



PROTECTING OUR
JEWISH COMMUNITY



What you may expect to
experience, think & feel
after the attack on Yom Kippur

- You may experience **changes in your behaviours**, feelings and thoughts. These are typical reactions to a critical incident. Acknowledge them and accept them for now.
- You **cannot predict** these changes: they are common Acute Stress situations. They may start now, fade and restart, or emerge in a few weeks time. Just **notice and reflect**.
- Most symptoms **settle within 6-12 weeks**, or sooner.
- **Monitor any changes** in yourself. If they persist beyond 12 weeks or are becoming entrenched, then please reach out.
- Don't assume that you know the reason for your symptoms: **keep an open mind**. (Explanations are rarely 'either', 'or', but rather 'both', 'and').
- **Acknowledge your humanity**: we all need rest, food, exercise, and self-compassion in order to perform our roles. If you burn-out, you cannot perform your role to your usual level. And you will end up worrying your colleagues and impacting their ability to continue. We don't need to be a hero; we just need to do the best we can, and accept that.
- Take responsibility for **looking after yourself**. (This may be new for you).
- Be aware that **everyone is doing their best**: no one wakes up thinking, 'today, I am going to slack.' Be patient with yourself and others. Try and say 'thank you' more and criticise less. Be compassionate towards others, but don't take their problems on board: you need to focus on your job.
- Our **responses towards the critical incident will vary according to our temperament and personality**, i.e. who we were before the incident (e.g. childhood, adolescent, and work experiences), the current context (e.g., thoughts about the Yom Tovim, the anniversary of 7 October) and our own personal/family circumstances (e.g., role responsibility within the family and community, family illness, family in Israel/IDF).
- **Over-working is unhelpful**. So is suppressing or avoiding thoughts. Or making efforts to distract yourself. Focus on being compassionate towards yourself and others.

POSSIBLE PHYSICAL/BODY SYMPTOMS OF STRESS & ADRENALIN SURGES

Pre-existing conditions

You may experience an increase in existing conditions:

- Muscle/ back pains & aches, headaches, nausea, tearfulness, tension in my body, feeling constantly 'on edge' (Adrenalin).
- Possible increase in twitches, tics, colds, coughs, hair pulling, nail biting, cold sores, etc
- Do NOT ignore your physical symptoms: they are information of how you are coping emotionally. Your body is your radar – listen to it! (More stress = impaired immunity).

Find the time to :

- Walk (even short distances), do yoga-type stretches, go swimming, go to the gym, any type of exercise.
- Use this time to clear your head and think about your own needs.
- (It may be that your attention is so focused on what you are doing that you barely notice your usual symptoms. That's great, but be aware that you still need to meet your human needs!)

Changes in sleep

Change in sleep patterns:

- Difficulty in getting to sleep or staying asleep; early morning waking; unrefreshing sleep.
- You may just want to sleep all day.

This is to be expected and will settle.

- Reading before bed is helpful.
- Writing down your worries on a pad by the bed before you sleep is helpful.
- Don't toss and turn: get up and do something gentle for a few minutes in another room and then go back to bed.
- No social media, mobile use, TV for 60 – 90 minutes before sleeping.
- Try and maintain your sleep routine
- 30-45 minute naps before 3pm (not later) can be very restorative.

Change in appetite

Eating more/less; feeling slightly sick at the sight of food.

If you are not hungry, 'graze': eat small and manageable amounts of nutritious food regularly.

- Keep well hydrated
- Do not binge on sugar: you will get an instant 'hit' followed by a crash.
- Don't increase caffeine
- Don't increase alcohol

Energy levels

You may feel drained/lethargic/exhausted. This may be a sleep deficit, but it may be an Acute Stress response.

Exercise when you don't want to; rest when you don't need to!

SOCIAL DEMANDS

Family support

All your family and friends who were not involved wants to be there for you, come round to support you or invite you out.

