

Possible Reactions of Children 0-6 Exposed to Traumatic Stress

Children suffering from traumatic stress symptoms generally have difficulty regulating their behaviors and emotions. They may be clingy and fearful of new situations, easily frightened, difficult to console, and/or aggressive and impulsive. They may also have difficulty sleeping, lose recently acquired developmental skills, and show regression in functioning and behavior.

Behavior Type	Children aged 0–2	Children aged 3–6
Cognitive		
Demonstrate poor verbal skills	√	
Exhibit memory problems	√	
Have difficulties focusing or learning in school		√
Develop learning disabilities		√
Show poor skill development		√
Behavioral		
Display excessive temper	√	√
Demand attention through both positive and negative behaviors	√	√

Exhibit regressive behaviors	√	√
Exhibit aggressive behaviors	√	√
Act out in social situations		√
Imitate the abusive/traumatic event		√
Are verbally abusive		√
Scream or cry excessively	√	
Startle easily	√	√
Are unable to trust others or make friends		√
Believe they are to blame for the traumatic experience		√
Fear adults who remind them of the traumatic event	√	√
Fear being separated from parent/caregiver	√	√
Are anxious and fearful and avoidant		√

Show irritability, sadness, and anxiety	√	√
Act withdrawn	√	√
Lack self-confidence		√
Physiological		
Have a poor appetite, low weight, and/or digestive problems	√	
Experience stomachaches and headaches		√
Have poor sleep habits	√	√
Experience nightmares or sleep difficulties	√	√
Wet the bed or self after being toilet trained or exhibit other regressive behaviors		√