

# Why Do I Feel This Way???

## Acute Stress Disorder in the Face of Traumatic Experiences: Understanding and Coping

**Acute Stress Disorder is caused by trauma (traumatic stress) and lasts at least 3 days following a traumatic event.**

### Some symptoms can include:

- ✓ Involuntary and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event.
- ✓ Recurrent distressing dreams in which the content and/or affect of the dream are related to the events
- ✓ Intense physical and emotional reactions when reminded of the event
- ✓ Feeling or acting as if the event is reoccurring
- ✓ Difficulty feeling positive emotions
- ✓ Feeling dazed or as if viewing yourself from another's perspective
- ✓ Sleep disturbance
- ✓ Irritable behavior
- ✓ Hypervigilance or exaggerated startle response
- ✓ Problems with concentration

As scary and overwhelming as these feelings can be, **these symptoms are considered to be within the normal range of reactions** given the extreme severity of the stressor. The symptoms usually appear within hours to days of the impact of the stressful stimulus or event, and **typically begin to subside within a week after the event.**

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## Helpful Ways to Cope with Acute Stress

**Physical Activity:** Acute stress releases a great deal of adrenaline and triggers your “fight or flight” response. Physical activity will metabolize these hormones helping you become calmer. Ex.) Brisk walking, dancing, or an activity from Darebee.com

**Clarifying Information about the Event:** As able discussing with friends and faculty/staff the evolving situation to stay informed and reduce catastrophic thinking.

**Time with Friends and Loved Ones:** Spending time and sharing support, empathy, and connections with those who are also affected. This is the time to rally within your community for one another.

**Talking With a Professional:** Utilizing the professional supports on campus and beyond. The College Counseling Center- 315-267-2330, Live Counselor Text Line- Text Got5U to 741-741 Reachout Crisis Hotline- 315-265-2422.

**Using Five Senses to Soothe:** Taking a hot shower or bath, listening to a favorite music composer or artist, looking at beautiful works of art or photos, smelling your favorite scents such as lavender, allowing yourself to indulge in a favorite food or dessert.

**Protect Your Sleep Hygiene:** Sleep helps heal your brain from the stress. Trying to keep a consistent schedule, avoid screentime right before bed, and only use your bed for sleeping. All of these can help train your brain for a more restful sleep

**Avoid Alcohol or Other Substances:** While in the immediate these can reduce your emotional discomfort it causes a “rebound” effect. Once your body metabolizes the substance the initial emotions will return with increased intensity.