

COMMON SIGNS AND SIGNALS OF A STRESS REACTION - General Public -

When one has experienced a traumatic event or a critical incident, it may cause someone to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at work or in their private life. Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing or may experience later, some strong emotional or physical reactions. It is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have passed through a stressful event.

Sometimes the emotional aftershocks (or stress reactions) appear immediately after the traumatic event. Sometimes they may appear a few hours or a few days later. In some cases, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions appear.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or a few months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event. With understanding and the support of loved ones, the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This does not imply craziness or weakness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful for the person to manage by themselves.

** definite indication of the need for medical attention*

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	BEHAVIORAL	SPIRITUAL
Chest pain*	Heightened or lowered alertness	Severe panic (rare)	Suspiciousness	
Chills		Agitation	Change in sexual functioning	Believing God is not in control
Difficulty breathing*		Emotional shock	Change in usual communications	Sudden turn toward God
Dizziness	Poor abstract thinking	Intense anger	Pacing	Questioning of one's basic beliefs
Elevated BP	Poor concentration	Fear		Familiar faith practices seem empty (prayer, scriptures, hymns)
Fainting	Nightmares, Intrusive Images			Belief that we have failed God
Fatigue	Blaming someone	Anxiety	Change in activity	Anger at God
Grinding of teeth		Apprehension	Hyper-alert to environment	Sense of isolation (from God, church members)
Headaches	Difficulty identifying familiar objects or people	Depression	Inability to rest	
Muscle tremors	Poor attention	Grief	Withdrawal	Withdraw from church
Nausea	Confusion	Guilt	Change in speech patterns	Feeling distant from God
Profuse sweating	Loss of time, place or person orientation	Irritability	Erratic movements	Anger at clergy
Rapid heart rate	Memory problems	Uncertainty	Loss or increase of appetite	
Shock symptoms*	Disturbed thinking			Believing God doesn't care
Thirst	Hyper-vigilance	Loss of emotional control	Alcohol consumption	Church rituals seem empty (worship, communion)
Twiches	Poor decisions	Denial	Emotional outbursts	Uncharacteristic church involvement
Visual difficulties		Inappropriate emotional response	Antisocial acts	Belief that God is powerless
Vomiting	Increased or decreased awareness of...	...surroundings	Nonspecific bodily complaints	Loss of meaning and purpose
Weakness	Poor problem solving	Feeling overwhelmed	Startle reflex intensified	

The Organizational Self-Care Checklist

Training and Education

- The organization provides education to all employees about stress and its impact on health and well-being.
- The organization provides all employees with education on the signs of burnout compassion fatigue and/or vicarious traumatization.
- The organization provides all employees with stress management trainings.
- The organization provides all employees with training related to their job tasks.
- Staff are given opportunities to attend refresher trainings and trainings on new topics related to their role.
- Staff coverage is in place to support training.
- The organization provides education on the steps necessary to advance in whatever role you are in.
- Other: _____

Support and Supervision

- The organization offers an employee assistance program (EAP).
- Employee job descriptions and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- All staff members have regular supervision.
- Part of supervision is used to address job stress and self-care strategies.

- Part of supervision is used for ongoing assessment of workload and time needed to complete tasks.
- Staff members are encouraged to understand their own stress reactions and take appropriate steps to develop their own self-care plans.
- Staff members are welcome to discuss concerns about the organization or their job with administrators without negative consequences (e.g., being treated differently, feeling like their job is in jeopardy or having it impact their role on the team).
- Staff members are encouraged to take breaks, including lunch and vacation time.
- The organization supports peer-to-peer activities such as support groups and mentoring.
- Other: _____

Employee Control and Input

- The organization provides opportunities for staff to provide input into practices and policies.
- The organization reviews its policies on a regular basis to identify whether they are helpful or harmful to the health and well-being of its employees.

Employee Control and Input *continued*

- The organization provides opportunities for staff members to identify their professional goals.
- Staff members have formal channels for addressing problems/grievances.
- Other: _____

Communication

- Staff members have regularly scheduled team meetings.
- Topics related to self-care and stress management are addressed in team meetings.
- Regular discussions of how people and departments are communicating and relaying information are addressed in team meetings.
- The organization provides opportunities for staff in different roles to share their “day in the life”.
- The organization has a way of evaluating staff satisfaction on a regular basis.
- Other: _____

Work Environment

- The work environment is well-lit.
- The work environment is physically well maintained (e.g., clean, secure, etc.).
- Information about self-care is posted in places that are visible.
- Employee rights are posted in places that are visible.
- The organization provides opportunities for community building among employees.
- The organization has a no-tolerance policy concerning sexual harassment.
- The organization has a no-tolerance policy concerning bullying.
- Workplace issues, including grievance issues and interpersonal difficulties, are managed by those in the appropriate role and remain confidential.
- Other: _____

***Agencies that deal with people in traumatic situations
can also become traumatized.***

***It is the ethical responsibility of the agency/organization/division
to create an environment that supports and encourages the
critical strength
of RESILIENCE in all staff.***

DEVELOPING RESILIENCY: BOOKS, WEBSITES, FURTHER READING

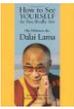
SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT



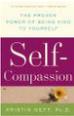
Crones Don't Whine: Concentrated Wisdom For Juicy Women. Jean Shonoda Bolen



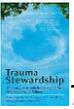
Goddesses In Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes In Women's Lives. Jean Shonoda Bolen



How To See Yourself As You Really Are. Bstan-zin Rgya-mtsho (Tenzin Gyatso), the 14th Dalai Lama.



Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up And Leave Insecurity Behind. Kristin Neff



Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide To Caring For Self While Caring For Others. Laura van der noot
Lipsky & Connie Burk.

Emotional Intelligence - Daniel Goleman

<http://www.danielgoleman.info/topics/emotional-intelligence/>

SENSE OF HOPE



The Western Guide To Feng Shui: Creating Balance, Harmony, And Prosperity In Your Environment. Tara
Collins



Naikan: Gratitude, grace and the Japanese art of self-reflection. G. Krech



The Wishing Year: A House, A Man, My Soul. N Oxenhandler

If you have a suggestion on a resource you've found useful, I'd love to add its wisdom and yours to this list. Email it to me at thomhome@hills.net



Tragedy To Triumph: Lessons Of Recovery And Hope, Robin Finegan, Krista Flanigan, (stories on recovery after the Oklahoma City bombing)

Positivity: Top-Notch Research Reveals The 3-To-1 Ratio That Will Change Your Life. Barbara Fredrickson.

<https://www.positivityratio.com/> New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

HEALTHY COPING

Trauma Exposure. Dr. Delores Subia BigFoot

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241496299 Trauma Exposure in American IndianAlaska Native](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241496299_Trauma_Exposure_in_American_IndianAlaska_Native_Children)

[Children](#)

Training America's Cops. Lt. Col. Dave Grossman (Retired)

[http://www.mensjournal.com/features/articles/lt-dave-grossman-the-self-described-killologist-training-](http://www.mensjournal.com/features/articles/lt-dave-grossman-the-self-described-killologist-training-americas-cops-w463304)

[americas-cops-w463304](#)

Retirement for Cops. Jeff Shannon [https://www.calibrepress.com/2016/02/retirement-for-cops-part-1-the-](https://www.calibrepress.com/2016/02/retirement-for-cops-part-1-the-challenges/)

[challenges/](#)

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else In Business - Patrick Lencioni

The Best Place to Work: The Art and Science of Creating an Extraordinary Workplace - Ron Friedman, Ph.D.

Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high. Patterson, K., Greny, J., McMillian, R., & Switzler, A.

Dealing with the crazy makers in your life: Setting boundaries on unhealthy relationships. D Hawkins.

Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable – Patrick Lencioni

I'm proud of you: My friendship with Fred Rogers. T Madigan

The Stiletto In Your Back: The Good Girl's Guide To Backstabbers, Bullies, Gossips & Queen Bees At Work (The Good Girl's Guide To Getting Ahead) – Michelle Villalobos

What if? Short stories to spark diversity dialogue. Steven L. Robbins

If you have a suggestion on a resource you've found useful, I'd love to add its wisdom and yours to this list. Email it to me at thomhome@hills.net

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE AND MEANING

Anyway: The paradoxical commandments: Finding personal meaning in a crazy world. KM Keith

Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being. Martin Seligman

The essence of Tibetan Buddhism. L.T. Yeshe

The Happiness Project – Gretchen Rubin

The Tao of Pooh - Benjamin Hoff

WEBSITES:

NVAA Chapter on Research Basis for Five Core Elements (38 pages): <https://ce4less.com/Tests/Materials/E078Materials.pdf>

OVC Chart linking research resources to each of the 5 elements of Resiliency (126 page list): [[Word](#) 49KB, [PDF](#) 68KB]

workplacebullying.org

[www.fried](http://www.friedsocialworker.com) social worker.com

www.calmingmanatee.com

www.icanhascheezeburger.com

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qr3rk0kzfkq> (jessica) (affirmation!!)

positivityratio.com

livehappymagazine.com

successmagazine.com

folkrellion.com

https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspBldgResiliencyChildAbuseOrgs_InstructorMaterials.cfm:

- "An Evaluation of the Need for Self-Care Programs in Agencies Serving Adult and Child Victims of Interpersonal Violence in Texas" [[PDF](#) 715KB]
- "Reclaim Your Life: Strategies and Insights for Balanced Living" [[PDF](#) 105KB]
- "Speaking Up and Stepping Back: Examining the Link Between Employee Voice and Job Neglect" [[PDF](#) 288KB]
- "Fight or Flight? Factors Influencing Child Welfare Workers' Propensity to Seek Positive Change or Disengage from Their Jobs" [[PDF](#) 388KB]

