



## Reactions to trauma

It is very normal to have a reaction after a traumatic event. For most people reactions gradually diminish over time. Some of these may include:

- Emotional reactions—*anxiety, fear, shock, personal or social disconnection, depression, irritability, guilt, shame, anger, or irritability*
- Distressing thoughts—*flashbacks, nightmares, reliving the event*
- Sometimes you can't remember the significant parts of what happened
- You feel unsafe and out of control, less secure, more vulnerable
- You may have problems with relationships

You may experience health problems such as:

- Increased feelings of fatigue and headaches
- Having a feeling that you don't know who you are
- Bodily problems, illness, aches and pains—without a detectably physical cause

## When to seek professional help

If efforts at coping don't seem to work or your PTSD symptoms are getting worse, it is important to reach out and call a counselor who can help you turn things around.

## Resources

### Crisis hotlines

**Oakland County** - Common Grounds  
(248) 456-0909 or (800) 231-1127

**Macomb County** - (586) 307-9100

**Wayne County** - (313) 224-7000

**Lapeer County** - (810) 667-0500 or (888) 225-4447

### Domestic violence hotlines

**Domestic Violence** - (800) 966-6228

**HAVEN** - (248) 334-1274 or (800) 99 NO ABUSE

**RAINN (rape support)** - (800) 656-4673

**Turning Point Shelter (Macomb County)** - (586) 463-7860

**First Step Shelter (Wayne County)** - (734) 416-1111

### PTSD/Trauma/Depression support groups

**Dream Catchers Well-Being LLC** - (313) 908-6917  
15350 Commerce Drive North, Suite 204, Dearborn, MI 48120

**Americenter** - (248) 213-8422  
28175 Haggerty, Novi, MI 48375

**Willows Edge Counseling and Art Center** - (248) 707-1894  
81 Indianwood Road, Suite 2, Lake Orion, MI 48362

**Dr. James Zender** - (586) 804-5724  
117 Cass Ave., Mt. Clemens, MI 48043



OAKLAND

50 North Perry Street, Pontiac, MI 48342

(248) 338-5000

[mclaren.org/oakland](http://mclaren.org/oakland)

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## What is PTSD?

*Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*



OAKLAND

## What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can occur after you have been through a traumatic event. A traumatic event is something terrible and scary that you see, experience or hear about, such as:

- › Combat exposure
- › Child sexual or physical abuse
- › Terrorist attack
- › Sexual or physical assault
- › Serious accidents, like a car accident
- › Natural disasters—fire, tornado, hurricane, flood, or earthquake

During a traumatic event, you think that your life or others' lives are in danger. You may feel afraid or feel that you have no control over what is happening around you. Most people have some stress-related reactions after a traumatic event—however, not everyone gets PTSD. If your reactions don't go away over time and they disrupt your life, you may have PTSD.

Traumatic events are more common than you might think. In the United States, over two-thirds of the population has experienced at least one traumatic event and most people will experience more than one.



## Acute Stress Disorder

Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) can occur in the first month following a trauma. The symptoms that define ASD overlap with those for PTSD. One difference, though, is that a PTSD diagnosis cannot be given until symptoms have lasted for one month. If you have ASD, you are very likely to get PTSD. Research has found that over 80% of people with ASD have PTSD six months later. Acute stress disorder symptoms may include:

- › Experiences of dissociation (feelings of unreality or disconnection)
- › Anxiety
- › Efforts to avoid reminders of the traumatic experiences
- › Intrusive thoughts and images

## How to cope

When trauma survivors take direct action to cope with their stress reactions, they put themselves in a position of power. Certain actions can help to reduce your distressing symptoms and make things better. Here are some positive coping methods:

**Learn about trauma and PTSD** Learn more about common reactions, find out what is normal and what are the signs that you may need additional assistance.

**Talk about the trauma** Talk about your problems with people you trust. Do not isolate yourself. Instead make efforts to be with others.

**Practice relaxation methods** Continuing with relaxation in small amounts may help reduce negative reactions. Try mixing relaxation in with music, walking, or other activities.

**Distract yourself with positive activities** Pleasant recreational or work activities help distract a person from his or her memories and reactions.