

**Resources to further aid in your
care.**

For those who may be experiencing trauma or seeking support:

- The 24-hour National Indian Residential School Crisis Line: 1-866-925-4419
- Crisis Line for First Nation, Metis and Inuit People: 1-855-242-3310, chat on website <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>
- <https://988.ca>

Other resources:

- Suicide and Crisis hotline: call or text 988. Calls, texts and chats are answered 24/7 Website: <https://988.ca>
- Assaulted Women's Helpline: 1-888-917-3449, TTY: 1-888-9173449
- Support Services for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse: Male survivors of sexual abuse, both recent and historical: 1-866-887-0015

Websites and resources to learn more:

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: <https://nctr.ca/education/teaching-resources/residential-school-history/>

Interactive digital map of Indian boarding schools: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/digitalmap/>

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/crown-indigenous-relations-northern-affairs.html>

Signs & symptoms of acute stress:

Acute stress disorder is diagnosable when symptoms persist for a minimum of three days and last no more than one month after a traumatic experience. If symptoms persist after a month, the diagnosis becomes post-traumatic stress disorder.

According to the DSM-5, acute stress disorder symptoms fall into five categories. A patient is diagnosed with the disorder when he or she has nine or more symptoms:

- Intrusion symptoms—involuntary and intrusive distressing memories of the trauma or recurrent distressing dreams
- Negative mood symptoms—a persistent inability to experience positive emotions, such as happiness or love
- Dissociative symptoms—time slowing, seeing oneself from an outsider's perspective, or being in a daze
- Avoidance symptoms—avoidance of memories, thoughts, feelings, people, or places associated with the trauma
- Arousal symptoms—difficulty falling or staying asleep, irritable behavior, or problems with concentration

People with acute stress disorder may also experience a great deal of guilt about not having been able to prevent the trauma, or for not being able to move on from the trauma more quickly. Panic attacks are common in the month following a trauma. Children with acute stress disorder may also experience anxiety related to their separation from caregivers.

Sourced from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/acute-stress-disorder>

Signs & symptoms of PTSD:

Many people with PTSD tend to re-experience aspects of the traumatic event, especially when they are exposed to events or objects reminiscent of the trauma. Anniversaries of the event and similarities in person, place, or circumstance can trigger symptoms. People with PTSD experience intrusive memories or flashbacks, emotional numbness, sleep disturbances, anxiety, intense guilt, sadness, irritability, outbursts of anger, and dissociative experiences. Many people with PTSD may try to avoid situations that remind them of the ordeal. When symptoms last more than one month, a diagnosis of PTSD may be relevant.

Symptoms associated with reliving the traumatic event:

- Having bad dreams, or distressing memories about the event
- Behaving or feeling as if the event were actually happening all over again (known as flashbacks)
- Dissociative reactions or loss of awareness of present surroundings
- Experiencing intense emotions when reminded of the event
- Having intense physical sensations when reminded of the event (heart pounds or misses a beat, sweating, difficulty breathing, feeling faint, feeling a loss of control)

Symptoms related to avoidance of reminders of the traumatic event:

- Avoiding thoughts, conversations, or feelings about the event
- Avoiding people, activities, or places associated with the event

Symptoms related to negative changes in thought or mood:

- Having difficulty remembering an important part of the original trauma
- Feeling numb or detached from things
- Lack of interest in social activities
- Inability to experience positive moods
- Pessimism about the future

Arousal and reactivity symptoms:

- Sleeping difficulties including trouble falling or staying asleep
- Irritability and outbursts of anger
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling easily startled
- Excess awareness (hypervigilance)

Other symptoms related to depersonalization (feeling like an observer to one's body and thoughts/feelings) or derealization (experiencing unreality of surroundings) may also exist for some individuals.

Sourced from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder>

When to seek out therapy/treatment: It can be challenging to figure out when it is time to seek help. If you are experiencing signs/symptoms of a mental health disorder, the time to seek treatment is when it feels difficult to manage daily functioning due to the signs/symptoms that you are experiencing.

How to find a therapist

Psychology Today has a great Find-a-therapist tool. You can go to the link, type in your zip code, choose male, female, in-person or online. You can also click on the “All Filters” button and choose filters such as the issue you are looking for help with, your insurance, age, ethnicity, etc. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>

This article also has helpful tips on how to choose a therapist: <https://www.mharochester.org/find-your-way/how-to-decide-if-you-need-help/>

Coping:

- Write it out: writing or journaling can help externalize stress and figure ways to handle it. It can also aid in identifying the stressor and help enable talking about it with others.
- Identify and label an uncomfortable emotion: Labeling an uncomfortable emotion takes the power from it. Ways to do this could be to label it to yourself either out loud or silently, write about it or talk to a trusted support person.
- Talk to someone you trust: talking about your stress can serve as a release and provides an opportunity to tap into social support.
- Get creative: scribbling on a piece of paper is a simple way to express uncomfortable emotions. Zentagles, creating mandalas or coloring pages are also ways that can help take some space from uncomfortable emotions.
- Spend time outside: Taking a walk or a hike is a way to physically soothe emotions that feel uncomfortable or intense.

Local community supports:

- <https://www.niagarahealth.on.ca/site/home>
- <https://niagara.cmha.ca/>
- <https://aboriginalhealthcentre.com/mental-health-and-addictions/>
-

Booklist:

- My Grandmother's Hands, Resmaa Menakem
- The Seven Circles: Indigenous Teachings for Living Well, Chelsey Luger, Thosh Collins
- Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future, Patty Krawec, Nick Estes
- The Pain We Carry: Healing from Complex PTSD for People of Color, Natalie Y. Gutiérrez LMFT
- Break the Cycle, Mariel Buqué
- Decolonizing Therapy: Oppression, Historical Trauma, and Politicizing Your Practice, Jennifer Mullan PsyD, Carmen Jewel Jones, et al.
- Decolonizing Trauma Work: Indigenous Stories and Strategies, Renee Linklater, Tanis Parenteau, et al.
- The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel van der Kolk