



ACT!

AGAINST
VIOLENCE
AND SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION

WEBSITE



Sexual exploitation, human trafficking and post-traumatic stress disorder

Survivors who develop this disorder have experienced or witnessed at least one situation in which their physical integrity or that of their loved ones was seriously endangered and in which they felt intense fear, horror and fear of death. **After such a traumatic event, the survivor who develops PTSD exhibits the following symptoms, which can be grouped into four types:**

- **Intrusive memories** these are recurrent, involuntary and distressing memories of the traumatic experience or experiences, reliving the traumatic experience and nightmares that generate deep discomfort.

- **Avoidance:** In this case, the survivor makes great efforts to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event and to avoid places, activities or people that remind him/her of the event.

- **Negative changes in thinking and mood:** i.e., negative thoughts about oneself, others, or the world in general, great despair about the future, memory problems, even inability to remember important aspects of the traumatic event, serious difficulties in maintaining close relationships, a feeling of alienation from family and friends, a great disinterest in activities previously enjoyed...

...difficulties in experiencing pleasant emotions and the persistence of unpleasant emotions

· **Changes in physical and emotional reactions:** in this case, the survivor may have outbursts of rage, excessive physical or verbal reactions to others, self-destructive behaviour such as excessive drinking or driving too fast, difficulty concentrating, sleep problems, a constant feeling of being in danger.

These symptoms are so unpleasant that they prevent the person from developing socially, familiarly and professionally. Moreover, the symptoms can vary in time or from one person to another.

Fortunately, there are psychological and psychiatric approaches to help survivors develop a resilience process and be able to move forward, grow, generate new personal and social resources.

