion about place and time
- Disturbed thinking
- Heightened/ lowered alertness
- Continuous images of the event
- Memory problems
- Nightmares
- Questioning your skills
- Flashbacks
- Slowed thinking
- Trouble naming common objects

Emotional

- Anger/irritability
- Anxiety/agitation
- Depression
- Desire to hide
- Excessive worrying about others
- Fear of losing emotional control
- Fear/apprehension
- Feeling helpless and out- of-control
- Feeling lost or abandoned



- Feeling shocked or numb
- Grief and sadness
- Inability to enjoy yourself
- Overly sensitive to people
- Panic
- Survivor guilt / self-blame
- Lack of confidence
- Inability to trust people
- Loss of faith
- Loss of future direction
- Sudden turn towards God
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling helpless
- Search for meaning
- Feeling excessive shame and/or guilt

Behavioral

- Aggressive/hostile behavior
- Change in activities
- Changes in speech
- Changes in sexual interest
- Emotional outbursts
- Erratic or impulsive behavior
- Hyper-alert
- Increased number of accidents
- Isolation
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Over or under communication
- Overreacting / under- reacting
- Inability to sit down or relax
- Suspiciousness
- Uninterested in taking care of yourself
- Withdrawal from others
- Overeating / under eating

Spiritual

- Loss of purpose & meaning
- Questioning one's basic beliefs
- Sense of aloneness
- Withdrawal from place of worship
- Uncharacteristic religious involvement
- Familiar faith practices seem empty
- Anger at clergy and/or God
- Questioning whether anyone cares about you
- Believing that we have failed as human beings
- Loss of direction and/or a personal compass