

Common Stress & Trauma Reactions: There are many different ways that people (kids and adults) react to stressful life events. Below there are several kinds of reactions, all of which are **common**. Take a look at this list to see which ones you've experienced. Talk to a trusted adult about them. There are ways to keep them from bothering you.

	<p>Having Nightmares & Trouble Sleeping. When something really scary or upsetting happens, it takes a while to figure out exactly what happened and what it means. Our brains work to “digest” it or make meaning of it. This can take a long time. Nightmares are one way of digesting what happened to you.</p>
	<p>Thinking about it ALL THE TIME. This is another way to digest what happened. Like nightmares. It can be a problem because it makes you feel upset and can be unpleasant.</p>
	<p>Wanting to <u>NOT</u> think about it. This is natural, since it is upsetting to think about stress and trauma, and it can make you feel all sorts of emotions. Avoiding it can make things easier, but only for a little while.</p>
	<p>Avoiding people, places, or things that make you think about it. Just like not wanting to think or talk about it, avoiding situations that remind you of what happened can help for a little while. But, sometimes it keeps you from doing normal things that are an important part of your life.</p>
	<p>Feeling scared for no reason. Sometimes this happens because you're remembering something hard that happened. Other times, your body is just so tense all the time that you just feel scared. Either way, you can learn some ways to help you feel calmer when it happens!</p>
	<p>Feeling “crazy” or out of control. Sometimes, you can start to feel really out of control or even crazy. Don't worry, there is nothing wrong with you. These are all normal reactions to stressful situations!</p>
	<p>Not being able to remember parts of what happened. This happens to a lot of people. The stressful event can be so awful that your memory doesn't work the way it usually does. Sometimes it gets easier to remember later on, and sometimes it gets harder. This can be frustrating, but it is really normal!</p>

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	<p>Having trouble concentrating. When stressful things happen, there are a lot of feelings and hard thoughts happening. It makes sense that it could be hard to concentrate on schoolwork or even on what your family and friends say to you.</p>
	<p>Being on guard to protect yourself; feeling like something bad is about to happen. After a bad thing happens to you, it makes sense to be prepared for another bad thing. The problem with this is that you can spend so much time and energy waiting for the next bad thing, it's hard to do anything else.</p>
	<p>Jumping with loud noises. This is one way your body says it's prepared for action, in case something else happens. As you begin to feel calmer, this will go away.</p>
	<p>Feeling anger. Some people feel angry about the thing that happened, others may feel angry all the time, at everything, and everybody. Both of these are normal responses and will feel less intense as you digest what happened to you.</p>
	<p>Feeling bad about yourself. Sometimes, all this stress can make you feel really bad about yourself, like you're a bad person or no one likes you. This is a normal response to stress, but it can feel really hard.</p>
	<p>Feeling guilt or shame. Sometimes you blame yourself for things you couldn't control. You may also feel bad about upsetting your caregivers. Sometimes people are ashamed about what happened to them or how they responded. Guilt and shame can make it hard to talk about what happened. Even though it's hard to believe, the more you talk about what happened, the better it gets.</p>
	<p>Feeling sadness, grief, or loss. Sometimes stressful life events or traumas include losing someone close to you or losing something that is important to you. It can make you feel sad or down. We'll talk about these feelings in the group.</p>
	<p>Having physical health problems. Stress has an effect on your body as well. Some people get headaches or feel sick to their stomach a lot. Pain and discomfort are a normal response to stressful things.</p>