

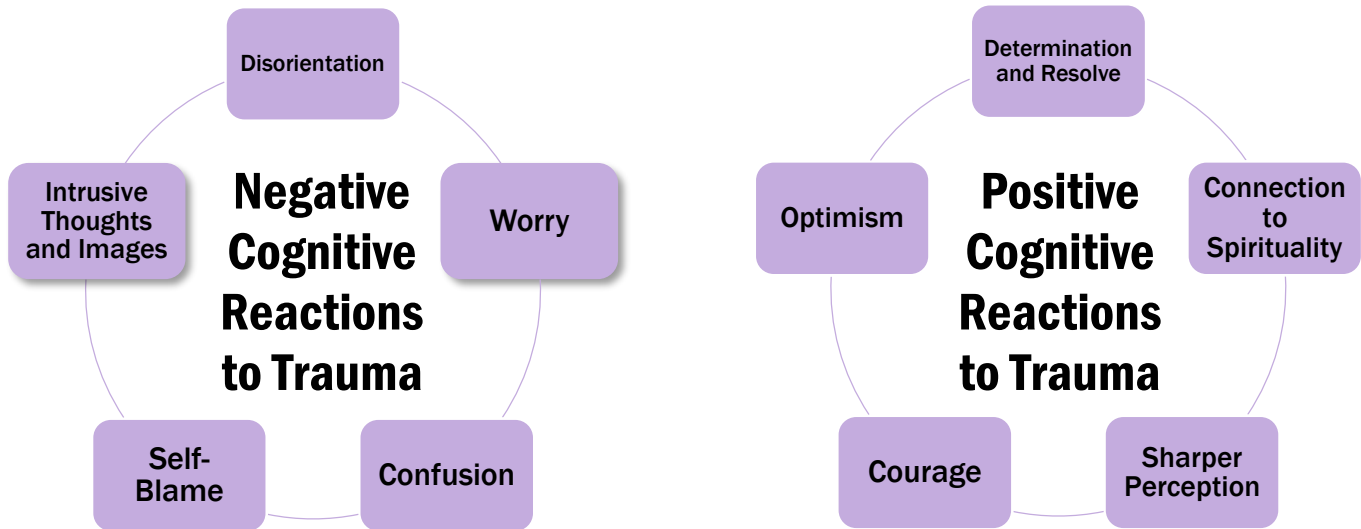


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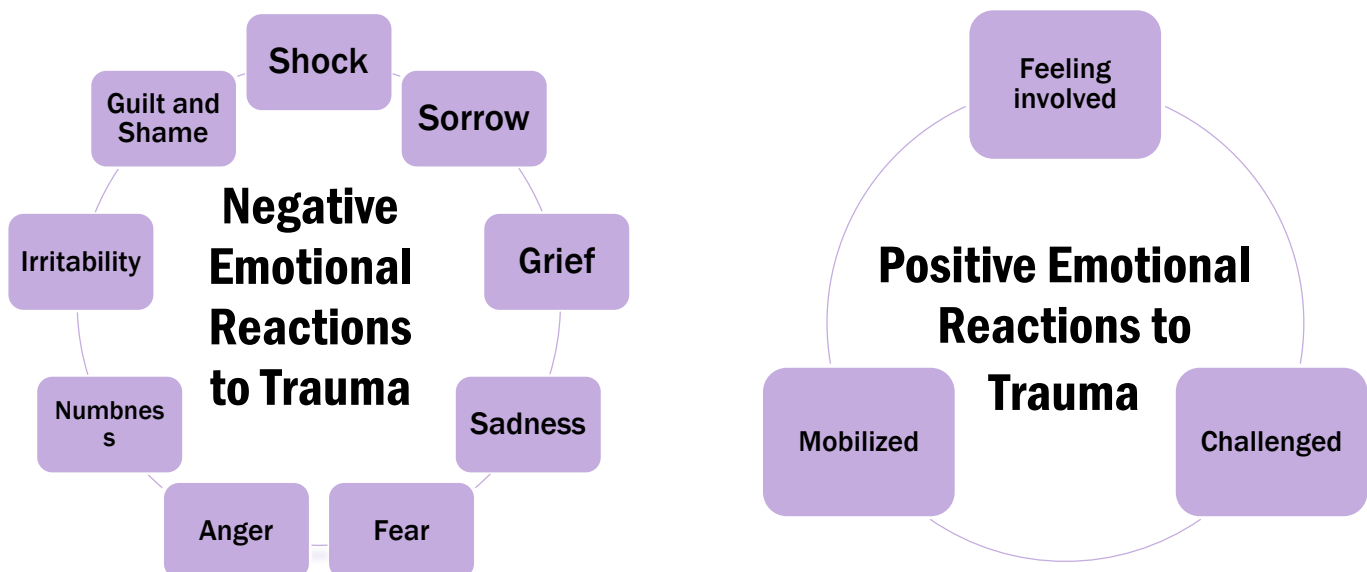
What You May Experience After a Traumatic Event

