

COMMON REACTIONS TO TRAUMATIC STRESS FROM LOSS

Please remember that everyone reacts to stress and trauma in different ways. The following information could be a great resource to you, one of your friends or a family member.

REMEMBER:

- ☐ **No one is immune from the ill effects of stress, and some people, because of their personalities, are more susceptible than others.**
- ☐ **Stress can affect us in three areas, Physically, Mentally and Emotionally.**
- ☐ **There is no predictable reaction to stress. Unusually odd behavior or significantly changed responses during or after a traumatic event could be a sign of a stress reaction.**
- ☐ **Reactions to traumatic loss can occur immediately following an event or can start much later. When this happens, people often find themselves thinking, “I thought I was O.K., what is wrong with me?” Allow yourself time to grieve. Shock can delay a person’s response to loss and grief.**
- ☐ **Wide ranges of mood swings**
- ☐ **Physical symptoms, such as lack of energy, fatigue, nausea**
- ☐ **Easily startled, hyper vigilant**
- ☐ **A “roller coaster” of emotions**
- ☐ **Difficulty in remembering or concentrating**

COPING STRATEGIES:

- ☐ **Acknowledge that reactions to traumatic loss are NORMAL**
- ☐ **Give yourself and others a break and allow time for recovery**
- ☐ **Talking to your friends and family is great. Talk to your friends and allow them to talk to you. Avoid isolating yourself. This could be of great help to everyone.**

- ☐ **Don't make life-changing decisions during a stressful situation. Give yourself time to cope.**
- ☐ **If you or one of your friends is having a hard time coping after a traumatic loss, remember that it's ok to need and ask for help. Giving a friend a "pep talk" about getting over it is not what he or she needs, but rather support, understanding and maybe in some cases professional help.**
- ☐ **Be on the lookout for signs of stress and allow the person to express their feelings in their own way. If you think a family member friend is struggling, you might want to approach them by saying: "I'm a little worried about you, you don't seem yourself. How are you doing?"**

Resources are available to provide assistance. Everyone responds to loss differently and with no specific time frame. However, if it seems to get harder instead of easier with time, after about a month, talk to a professional who can help you through this process.

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