



- Serious illness
- Intrusive medical procedures
- Sexual, physical, or verbal abuse
- Domestic violence
- Neglect

experiencing trauma in childhood can result in a severe and long-lasting effect. When childhood trauma is not resolved, a sense of fear and helplessness carries over into adulthood, setting the stage for further trauma. However, even if your trauma happened many years ago, there are steps you can take to overcome the pain, learn to trust and connect to others again, and regain your sense of emotional balance.

### **Symptoms of psychological trauma**

We all react to trauma in different ways, experiencing a wide range of physical and emotional reactions. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to think, feel, or respond, so don’t judge your own reactions or those of other people. **Your responses are NORMAL reactions to ABNORMAL events.**

Emotional & psychological symptoms:

- Shock, denial, or disbelief
- Confusion, difficulty concentrating
- Anger, irritability, mood swings
- Anxiety and fear
- Guilt, shame, self-blame
- Withdrawing from others
- Feeling sad or hopeless
- Feeling disconnected or numb

Physical symptoms:

- Insomnia or nightmares
- Fatigue
- Being startled easily
- Difficulty concentrating
- Racing heartbeat
- Edginess and agitation
- Aches and pains
- Muscle tension

### **Healing from trauma**

Trauma symptoms typically last from a few days to a few months, gradually fading as you process the unsettling event. But even when you’re feeling better, you may be troubled from time to time by painful memories or emotions—especially in response to triggers such as an anniversary of the event or something that reminds you of the trauma.

**If your psychological trauma symptoms *don’t ease up***—or if they become even worse—and you find that you’re unable to move on from the event for a prolonged period of time, you may be experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). While emotional trauma is a normal response to a disturbing event, it becomes PTSD when your nervous system gets “stuck” and you remain in psychological shock, unable to make sense of what happened or process your emotions.

**Whether or not a traumatic event involves death**, you as a survivor must cope with the loss, at least temporarily, of your sense of safety. The natural reaction to this loss is grief. Like people who have lost a loved one, you need to go through a grieving process.