

Trauma: Brief Facts and Tips for Children and Adults

1. **Trauma is a serious problem.** Most children and adults will overcome a traumatic event with support. Some individuals are at greater risk for more serious traumatic reactions. Risk factors can include: proximity to a traumatic event, past exposure to trauma, substance abuse or mental illness, isolation, family stress, loss of a loved one, community stressors (poverty, violence).
2. **Trauma can have a lasting impact.** Trauma can increase the risk for psychological, behavioral or emotional problems (depression or PTSD), substance abuse, low occupational attainment or academic failure, social maladjustment and poor medical health.
3. **Common Reactions to Trauma.** Shock or disbelief, fear, sadness, guilt/shame, grief, confusion, pessimism, or anger. *In most cases these reactions are temporary and lessen over time.*
4. **Warning Signs.** If any of the following symptoms do not decrease over time, if they *severely* impact the ability to participate in normal activities, or if significant changes are noted, a referral to a mental health professional may be necessary.
 - Disruption or withdrawal from peer relationships
 - General lack of energy or interest in previously enjoyed activities
 - Decline in school/work performance, school/work avoidance, or difficulty concentrating
 - Physical complaints with no apparent cause (e.g., stomachaches, headaches)
 - Maladaptive coping (drug or alcohol use, severe aggression)
 - Repeated nightmares and reporting strong fears of death or violence
 - Repetitive play or talk re-enacting the traumatic events
 - Sleeping (difficulty falling or staying asleep) and eating disturbances
 - Increased arousal, easily startling or quick to anger, agitation, irritability, aggressiveness
 - Regression in behavior (thumb sucking, clinginess, fear of dark, assuming fetal position)
5. **Signs of Strong Emotional Reactions.**
 - Short temper/impatience; verbal outbursts
 - Sleep and/or eating problems; physical symptoms
 - Restlessness and agitation
 - Hitting and slamming objects, pets, or people
 - Desire to do harm
 - A sense of losing control over your life
 - Poor concentration or attention span
 - Social media posts expressing intolerance and/or anger
6. **There is help available.** If you or your family members are experiencing a crisis, reach out to the following:
Orlando Family Assistance: (407) 246.4357, **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1 (800) 273-8255
SAMHSA Helpline: 1(800) 662-HELP (4357)- English and Spanish