

## INTERVENTION (PROFESSIONALS)



### Symptoms After Experiencing Assault or Abuse

Symptoms can vary from mild, followed by a return to typical functioning, to lengthy periods of intense distress. Factors such as level of social support, mental health functioning before the assault or abuse, and ability to access effective treatment play an important role in influencing the course of the symptoms individuals experience following the assault or abuse.

## Coping and PTSD

Adults with autism can have difficulties coping with change and stressful life events, which can increase their vulnerability to developing psychological disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following sexual assault or abuse.

Research has demonstrated that adults with autism display amplified emotional responses and more difficulty with emotion regulation when compared to individuals not diagnosed with autism.

Due to strong reactions to stress and difficulty regulating related emotions, individuals with autism who experience sexual assault or abuse may be at greater risk for developing PTSD.

Individuals with autism also experience difficulty in social relationships and may experience less helpful social support following assault or abuse than individuals without autism.

Due to the increased risk of developing PTSD, it's critically important for individuals with autism to be provided evidence-based treatment targeting symptoms of PTSD.

