

Common reactions to disaster

Aetna Resources For LivingSM

There's no one way all people react after a disaster. But there are common reactions many may experience.



Sometimes stress reactions start on the scene of the disaster. Or they can appear hours, days, weeks or even months later.

These reactions can be physical, mental, emotional or behavioral in nature. Here are some examples:

Physical symptoms

- Fatigue
- Shock symptoms
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Vomiting
- Profuse sweating
- Fine motor tremors
- Chills
- Tics
- Teeth grinding
- Muscle aches
- Dizziness

Cognitive symptoms

- Memory loss
- Trouble concentrating
- Disturbing thoughts or memories
- Difficulty with calculations or making decisions
- Trouble with prioritizing issues

Emotional symptoms

- Anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Crying easily
- Grief
- Imagining what the victims went through
- Depression
- Fear of harm to self or others
- Irritability

Behavioral symptoms

- Insomnia
- Substance abuse
- "Dark" humor
- Gait change
- Ritualistic behavior
- Hyper vigilance
- Unwillingness to leave scene

Although these may be normal reactions to trauma, it's important to talk to your doctor about any physical or other new symptoms. And if you or someone you know has trouble recovering from a disaster, talking to a mental health professional can help.

Aetna Resources For LivingSM is the brand name used for products and services offered through the Aetna group of subsidiary companies (Aetna). The EAP is administered by Aetna Behavioral Health, LLC and in California for Knox-Keene plans, Aetna Health of California, Inc. and Health and Human Resources Center, Inc.

All calls are confidential, except as required by law. Information is not a substitute for professional health care and is not meant to replace the advice of health care professionals. Contact a health care professional with any questions or concerns about specific health care needs. This material is for informational purposes only. Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change. For more information about Aetna plans, refer to www.aetna.com.