# **Exhibit 1.3-1Immediate and Delayed Reactions to Trauma**

#### **Immediate Emotional Reactions**

Numbness and detachment

Anxiety or severe fear

Guilt (including survivor guilt)

Exhilaration as a result of surviving

Anger

Sadness

Helplessness

Feeling unreal; depersonalization (e.g., feeling

as if you are watching yourself)

Disorientation

Feeling out of control

Denial

Constriction of feelings

Feeling overwhelmed

#### **Delayed Emotional Reactions**

Irritability and/or hostility

Depression

Mood swings, instability

Anxiety (e.g., phobia, generalized anxiety)

Fear of trauma recurrence

Grief reactions

Shame

Feelings of fragility and/or vulnerability

Emotional detachment from anything that requires emotional reactions (e.g., significant and/or family relationships, conversations about self, discussion of

traumatic events or reactions to them)

## **Immediate Physical Reactions**

Nausea and/or gastrointestinal distress

Sweating or shivering

Faintness

Muscle tremors or uncontrollable shaking

Elevated heartbeat, respiration, and blood

pressure

Extreme fatigue or exhaustion

Greater startle responses

Depersonalization

# **Delayed Physical Reactions**

Sleep disturbances, nightmares

Somatization (e.g., increased focus on and worry about

body aches and pains)

Appetite and digestive changes

Lowered resistance to colds and infection

Persistent fatigue

Elevated cortisol levels

**Hyperarousal** 

Long-term health effects including heart, liver,

autoimmune, and chronic obstructive pulmonary

disease

### **Immediate Cognitive Reactions**

Difficulty concentrating

as minutes)

Rumination or racing thoughts (e.g., replaying the traumatic event over and over again)

Distortion of time and space (e.g., traumatic event may be perceived as if it was happening in slow motion, or a few seconds can be perceived

Memory problems (e.g., not being able to recall important aspects of the trauma)

Strong identification with victims

### **Delayed Cognitive Reactions**

Intrusive memories or flashbacks

Reactivation of previous traumatic events

Self-blame

Preoccupation with event

Difficulty making decisions

Magical thinking: belief that certain behaviors,

including avoidant behavior, will protect against future trauma

Belief that feelings or memories are dangerous

Generalization of triggers (e.g., a person who

experiences a home invasion during the daytime may

avoid being alone during the day)

Suicidal thinking

#### **Immediate Behavioral Reactions**

Startled reaction Restlessness

Sleep and appetite disturbances

Difficulty expressing oneself Argumentative behavior

Increased use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco

Withdrawal and apathy Avoidant behaviors **Delayed Behavioral Reactions** 

Avoidance of event reminders Social relationship disturbances

Decreased activity level

Engagement in high-risk behaviors Increased use of alcohol and drugs

Withdrawal

### **Immediate Existential Reactions**

Intense use of prayer

Restoration of faith in the goodness of others

(e.g., receiving help from others)

Loss of self-efficacy

Despair about humanity, particularly if the event

was intentional

Immediate disruption of life assumptions (e.g., fairness, safety, goodness, predictability of life)

# **Delayed Existential Reactions**

Questioning (e.g., "Why me?")

Increased cynicism, disillusionment

Increased self-confidence (e.g., "If I can survive this, I

can survive anything")

Loss of purpose

Renewed faith

Hopelessness

Reestablishing priorities

Redefining meaning and importance of life

Reworking life's assumptions to accommodate the trauma (e.g., taking a self-defense class to reestablish a

sense of safety)

Sources: Briere & Scott, 2006b; Foa, Stein, & McFarlane, 2006; Pietrzak, Goldstein, Southwick, & Grant, 2011.

# Advice to Counselors: Helping Clients Manage Flashbacks and Triggers

If a client is triggered in a session or during some aspect of treatment, help the client focus on what is happening in the here and now; that is, use grounding techniques. Behavioral health service providers should be prepared to help the client get regrounded so that they can distinguish between what is happening now versus what had happened in the past. Offer education about the experience of triggers and flashbacks, and then normalize these events as common traumatic stress reactions. Afterward, some clients need to discuss the experience and understand why the flashback or trigger occurred. It often helps for the client to draw a connection between the trigger and the traumatic event(s). This can be a preventive strategy whereby the client can anticipate that a given situation places him or her at higher risk for retraumatization and requires use of coping strategies, including seeking support.