# Healing after an act of violence

Acts of violence can affect people in different ways. Your own experiences and values can affect your response. It may help to know that many common reactions fade over time.

## Shock, insecurity, fear and vulnerability

Many people believe the world to be safe and predictable. But when violence occurs, you can lose your sense of safety. You may feel at risk and fearful. That can leave you feeling on high alert at all times. You may check and recheck door locks, peer through blinds, want family members to stay close or listen for the noise of an intruder. It can take time to rebuild your sense of trust in your safety.

## Anger and revenge

It's normal to experience anger and perhaps even a desire for revenge in response to violence. These feelings may surface as you work through the healing process. You may also experience anger at yourself.

## Past trauma

A violent act can trigger thoughts of past trauma. This can enhance your fear and other feelings. If you were going through a stressful time before the event, it can further heighten your stress and reactions. And dealing with past trauma can limit the energy you have available to cope with this new trauma.

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## Emotional triggers

Emotional triggers are those events, sounds or even smells that can cause you to recall a trauma. Examples include: seeing pictures or reading names associated with the incident or hearing sounds similar to those heard during the trauma.

Emotional triggers can bring on intense feelings. Though they tend to taper off as time passes, some may surface months or even years later. Those may be caused by an anniversary of the event or perhaps by learning of a similar incident.

## Signs of stress

These might include:

- Poor sleep
- Lack of appetite or overeating
- Not being able to focus
- Headaches or backaches
- Constant thoughts about the incident

## Signs of post-traumatic stress

These include emotional and physical responses. Often, survivors or those who saw a violent act can feel stuck in the trauma. They may have:

- Frequent memories
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Insomnia
- Depression
- Loss of interest in friends or family
- Survivor guilt
- Guilt over not being able to control emotions
- Irritability or jumpiness

If you or someone you know is healing after an act of violence, it can help to find a local or online support group. It can also help to speak with a professional counselor.

You and your household members don't have to heal alone. We're here for you, day and night. Simply call us or go online for free, confidential support.

**1-833-327-2386**
**https://www.resourcesforliving.com**
**Username: crisis support**
**Password: RFL**

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