

After the Storm: Common Responses

In the weeks and months following a high stress or traumatic event such as a disaster, many people experience new or worsening behavioral, cognitive (thinking), emotional, physical, and/or spiritual reactions. Discovering that our reactions may be related to the disaster can provide a sense of normalcy and security and help us decide if further support and help is needed. If reactions persist for more than one month or cause significant problems in day-to-day activities or relationships, consider seeking a referral for further help.

Behavioral	Cognitive (thinking)*	Emotional	Physical	Spiritual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sleep problems ○ Withdrawal ○ Inability to rest ○ Emotional outbursts ○ Avoiding thoughts or feelings related to the event ○ Eating problems: loss or increase of appetite ○ Feeling uncoordinated ○ Significant loss of interest in prior activities ○ Aggressive, self-destructive, or reckless behavior ○ Exaggerated startle response ○ Increased substance abuse or other addictive behaviors ○ Increased conflict in primary relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Problems concentrating ○ Nightmares ○ Hyper-vigilance ○ Flashbacks ○ Blaming others or self ○ Poor problem solving ○ Preoccupied with thoughts of the event ○ Inability to remember some things about the event ○ Ongoing negative beliefs about self or the world ○ Avoidance of thoughts, feelings, places, people, activities, or reminders of the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Persistent negative emotions such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear • Horror • Anger • Guilt • Shame ○ Feeling anxious ○ Emotional outbursts/loss of control ○ Feeling hopeless or helpless ○ Feeling numb ○ Staying upset after seeing reminders of the event ○ Persistently feeling “unsafe” ○ Feeling detached from others ○ Unable to experience positive emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heart palpitations ○ Weakness ○ Rapid heart rate ○ Nausea/diarrhea ○ Shallow breathing ○ Fatigue ○ Unusual sweating ○ Excessive thirst ○ High blood pressure ○ Headaches ○ Physically feeling as if you are experiencing the event again (sights, sounds smells) ○ Chest pains (<i>If you are experiencing chest pains, call 911. Immediately seek medical attention!</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Loss of meaningfulness ○ Withdrawal from religious support or community ○ Feeling abandoned or alienated from God ○ Anger at God ○ Hopelessness or despair ○ Guilt ○ Crisis of faith ○ Mistrust of religious institutions ○ Mistrust of God/higher being ○ Feeling punished ○ Feeling unforgiven

*** If you have thoughts of harming yourself or others, call 911, a suicide hotline, or go to a nearby emergency room.**

The fifteen denominations, 1,500 local congregations, interfaith, and community partners comprising the Oklahoma Conference of Churches want you to know you are not alone. For assistance in finding a local clergy, spiritual care provider, or faith community to walk with you along the pathway through recovery, contact:

Oklahoma Conference of Churches
Emotional and Spiritual Care Ministries
at 405-525-2928 or 405-315-1528
www.okchurches.org

