

## Symptoms of Trauma

Everyone experiences and responds to trauma differently. Survivors who exhibit trauma symptoms *often* present in one of four ways:

### SAD

- Persistent sadness
- Suicidal thoughts or behaviors
- Low self-esteem
- Self-injury, appear to be self destructive or self sabotage
- Shame about the abuse
- Hopelessness and despair
- Feelings of isolation and withdrawal
- Helplessness

### MAD

- Explosive anger and rage
- Hyper-sexuality
- Drug use and related behaviors
- Running away or truancy in adolescent
- Gang-related violence
- Preoccupation with revenge toward perpetrator
- Frequent physical fights
- Hostility toward authority figures

### BAD

- Dissociative episodes
- Compulsions
- Depersonalization
- Obsessive thinking
- Feeling totally different from everyone
- Preoccupation with the perpetrator which may appear delusional
- Paranoia
- Eating disorders
- Intense guilt or shame

### "I'VE BEEN HAD"

- Distrust and re-victimization
- Disrupted relationships
- Domestic violence
- Failure to protect oneself and accurately assess danger
- Pattern of succumbing to damaging peer pressure
- Difficulty in setting long-term goals due to sense of foreshortened future

## Signs and Symptoms of Secondary Traumatic Stress

To what extent do you experience any of the following as a result of your work?

- Social withdrawal
- Low energy, fatigue
- Feelings of being easily overwhelmed
- Pessimistic or cynical outlook on life
- Intrusive work-related thoughts or dreams
- Difficulty keeping appropriate relationship boundaries
- Difficulty setting limits or saying "no"
- Depressed mood
- Lack of motivation or anhedonia
- Increased worry and anxiety
- Emotional numbness
- Feelings that no one understands (or would be able to)
- Loss of interest in sexual activity
- Vague physical aches, pain
- Making poor judgments and decisions
- Feelings of loss of control
- Increased sense of danger or not feeling safe
- Finding your mind wandering at work
- Difficulty making decisions
- Sense of disconnection from loved ones
- Increased feelings of suspiciousness
- Feeling "adrift" spiritually
- Accident-proneness
- Excessive Involvement in "risky" activities (e.g. drugs, alcohol, sexual behaviors)
- Increased irritability or agitation
- Feeling "on edge" much of the time
- Feelings of despair
- Wanting to escape, "run away from it all"
- Increased "sick days" from work
- Violating ethical standards
- Reduced work productivity, doing the "bare minimum"
- Decrease in respect for others, increase in blaming
- Increase in obsessive thoughts and/or compulsive behaviors
- Decreased interest in "self-care"

(Adapted from Traumatic Stress Institute Self Assessment Tool and other similar sources)

## **May You Be Blessed**

May you be blessed  
With discomfort at easy answers,  
Half-truths, and superficial relationships,  
So that you will live  
Deep in your heart.

May you be blessed  
With anger at injustice, oppression, and  
Exploitation of people and the earth  
So that you will work for  
Justice, equity, and peace.

May you be blessed  
With tears to shed for those who suffer  
So you will reach out your hand  
To comfort them and  
Transform their pain into joy.

And may you be blessed  
With the foolishness to think  
That you can make a difference in the world,  
So you will do the things  
Which others say cannot be done.

Source Unknown