

Surviving a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event

Retraumatization happens when experiencing a triggering event and it reminds you of a fear that was experienced during a previous traumatic event, such as a disaster.

Retraumatizing event examples include:

- Anniversary dates or news stories of similar incidents
- Similar disasters, such as tornado, hurricane, earthquake, flood, wildfire, or the threat
- Distressing events reported by media(car accidents, physical, sexual and emotional abuse)
- Witnessing a traumatic event or hearing about one that happens to someone else

Signs and Symptoms of Retraumatization

Thoughts

- Negative thoughts are associated with fear or other emotions
- Flashbacks and nightmares
- Trouble concentrating
- Disassociation (feeling disconnected)

Physical Signs and Symptoms

- Feeling anxious, tense, on edge
- Weight changes
- Fatigue, lack of energy
- Strong reaction to triggers(racing heart, sweating)

Behaviors

- Social withdrawal, isolation and avoidance
- Increasing intake of alcohol and other substances

Emotions

- Intense feelings of guilt, anger, fear, anxiety, horror, sadness, shame or despair
- Intense distress in reaction to triggers, or circumstances you link with present or past trauma
- Feeling distant from other people
- Feeling unable to control your emotions, such as not being able to calm your self down, a decreased sense of security and inability to love

Tips for managing and developing resilience for Retraumatization

- Do not underestimate what you have been through, but also recognize that you are strong and able to recover
- Understand how and why the event happened
- Connect with people who understand and help you through triggering events
- Ensure that you have a support system that is easily accessible and consists of people who know, accept and care for you.
- Develop coping skills for stress management, self-care, and social support, especially peer support
- Have a self care plan that includes ways to build resilience (regular exercise, quiet time for meditation or relaxation)
- Practice your spiritual beliefs or reach out to your faith community
- Seek care from a trained, trauma-informed provider who can recognize your retraumatization symptoms and offer evidence-based treatment and guidance



Tools and Resources

The free and confidential resources below can help you or a loved one connect with a skilled, trained mental health professional.

Need Support Now

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. [Call](#) or [text](#) 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

- [Disaster Distress Helpline](#): CALL or TEXT 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish)

Abuse/Assault/Violence

- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#): [1-800-799-7233](tel:1-800-799-7233) or text LOVEIS to 22522
- [National Child Abuse Hotline](#): 1-800-4AChild ([1-800-422-4453](tel:1-800-422-4453)) or text 1-800-422-4453
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#): [1-800-656-HOPE](tel:1-800-656-HOPE) (4673) or [Online Chat](#)

LGBTQ+

- [Trans Lifeline](#): [1-877-565-8860](tel:1-877-565-8860) (para español presiona el 2)
- The Trevor Project's [TrevorLifeline](#): [1-866-488-7386](tel:1-866-488-7386)

Older Adults

- [The Eldercare Locator](#): 1-800-677-1116 – [TTY Instructions](#)
- Alzheimer's Association Helpline: [1-800-272-3900](tel:1-800-272-3900) (para español presiona el 2)
- Veterans/Active-duty Military
- [Veteran's Crisis Line](#): 988, then select 1, or [Crisis Chat](#) or text: 838255
- [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Help for Military Service Members and Their Families](#)

Finding Treatment

- [FindTreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov) Find a provider treating substance use disorders, addiction, and mental illness.
- [American Psychiatric Association Foundation](#) Find a Psychiatrist
- [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#) Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Finder
- [American Psychological Association](#) Find a Psychologist

Opioid Treatment

- [Buprenorphine Treatment Practitioner Locator](#)
- [Opioid Treatment Program Directory by State](#)

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