

SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMATIC REACTIONS

Physical symptoms

- Fatigue
- Nausea/vomiting
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Visual difficulties
- Clenching of jaw
- Nonspecific aches and pains

Cognitive symptoms

- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Heightened or lowered alertness
- Poor concentration
- Poor problem solving
- Difficulty identifying familiar objects or people
- Memory problems
- Nightmares

Emotional symptoms

- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Denial
- Grief
- Fear
- Irritability
- Loss of emotional control
- Depression
- Sense of failure
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Blaming others or self
- Severe panic (rare)

Behavioral symptoms

- Intense anger
- Withdrawal
- Emotional outburst
- Temporary loss or increase of appetite
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Inability to rest, pacing
- Change in sexual functioning

Children's Reactions to Traumatic Events

School-age Children (6-11 years)

- Feelings of responsibility and guilt
- Repetitious traumatic play and retelling
- Feeling disturbed by reminders of the event
- Nightmares and other sleep disturbances
- Concerns about safety and preoccupation with danger
- Aggressive behavior and angry outbursts
- Fear of feelings and trauma reactions
- Close attention to parents' anxieties
- School avoidance
- Worry and concern for others
- Changes in behavior, mood, and personality
- Somatic symptoms (complaints about bodily aches and pains)
- Obvious anxiety and fearfulness
- Withdrawal
- Specific trauma-related fears; general fearfulness
- Regression (behaving like a younger child)
- Separation anxiety
- Loss of interest in activities
- Confusion and inadequate understanding of traumatic events (more evident in play than in discussion)
- Unclear understanding of death and the causes of "bad" events
- Giving magical explanations to fill in gaps in understanding
- Loss of ability to concentrate at school, with lowering of performance
- "Spacey" or distractible behavior

Pre-adolescents and Adolescents (12-18 years)

- Self-consciousness
- Life-threatening reenactment
- Rebellion at home or school
- Abrupt shift in relationships
- Depression and social withdrawal
- Decline in school performance
- Trauma-driven acting out, such as with sexual activity and reckless risk taking
- Effort to distance oneself from feelings of shame, guilt, and humiliation
- Excessive activity and involvement with others, or retreat from others in order to manage inner turmoil
- Accident proneness
- Wish for revenge and action-oriented responses to trauma
- Increased self-focusing and withdrawal
- Sleep and eating disturbances, including nightmares