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## *How you may feel afterwards*

After experiencing a rape or other type of sexual assault, or an attempted sexual assault, there are certain psychological responses that may occur. These symptoms (known as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome) are a normal response to severe trauma.

*Normal responses include:*

### 1. RE-EXPERIENCING THE TRAUMA

- ❖ Flashbacks
- ❖ Nightmares
- ❖ Intrusive images
- ❖ Recurring memories of assault
- ❖ Intensive distress when reminded of the event (like anniversary date)
- ❖ Physical reactions to reminders of the trauma (trembling, heart pounding, etc.)

### 2. INCREASED ANXIETY, FEARFUL FEELINGS

- ❖ Difficulty falling and/or staying asleep
- ❖ Irritability and feelings of anger
- ❖ Difficulty with concentration
- ❖ Fears about personal safety
- ❖ Feeling jumpy, reactive

### 3. CHANGES IN USUAL REACTIONS AND FEELINGS

- ❖ Feelings of depressions and sadness
- ❖ Tearfulness
- ❖ Avoiding thoughts or feelings about the assault
- ❖ Avoiding activities that remind you of the assault
- ❖ Unable to remember some or all of what happened (amnesia)
- ❖ Less interest or no interest in daily activities
- ❖ Feeling detached and alienated from others
- ❖ Not able to feel your full range of emotions
- ❖ Feeling hopeless/ no sense of future

These are common and normal responses to trauma. As someone who has survived a traumatic event, you will likely experience some of these symptoms as you heal from the assault over time.



*Many people experience feelings of loss after a sexual assault: loss of your safety, loss of your body integrity, loss of dignity, and threatened loss of your life. Talking to someone you trust about these feelings is often helpful in healing from the assault.*

**Some other ideas for taking care of yourself:**

1. Take steps to insure your personal safety.
2. Grieve the loss by allowing yourself to cry.
3. Be gentle and nurturing to yourself.
4. Remember how you've gotten through difficult times and use those strategies.
5. Learn and practice relaxation techniques.
6. Seek counseling for yourself.
7. Get extra rest.
8. Avoid self blame.
9. Physical activity can help.
10. Get all the information you can about sexual assault, the court system, how trials go, or any other information.
11. Warm milk, herbal teas, and other warm drinks may be calming.
12. Remind yourself that your feelings are normal and you will heal from this trauma.
13. Join a support group.
14. Remember alcohol and drugs only postpone your feelings and don't help healing.
15. Express your anger in non-hurtful ways.
16. Take a self defense class.
17. Take a hot bath for relaxation.
18. Give yourself time to heal.
19. Don't push yourself to do anything until you're ready.

***We want to Help!***

**415-437-3000**