



## **Coping with a Traumatic Event**

Produced by FEI Behavioral Health

A traumatic event, such as a man-made or natural disaster is typically sudden, random, and senseless. The event can shatter your sense of safety and well being, and temporarily impact your ability to function normally. A range of post-trauma reaction is common and normal. While individual reactions will differ, most people will experience some form of numbness and/or hyper-arousal, such as:

### *Numbness*

- Isolating from others
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling "lost in a fog"
- Not feeling much of anything
- Depression

### *Hyper-arousal*

- Flashbacks of the event
- Anxiety and irritability
- Mood swings
- Being easily startled
- Sleep disturbances and nightmares

Other common reactions include sadness, guilt, fear, and an increased sense of vulnerability. It is not uncommon for the event to rekindle memories of past events when you felt helpless, shocked, or suffered the loss of someone close to you.

### ***Building Walls Around the Pain***

When crisis strikes, the natural human tendency is to try to stop the pain and to build a wall around the event to keep it from affecting the rest of your life. The problem with this is that it usually does not work. Denying the pain comes at a cost, often in the form of emotional pain, breakdown in relationships, decreased productivity and morale, or physical illness.

### ***Moving Beyond the Traumatic Event***

Understanding the post-trauma response, and making a conscious effort to work through it, will ultimately help you move ahead. It is important to remember that post-trauma reactions are a temporary response to a serious event. Often, you can help yourself get through this difficult time by reaching out for support, sharing your feelings with others, and taking care of yourself physically and emotionally. At times this may not be enough. If your reactions are causing major disruptions in your life, or if you don't feel yourself back to "normal" within a few weeks, seek professional help.

**For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 337-436-9533 or 1-888-414-FYCA.**

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