

Département assistance psychologique d'urgence
de la Ligue Française pour la Santé Mentale (Association reconnue d'utilité publique)
Psychological Assistance International of the World Federation for Mental Health.

Jean-Pierre VOUCHE , Directeur Clinique,
Responsable de notre département
Assistance Psychologique d'Urgence,
O.N.G "Psys Sans Frontières".

11, rue Tronchet 75008 PARIS - FRANCE

tél cell : 00.33.6.18.44.37.07 ATTENTION ! NOUVELLES COORDONNÉES TÉLÉPHONIQUES +366 48 28 69 09

siège : 00.33.1.42.66.20.70

Fax : 00.33.1.42.66.44.89

SYMPTOMS EXPERIENCED AFTER A TRAUMATIC EVENT

After a traumatic event, a certain number of reactions are possible. These reactions are normal.

They appear in the form of various symptoms which can last several days to a few weeks after the traumatic incident. They are also proof that the body and psyche are recovering from this particularly testing situation.

Among the most frequent reactions one can experience are:

- Physical symptoms such as tense muscles, tremors, agitation, headaches, perspiration, tiredness, disorders of transit (diarrhoea, constipation).
- Sleep disorders such as insomnia, waking in the middle of the night, dreams and nightmares.
- Loss of enthusiasm for usual activities, including the loss of appetite or a fall in sexual energy.
- Over reaction to loud noises or abrupt movements.
- Experiences of re-living the images of the traumatic event may occur at any time without apparent reason.
- Difficulties in thinking, concentrating or remembering things.
- Avoidance of situations, places which recall the traumatic event.
- Fear of the traumatic event re-occurring.
- Anxiety or fear of being alone or any situation likely to cause fear, a fear that something may happen to oneself or to close friends and relations.
- Sadness, feelings of loss, loneliness.
- Anger, irritability directed against what has happened: against the absurdity and lack of meaning in the situation, against whatever caused the incident and the incessant self questioning " why me? ".
- A feeling of continuing guilt: because of not having acted differently during the traumatic event, or to have come out of it better than the others or finally the guilt related to the death of someone.

The intensity of these reactions varies from one individual to another.

This list is not exhaustive and other symptoms can appear. In the majority of cases, the symptoms will disappear within the following hours, days or weeks.

After the event, it is preferable to:

- Not remain alone at home in an apartment or an empty house.
- Speak about the incident as much as possible with your closest friends or family.
- Avoid taking drugs (sleeping pills or tranquillisers) without seeking medical advice.

It is also important to remember that the incident is finished.

Lastly, even if these uncomfortable reactions are normal, it is useful to speak to a specialist in order to accelerate their disappearance and to avoid psychological disturbances in the medium to long term.