

SEEKING HELP

Consider professional help if:

- Your symptoms last for more than two weeks or interfere with the normal activities of your life
- You have persistent feelings of guilt, anxiety, panic, or stress
- You are having thoughts of hurting yourself or others
- You have new physical symptoms or are having other medical problems
- You are using drugs or alcohol to cope with what happened

HELPING VICTIMS BECOME SURVIVORS

The Glendale Victim Assistance Unit (VAU) specializes in helping crime victims deal with the emotional impact of their victimization. This includes helping victims understand and overcome any post-traumatic stress reactions.

Victim Assistance staff can:

- Explain your rights as a crime victim
- Answer questions about the criminal justice process
- Coordinate outside professional and/or community resources that can assist you in restoring stability to your life

If you or your family is having trouble dealing with what has happened and the impact of the traumatic event, please remember we are here to help. Contact us at (623) 930-3030.



Glendale Victim Assistance
(623) 930-3030

Glendale City Court
(623) 930-2400

Glendale City Prosecutor's Office
(623) 930-3475

Disaster Distress Helpline
(800) 985-5990
Text TalkWithUs to 66746

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COPING WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS



GLENDALE POLICE DEPARTMENT

COPING WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS

If you were involved in a traumatic incident, you may be personally impacted regardless of whether you were hurt, injured, or lost a loved one. You can be affected simply by witnessing or experiencing the traumatic event. It is common to show signs of distress after any exposure to a traumatic incident.

Not all people react in the same way or with the same intensity. There really is no *right way* to respond; each of us individually has their own way to deal with such an overwhelming event.

Although each person is affected by an incident in different ways, there are some common reactions that are typical and normal. These reactions can be influenced by the severity of the incident; your personality; your thoughts about the event; your actions during or after the event; the support systems you rely on; and if this incident is similar to another previous event that you have experienced. Each of these factors may impact your reaction to the traumatic event.

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an intense physical and emotional response to thoughts and reminders of the event that may last for many weeks or months after the traumatic event. The symptoms of PTSD fall into three broad types: re-living, avoidance and increased arousal.

- Symptoms of *re-living* include flashbacks, nightmares, and extreme emotional and physical reactions to reminders of the event. Emotional reactions can include feeling guilty, extreme fear of harm, and numbing of emotions. Physical reactions can include uncontrollable shaking, chills or heart palpitations, and tension headaches.
- Symptoms of *avoidance* include staying away from activities, places, thoughts, or feelings related to the trauma or feeling detached or estranged from others.
- Symptoms of *increased arousal* include being overly alert or easily startled, difficulty sleeping, irritability or outbursts of anger, and lack of concentration.

COMMON PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Common short-term physical symptoms of post-traumatic stress (PTSD) may include:

- Nausea, vomiting, or indigestion
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or hyperventilation
- Headaches
- Skin rashes
- Lack of energy
- Weight loss or gain
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Rapid pulse

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

- Feelings of embarrassment or shame
- Intrusive thoughts, nightmares, flashbacks
- Sudden unprovoked fear, anger, crying, irritability, or giddiness
- Difficulty concentrating, mind wandering
- Forgetfulness or memory lapses
- Difficulty showing emotion
- Inability to make decisions
- Exaggerated startle reflex or jumpiness
- Anxiety, fear, nervousness, or afraid to be alone
- Anger
- Crying, sadness, depression, or grief
- Denial or disbelief

TIPS FOR RECOVERY

- Reach out to people who can understand and accept how you feel, like a trusted friend, family member, coworker, or faith-based leader
- Physical activity can help to get rid of the buildup of extra stress hormones in your body
- Try to maintain your normal routine, such as eating regular meals and keeping a balanced diet
- Get some sleep. The more rested you are, the better equipped you are to manage your stress
- Recognize your limits. Learn to accept that you are healing and are not always capable of doing everything at one time
- Take deep breaths. Deep breathing can move stress out of your body and help you calm yourself
- Listen to music. Music is a way to help your body naturally relax
- Try to avoid alcohol and drug use

Seek help right away if you are thinking of harming yourself or others. If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts:

- Call 911 for emergency services or go to your nearest hospital emergency room
- Call the *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* at (800) 273-TALK (8255). This is a 24-hour, 7 days a week toll-free hotline. For those who are hard of hearing, TTY at (800) 799-4889.



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