

# How Traumatic Events Can Affect You

By Courtney Rooks  
Valeo Behavioral Health Care

**T**rauma is an emotional response to an intensely distressing event. This could be a single harmful or life-threatening incident or multiple distressing events that occur over time. There are many events that can constitute as trauma. These events include – but are not limited to – physical abuse, sexual abuse, child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, accidents, natural disasters, and the loss of a loved one. Research indicates that 60-75% of people in North America experience a traumatic event at some point in their lives.



Courtney Rooks

Experiencing trauma can result in a range of immediate and prolonged symptoms. These symptoms are a normal response to a highly stressful event. Typical responses to trauma include:

- Fear
- Sadness
- Helplessness
- Hypervigilance
- Intrusive thoughts
- Avoidance of people, places, or things

- Numbness
- Anger
- Shame

Trauma can also result in physical symptoms. It is important to recognize these symptoms as well as some individuals may initially be more aware of physical problems. Physical symptoms of trauma can include:

- Increased heart rate
- Difficulty sleeping
- Nightmares
- Digestive problems
- Body aches and pains

Everyone responds to trauma differently. For some, the symptoms resolve on their own but for others, the symptoms can persist over time and interfere with mental and physical well-being. When left unaddressed, this can potentially lead to mental illness and substance use. Anyone who is experiencing prolonged symptoms of trauma or is experiencing symptoms that affect their daily life should seek help from a professional. Traumatic events should be taken seriously as trauma increases the risk of developing PTSD, depression, suicide, and suicidal ideation, anxiety, and substance use disorders.

According to the Sidran Institute, approximately 20% of those who experience trauma

will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Women are twice as likely to develop PTSD than men. The risk of developing PTSD varies dependent on the traumatic event experienced. Especially strong predictors of PTSD are rape, child abuse, and physical attack.

Treatments are available to help people find ways to cope after a traumatic event and heal from the effects of trauma. Mental health professionals can utilize a variety of treatments such as cognitive behavioral therapy and medication to help manage symptoms. Valeo's Crisis Center is located at 400 SW Oakley Avenue and no appointment is necessary. The emergency walk-in clinic is open 24/7. Valeo's 24-Hour crisis line is 785-234-3300.

## Valeo Behavioral Health Care (Adults)

Crisis Services  
400 SW Oakley  
Topeka, KS 66606  
24 Hour Crisis Line  
785-234-3300

## National Suicide Prevention Life Line

1-800-273-8255

## Shawnee County Suicide Prevention Coalition

SCSPC.org

## Family Service & Guidance Center (18 and under)

325 SW Frazier  
Topeka, KS 66606  
24 Hour Crisis Number  
785-232-5005

## Healing after Loss to Suicide Group (HeALS)

Sandy Reams – Group Facilitator  
Topeka.Heals@gmail.com  
785-249-3792

**Valeo**  
Behavioral Health Care

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330 SW Oakley  
Topeka, Kansas, 66606

Phone: 785.233.1730  
24-Hour Crisis Line: 785.234.3300  
24-Hour Detox Number: 785.234.3448

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