

Trauma and Grief

Trauma reactions are **NORMAL** reactions that happen when a person experiences an **ABNORMAL** situation that is very overwhelming and threatening. When a person has been through a traumatic experience they also have a great deal of fear and/or helplessness.

Grief reactions are **NORMAL** reactions that happen when a person experiences a significant loss in their lives.

Listed below are common reactions that can be expected when someone has had either a trauma or a loss.

TRAUMA	GRIEF
Main feeling is terror or fear	Main feeling is sadness
Trauma includes feeling grief	Grief is not traumatic
The experience is hard to talk about	Can talk about the loss
Left with a sense of being helplessness and powerlessness	Left with sense of sorrow
May experience being more angry more quickly and acting this out towards others	May feel angry about the loss, but not so likely to act out with anger towards others
May feel guilt – like “I should have prevented it” or “it should have been me instead”	If feeling guilt, it is more about regrets of what you wished you could of or should have done or said with the person who died
Leaves one feeling bad about self	Does not feel badly about self, just sadness and missing of the other person
Dreams of being victimized	Dreams about the person who died
Can't really forget – may have flashbacks or thoughts that keep coming back of the event	Remembers with sadness for loss, but not so much upsetting thoughts or memories of what has happened
Try to avoid anything that is a reminder of trauma - “numbing” (no feeling),	Want to remember the person who has died
Startle reactions, or hyper vigilance (keeping a look out for threats) ,	Mostly sadness, but not these other reactions

These reactions should lessen over time.
However if they do not, it is wise to seek help from a counselor.