

COPING WITH Unexpected Events

What's "normal" following a traumatic experience:

When you have experienced a traumatic incident, you may have post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSD). Your brain is trying to process something it cannot understand, so it is normal to experience...

- Intrusive images/ thoughts
- Sleep disturbance
- Eating disturbances
- Feelings of overwhelm
- More emotional than usual
- Brain fog/confusion
- Normal daily activities feel harder
- Spontaneous waves of emotion
- Physical symptoms like headaches, fatigue, muscle tension, stomach pain

What you can do to help your brain process the events:

It can take 2-4 weeks for these symptoms to resolve. Grief, on the other hand, can last much longer depending on the nature of the unexpected event. If PTSD symptoms last more than 30 days, see a mental health professional.

- Find trustworthy people to process your thoughts and feelings with
- Go for a walk
- Make sure to get good sleep

Grief: when the traumatic incident includes personal loss, the process of grieving can take much longer.

Your brain is **DESIGNED** to heal from trauma.

Self-care to heal:

- 20 min of exercise 5 days a week
- Make sure to let family and friends know to check on you/ pray for you. Even if you cannot share details, they can know you are dealing with something difficult
- Make sure to eat well and drink lots of water
- Check in with social support often
- Take lots of breaks to rest and check in with yourself and how you are doing
- Set healthy boundaries for yourself and your interactions with others

DURING SLEEP YOUR BRAIN PROCESSES FOR YOU: If you are having difficulty sleeping, establish a healthy bedtime routine geared toward mental health recovery.

- Do not try to process the unexpected event right before bed, instead start a gratitude journal, read a book, listen to music, etc.
- Epsom salt baths
- .5-2.5 ML Melatonin 2 hours before bed
- No alcohol
- Limit screens the hours before trying to sleep (blue light stimulates the brain)