

Post-traumatic Symptoms

Psychological Reactions: 3+ months post-exposure

Intrusive thoughts

- ▶ Recurring, intrusive, involuntary memories
- ▶ Nightmares
- ▶ Flashbacks
- ▶ Feelings of physical/psychological stress when recalling the event



Avoidant behaviour

- ▶ Avoiding thoughts, feelings, or memories associated with the event
- ▶ Avoiding places, people associated with the event



Mental/Emotional changes

- ▶ Dissociative amnesia (memory loss of certain elements of the event)
- ▶ Feelings of detachment, estrangement from others
- ▶ Persistent negative emotional state
- ▶ Loss of interest in important activities



Increased reactivity

- ▶ Recklessness and self-destructive behaviour
- ▶ Irritability and angry outbursts
- ▶ Difficulty falling asleep
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Heightened startle response
- ▶ Hypervigilance/paranoia



Identifying Traumatic Reactions

Normal Reactions

0 - 24hrs

Immediate Reactions

- ▶ Shock
- ▶ Confusion
- ▶ Partial or total amnesia regarding the event



Identifying issues and offering support in the immediate aftermath of traumatic events prevents the development of pathological symptoms.

Pathological Reactions

within 1 month

Post-immediate Reactions

Physical

- ▶ Palpitations
- ▶ Hypervigilance
- ▶ Heightened startle response
- ▶ Sleep disturbances

Psychological

- ▶ Feelings of unreality
- ▶ Insecurity
- ▶ Irritability

Acute Stress

Dissociative Symptoms:

- ▶ Feeling disconnected or numb
- ▶ Derealization

"Reliving" Symptoms:

- ▶ Intrusive memories
- ▶ Flashbacks and nightmares
- ▶ Hypervigilance
- ▶ Distress, helplessness

Avoidance

- ▶ Avoiding triggering memories about the event

beyond 1 month

PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)

- ▶ Reliving symptoms
- ▶ Avoidant behaviour
- ▶ Persistence of acute stress symptoms
- ▶ Personality changes
- ▶ Associated disorders
- ▶ Delayed-onset PTSD

Responding to Traumatic Reactions