Survivors can experience a wide variety of **positive** and **negative** immediate reactions after a traumatic event. These immediate responses can be **cognitive**, **emotional**, **social**, and **physiological** reactions.

Common Cognitive Immediate Reactions



Common Emotional Immediate Reactions

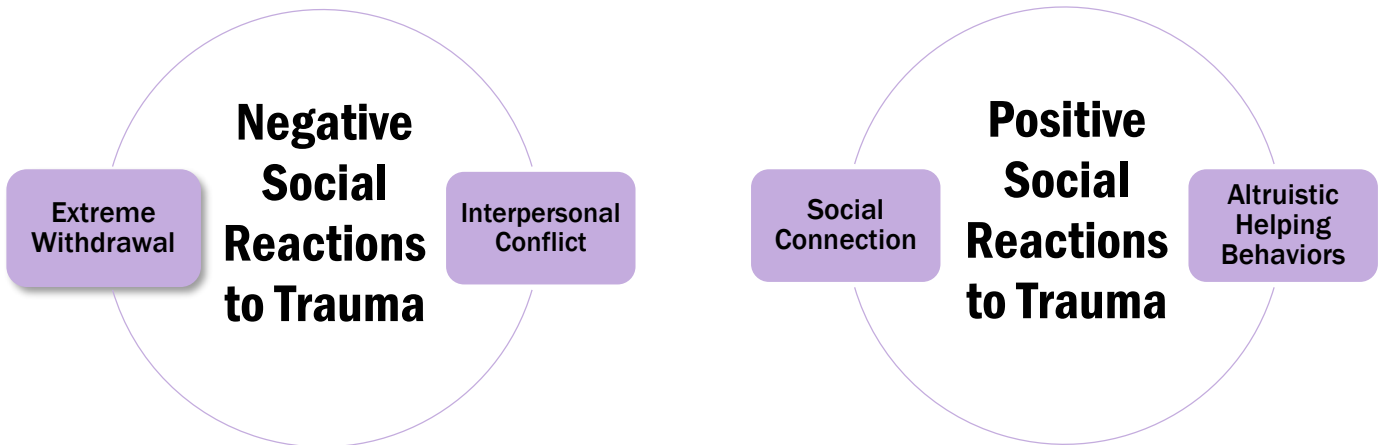




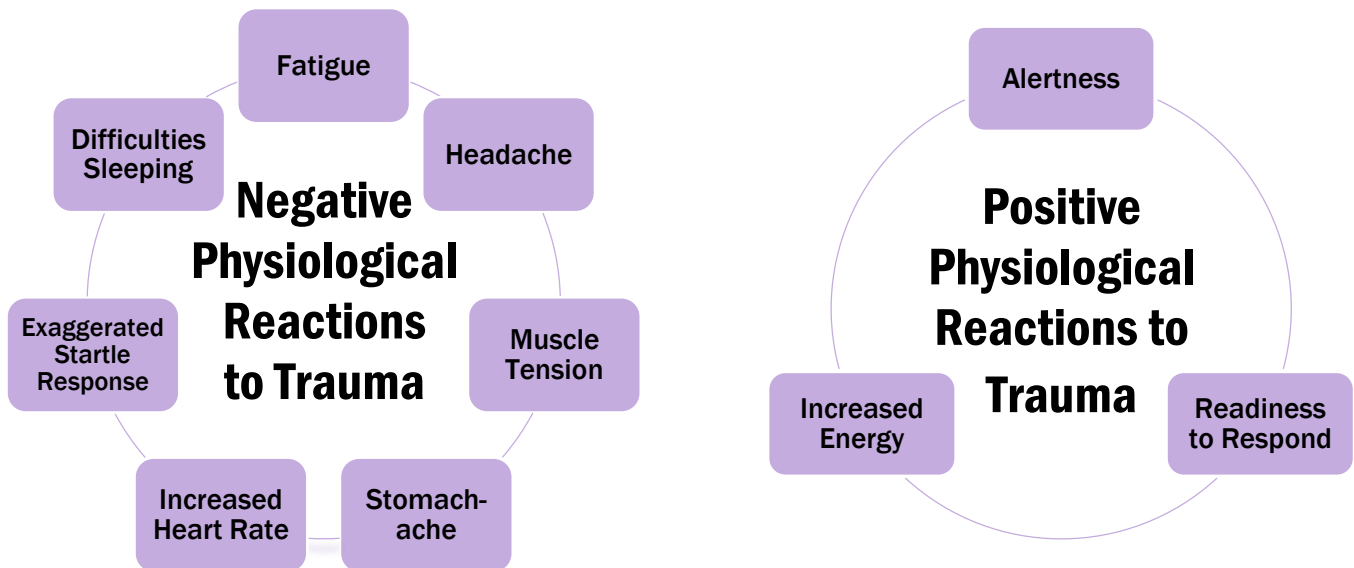
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What You May Experience After a Traumatic Event

Common Social Immediate Reactions



Common Physiological Immediate Reactions





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Common Reactions That Happen Later

Survivors may experience traumatic reactions **after** the immediate reactions. These reactions include **intrusive reactions** and **avoidance/withdrawal reactions**.

Intrusive Reactions

- Distressing thoughts or images of the event while awake or dreaming.
- Upsetting emotional or physical reactions to reminders of the experience.
- Feeling like the experience is happening all over again (“flashback”).

Avoidance/Withdrawal Reactions

- Avoid talking, thinking, and having feelings about the traumatic event.
- Avoid reminders of the event (places and people connected to what happened).
- Restricted emotion; feeling numb.
- Feelings of detachment and estrangement from others; social withdrawal.
- Loss of interest in usually pleasurable activities.
- Intense emotions such as extreme sadness, anger, or fear.
- Increased risk for physical illness and injury.
- Decreased productivity or difficulty making decisions.
- Having thoughts about the person who died, even when you don’t want to.