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STRESS RELIEF TIPS

EXPENSIVE WAYS TO RELIEVE STRESS

- Vacation
- Spa Treatments
- Massage
- Shopping
- Movies (comedies not sad ones!)
- Manicure
- Pedicure

NO COST STRESS RELIEVERS

- Exercise-relieves stress; works off anger
- Breathing Exercises
- Power Naps
- Humor
- Visualization
- Crying
- Self Talk
- Meditation
- Yoga

LOW COST STRESS RELIEVERS

- Get Organized
- Get in Touch with your Inner Child (bubbles)
- Aromatherapy
- Stress Stars/Stress Balls
- Water Therapy-desk top fountain; physical hydration
- Music
- Computer Video Games
- Pillow-uses, colors
- De-stress Your Environment-colors, textures, patterns

NEGATIVE TECHNIQUES

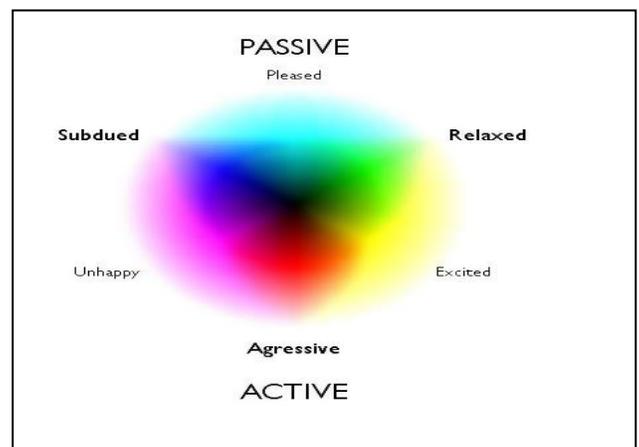
- Overeating
- TV Escape
- Prescription Drugs
- Illegal Drugs
- Drinking alcohol to excess
- Gambling
- Shouting/name calling
- Cursing
- Quitting your job-that'll show 'em!

WHAT DO THE COLORS MEAN?

- **RED** is aggressive, violent, passionate
- **BLUE** is calming
- **GREEN** represents life, nature, signifies growth, renewal, health, environment
- **YELLOW** is a warm color, represents sunshine
- **PURPLE** is the color of royalty, associated both with nobility and spirituality
- **PINK** is a softer, less violent red is a symbol of purity, cleanliness and innocence.

CULTURAL/TRADITIONAL STRESS RELIEVERS

- SWEAT LODGES
- SMUDGING
- BRUSHING
- HERB THERAPY
- DANCING, POW WOWS, STOMP DANCES
- STORY TELLING
- ARTS AND CRAFTS

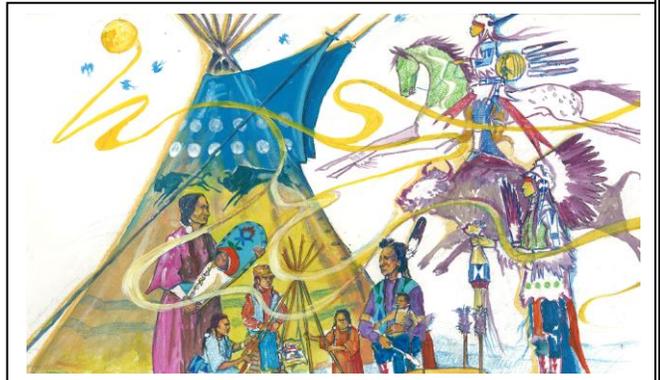


STRESS RELIEF THOUGHTS

- Most of us are here because we have a calling, a calling to help others, ease their pain, a true helping personality, but with most of us we are here because of something that happened to us or someone we love. We are changed irrevocably by the things we experience. The big things, the small things have their impact and can't be undone. Those experiences and the things that have happened to us is why we do what we do.
- *“Do not depend on the hope of results. When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on . . . you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no results at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to the idea, you start to concentrate not on the results, but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. Big results are not in your hands or mine. All the good that you will do will come not from you, but from the fact that you have allowed yourself, in the obedience of faith, to be used by God's love.”* **Father Thomas Merton**

WORDS TO LIVE BY

- Don't get so busy making a living, that you forget to make a life
- We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give
- Life is too short to wake up with regrets
- So, love the people who treat you right
- Love the ones who don't just because you can
- If you get a second chance-grab it with both hands!
- Forgive quickly
- Laugh often every day.
- Smile even if you don't feel like it, smiles are contagious
- Remember . . . There is always, always something to be thankful for.



REMINDER! *Never exclude professional counseling from possible stress relief. In helping professions we always look at ourselves as expert problem solvers and often we feel inadequate if we can't solve our own problems. We are all human beings! Do what you need to take care of yourself or you won't be able to care for others!*