

After a stressful or traumatic event, most people experience short-term emotional reactions. Support from trusted individuals and community can help with coping, though it may be hard to know when additional support is needed.

Common immediate reactions may include:

- Feelings of numbness or shock
- Avoiding people and places that are reminders of the event
- Nightmares or strong memories of the event, as if re-living it
- Being very afraid, angry, or sad
- Having trouble sleeping or paying attention
- Feeling helpless and hopeless
- Increased feelings of being tired and worn out
- Complaints of aches and pains

So how do we know when there is cause for concern and if all these symptoms above are to be expected?

Seek help right away if these behaviors:

- Get in the way of day-to-day activities
- Impact ability to function in more than one area of life
- Last for a minimum of one month

If you or someone you care about is having suicidal or homicidal thoughts or actions and/or begin to display self-injurious behaviors/actions, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 and/or 988.

To help return to a form of baseline functioning, consider the following questions.

People: Who do you rely on for strength and support?

Place: How can you create a space where you can feel comfortable and safe?

Routine: Can you keep things similar to what they were before the exposure? Keep a daily routine when you can.

Ritual: What are comforting traditions and can you employ some of them at this time?

For concerns regarding ongoing distress, crises or trouble, trauma treatment can help you seek safety, grow stronger, and heal.

It is natural to want to “put the past behind you” and not to think or talk about the bad things that have happened. While each person may behave differently, a community, family and/or friends can help manage fear and stress following a trauma exposure.

Feelings of safety can increase for people when we spend time together, helping us regain our sense of safety and ability to move through this experience.

Call 855.275.5237 or email Ask@JCFS.org to contact our centralized intake for services at JCFS Chicago.