- Longing, missing, and wanting to search for the person who died.
- Children are particularly likely to worry that they or a parent might die.
- Children may become anxious when separated from caregivers or other loved ones.



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What Helps and Doesn't Help

What Helps

- Talking to another person for support.
- Spending time with others.
- Engaging in positive distracting activities (hobbies, sports, etc.)
- Getting adequate rest.
- Eating healthy meals.
- Trying to maintain a normal schedule.
- Scheduling pleasant activities.
- Taking breaks.
- Reminiscing about a loved one who has died.
- Focusing on something practical that you can do right now to manage the situation better.
- Using relaxation methods (breathing techniques, meditation, positive self-talk).
- Participating in a support group.
- Exercising in moderation.
- Keeping a journal.
- Seeking counseling.

What Doesn't Help

- Using alcohol or drugs to cope.
- Extreme avoidance of thinking or talking about the event or a death of a loved one.
- Violence or conflict.
- Overeating or failing to eat.
- Excessive TV or computer games.
- Blaming others.
- Working too much.
- Extreme withdrawal from family or friends.
- Not taking care of yourself.
- Doing risky things (driving recklessly, substance abuse, not taking adequate precautions).
- Withdrawing from pleasant activities.



Are You Experiencing Any of the “Doesn't Help” Factors?

Experiencing these factors could mean that you may want to seek additional help and support from a professional.

Consider seeing a counselor or therapist to discuss your reactions and current ways of coping.