

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS (continued)

Changes in Sleep Patterns: Difficulty sleeping, nightmares, or insomnia. On the other hand, some might sleep excessively to avoid confronting their emotions.

Substance Abuse or Self-Destructive Behaviors: Turning to alcohol, drugs, or other harmful coping mechanisms as a way to numb emotional pain or avoid intrusive thoughts.

CLUES IN KIDS OR TEENS

Regression: Reverting to behaviors from an earlier age, like bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, or clinging to a parent.

Separation Anxiety: Fear of being away from caregivers or loved ones, even in situations where they previously felt safe.

Acting Out or Aggression: Acting out, aggression, or trouble with authority. Children may reenact events through play.

Difficulty in School/Social Situations: Decreased performance in school, difficulty interacting with peers.

WHAT'S NEXT

If this sounds like what you're feeling, it's okay to ask for help. Talking to a trained professional can make a huge difference. Call us, even if you just need someone to talk to. We're here to help and provide a safe space. No judgement, just support.

Are you struggling with trauma?

***Know the signs**



*This information provides general, non-clinical examples of symptoms commonly associated with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is not for diagnosis. Diagnosis should always be done with qualified professionals.



What is Trauma?

Trauma happens when you experience something scary that feels too big to handle. Violence can be a major cause of trauma. You might feel like your world has changed, and it can be hard to know what to do next.

Signs That You May Be Struggling

If you've been exposed to violence or lost someone close to you, you might be feeling things you don't understand or know how to deal with, like...

- Feeling anxious or scared all the time
- Having trouble sleeping
- Nightmares that wake you up feeling shaken
- Flashbacks—memories of the event pop up in your head
- Avoiding places/people that remind you of what happened
- Feeling angry, sad, or numb
- Struggling with school, family, or friends
- Isolating or crying more than usual
- Feeling lost in grief after losing someone close to you
- Feeling alone or like no one understands what you're going through.

Other Indicators

Signs that someone may be struggling with trauma can vary depending on the individual and the type of trauma they've experienced (e.g., physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological trauma), but there are several common indicators to watch for. Here are some key signs by category/type:

EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL



Hypervigilance: Heightened alertness, constant “on edge” feeling, may include being easily startled, overreacting to loud noises, or constantly scanning for danger.

EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL (continued)

Avoidance: Avoiding reminders or situations that bring up memories of the traumatic event.

Intrusive Thoughts or Flashbacks: Vivid memories, flashbacks, or distressing thoughts about the trauma.

Mood Swings or Emotional Numbness: Rapid shifts in mood, ranging from sadness to irritability or anger.

Difficulty Concentrating: Reduced ability to focus.

Engaging in Risky or Reckless Behavior: Behaviors that seem out of character, like driving recklessly, risky activities, substance use, impulsive decisions.



PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Somatic (Sleep) Symptoms: Unexplained aches and pains, headaches, digestive issues, or muscle tension. Some individuals carry trauma in their body, which can manifest as chronic pain or tension.

Fatigue: Chronic exhaustion, even if they haven't been physically active. Trauma can drain a person's energy due to the emotional and psychological toll it takes.

Changes in Appetite: Significant changes in eating habits, either eating too much or too little, as a way to cope with distress.

Physical Signs of Stress: High blood pressure, heart palpitations, & other physical manifestations of prolonged stress.



BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

Withdrawal: Social withdrawal, distancing from loved ones, or avoiding activities where interacting with others is required.

Anger or Irritability: Increased irritability, angry outbursts, or difficulty controlling emotions due to feelings of frustration and powerlessness.

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