

What are trauma symptoms? Why do they occur?

A traumatic experience is any event that has the potential to threaten a person's sense of safety and security.

These events often happen unexpectedly.

We can also experience trauma by witnessing an event, even if it did not happen to us directly.

When we experience a traumatic event, our brains work to protect us by sending messages to our bodies to respond. This is known as the fight, flight or freeze response and is a natural human instinct.



Things you might notice if your fight or flight response is triggered by a traumatic event include:



**Rapidly
beating heart**



**Tunnel vision and
a sense of time
slowing down**



Rapid speech



**Increased
strength and
stamina**



**Increase
perspiration**

These responses are completely natural and important for our survival.

However, after an event it can be common for our bodies to take some time to return to their natural state.

In the weeks or months that follow, you may notice:



**Difficulty
sleeping**



Fatigue



Tearfulness



**Going over and
over the event
in our mind**



**Irritability-easy
to anger or
get upset**



**Inability to
focus on a
task**

These experiences are natural after a traumatic event and usually settle over the coming days, weeks, or months. However, sometimes we need support when dealing with distressing symptoms. If you need further support, please contact your Instep Case Manager and Trauma Specialist. We are here to help you get back to a state of well-being.