

# Prevention Pathways

## *Online Courses*

### Common Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

**Shock and disbelief.** "I feel numb." "I can't believe this happened to me." You may feel withdrawn and distant from other people. You may want to forget what happened and avoid people or situations that remind you of the assault.

**Remembering what happened and what it felt like.** "Sometimes, I can't stop thinking about it." "It comes back out of nowhere. I feel like it's happening all over again." You may have intense, realistic memories and nightmares about the attack. When you think about the assault, you may have strong feelings of fear or loss of power.

**Intense emotions.** "I feel very sad, like I lost a part of me." "I have this intense anger that I never felt before." Very strong emotions after a sexual assault are normal. Some people may also feel anxious or depressed.

**Physical symptoms.** "I couldn't fall asleep at night." Some victims experience headaches and stomachaches. You may find it difficult to concentrate on routine activities. You may also experience a loss of interest in sex or a desire to avoid sex.

**Self-blame and shame.** "I felt like it was my fault. I trusted him." Because of a lack of understanding about rape, some victims blame themselves, doubt their own judgments, or wonder if they caused the assault. The reactions of others, often based on mistaken ideas about rape, sometimes make the feelings of guilt and shame even worse. Some victims describe feeling dirty, cheap, and ashamed.

### References

1. Rape Treatment Center, UCLA Medical Center, Santa Monica, CA 2001.

<http://www.samhsa.gov/preventionpathways>