

Aftereffects Checklist for Sexual Abuse Survivors In Recovery

When you are a survivor of any form of sexual abuse, whether it is incest, date rape, or prostitution, there are many aftereffects. These may manifest in your life in any combination of ways. Think of these behaviors as a constellation of symptoms that until now you might not have been aware of. Eventually, these symptoms create a full-blown syndrome, or disease. This is most commonly referred to: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

We believe that some, if not all of these behaviors served to distract you from your pain regarding the sexual abuse. Together we will work to uncover, discover, and discard the symptoms that no longer serve or empower us.

And remember, your recovery journey is just that—**YOURS!** Recovery is a path, it is a journey, and not a destination.

After you check off the aftereffectsthat pertain to you, go back and create an inventory of each item. Write about how each symptom has affected your life.

1. Problems with setting boundaries around who you are____
2. It is difficult for you to know what you are feeling____
3. No belief in one's own basic human rights; as if we have grown so accustomed to abuse that it seems normal to us____
4. Difficulty in claiming our own Voice, our God-given right to protect and defend our own best interests____
5. Issues with space such as feeling suddenly claustrophobic, or nervous when someone gets too close____
6. Easily startled, or flinching when someone attempts to touch or move towards us____ Taking dangerous high-risks without concern for consequences____
7. Fear of losing control____
8. If you were not abused as badly as others, you may experience "survivor guilt"____
9. You at times feel guilty for pleasurable emotions such as happiness, as if you somehow do not deserve it____
10. Desire to change one's name (to disassociate from the perpetrator or to take control through self-labeling)____
11. Stealing (adults); stealing and starting fires (children)____
12. Fear of being alone in the dark, of sleeping alone, nightmares, night terrors, especially of pursuit, threat, entrapment____
13. Swallowing and gagging sensitivity____
14. Alienation from the body. Not athome in body____
15. A feeling that our bodies do not belong to us so we do not listen to body signals____
16. A failure to take care of our health and/or personal hygiene (lack of self-care)____
17. Poor body image____
18. Wearing a lot of clothing to avoid sexual attention____
19. Eating disorders, (excessive over-eating, or dieting, anorexia, bulimia)____
20. Drug or alcohol abuse
21. Compulsive shopping and debting; inability to spend or save money appropriately____

22. Sex and love addictions
23. Obsessive/compulsive behaviors that serve to medicate our personal pain ____
24. Self-destructiveness; self-mutilation or self-abuse (banging head against wall)____
25. Phobias ____
26. Need to be invisible; perfect, or perfectly bad ____
27. Multiple personality disorder ____
28. Suicidal thoughts, attempts, obsession
29. Passive suicide (no real will to live)____
30. Depression (sometimes paralyzing)____
31. Difficulty with recognizing, owning or expressing anger ____
32. Rageaholism (constant uncontrolled anger)____
33. Splitting (depersonalization) going into shock, shutdown in crisis, numbing ____
34. Feeling watched ____
35. Trust issues: inability to trust, or trusting indiscriminately ____
36. High risk taking, or inability to take risks ____
37. Boundary issues; control, power, fear of losing control ____
38. Guilt, shame, low self-esteem, feeling worthless ____
39. Blocking out some period of early years (especially 1-12) or a specific person or place ____
40. Feeling of carrying an awful secret. Both a desire to tell this secret, and a concurrent fear of the secret being revealed; certainty that no one will listen; being generally secretive ____
41. Self-labeling that is a result of feeling marked ("Everyone knows I'm no-good," or, "I'm a slut, dirty, worthless" ____
42. Feeling crazy; feeling different ____
43. Believing that everyone's existence is valid; however, we are a phony ____
44. Creating a fantasy world, relationships, or identities ____
45. Denial: no awareness at all; repression of memories, pretending, minimizing, having dreams or memories (maybe it's my imagination) ____
46. Strong, deep negative reactions to a person, place, or event, sensory flashes (a light, a place, a physical feeling) without a sense of their meaning ____
47. Being aware of, or remembering the surroundings where abuse occurred, but not the actual event ____
48. Flashbacks ____
49. Panic Attacks ____

This link below has a lot of helpful information on **PTSD** and the **After effects** of **sexual abuse** and **trauma**.

<http://health.msn.com/centers/mentalhealth/articlepage.aspx?cp-documentid=100065525>

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Anne Bissell is the first author/activist and sexual exploitation survivor to bring out the connections between childhood sexual exploitation, pornography, domestic prostitution and international trafficking. "All of these are part of a

continuum of sexual crimes that involve turning an actual person into a thing, a commodity. That which becomes a commodity is eventually disposable." With the Operation Silver Braid campaign, Bissell has brought together all of the programs which she developed, such as: www.thesilverbraid.org, www.sexualabusesurvivors.com, and www.sexindustrysurvivors.com. She is a nationally sought after spokesperson on the topic of commercialized sexual exploitation of children.