Work out what you are truly able to do. The aftermath of the situation may continue, so be clear what works for you. Explain to friends – and close family who can protect you – that, at present, you may appear less sociable: it is not a lack of love for them, simply a need to look after yourself so that you can continue to perform your role to your best ability – and in their best interests.

Learn to BE (sitting quietly) rather than always DOING.

We all know that we are not alone, that we heal through connection and community – but monitor what you can do and keep well

People wanting details about the attack

Explain that this is an ongoing investigation and that they should probably rely on information that is in the public domain.

Also, it is not your role to correct misinformation.

CHANGES IN HOW WE THINK

Your usual biases will be intensified

- 'I have to do everything for everyone – otherwise I am unworthy'
- 'Life is dangerous/I am unsafe: I have to maintain my hypervigilance'
- 'What if ' [usually catastrophic/doomsday] scenarios?

Acknowledge that this is an intensification of your usual 'stuff'.

Stand back, reflect; ask yourself if these biases are helpful.

Ask yourself if you have a choice or any control over these biases at the moment.

Can you acknowledge your worries but focus on what you need to do or on what you enjoy. (We do not need to worry to be competent/efficient/caring. Worry just makes the task unpleasant.)

'My memory has been damaged'.

You may also describe this as 'cognitive overload'.

No – it hasn't: so much is going on that you simply don't have sufficient 'bandwidth'.

If you feel there is too much going on, make notes and also decide prioritize what you want to attend to. (If you have a line manager, explain that this is what is going on).

EMOTIONAL REACTIONS:

UNPREDICTABLE & PERHAPS CHAOTIC AT TIMES

Shock – this is the ongoing adrenalin/cortisol reaction

- Be compassionate with yourself; your nervous system will naturally re-regulate over the coming days and weeks.

Feeling numb

- This is a protective response. It too will pass. If it doesn't after three months, reach out.

'I'm fine'

- No, you're not: none of us. Denial slows recovery. Acknowledge what is going on

Confusion

- Again, an ordinary reaction to an extraordinary situation or event.

Anger – towards the attacker, the government, the world, people who try and put you on a pedestal which does not sit well with you or the indifference of some, the ignorance hatred of others.

- Acknowledge your anger. If it is helpful, channel it; if not, let it go.

Irritation

- Notice this – and tell colleagues/family. Explain that this is a reaction and that you will soon revert to your 'sunny self.'

Feeling constantly triggered

- This is to be expected and will gradually reduce. (Remember that everyone may feel like you: be compassionate!)

Denial of your emotions

- Please be honest with your partner/family: they want to support you. Sharing our needs will prevent unnecessary friction - at a time when you really want their support and they want to help.

Laughing hysterically when all you want to do is cry

- Let yourself cry: it helps you acknowledge that you want comfort and connection
- Developing black humour – when with trusted people – is an emotional resource.

Grief - crying uncontrollably/ not being able to cry

Both are expected reactions to an EXTRAORDINARY event. Be compassionate with yourself.

Not laughing when something is funny

- Acknowledge this: your sense of humour will return

Fear

- This is a natural response. It will slowly reduce to your pre-incident levels.

Panic attacks

- If these are frequent, access your GP for help.

Sadness

- Allow it. Allow your tears; if you struggle to cry even though you want to after 3 months, reach out.

Guilt - 'I didn't do enough' OR 'I should have been there', 'It was unfair that I wasn't there' (rare, but not unknown)

- All understandable reactions.
- But focus on the future: what can we do now to help (there is no shortage of need)? It is not about being a hero – it is about being a member of the community, whether a leader or not: we can all contribute.
- Learn to tolerate your guilt: it will fade

Shame/embarrassment at my emotional struggle

- These reactions are not helpful. We are all human – and all have different strengths and vulnerabilities. We are all struggling.

Generally feeling dysregulated - persistent outrage/rage that stops you functioning, disappointment and/or a sense of betrayal

- This feeling is to be expected. Mindful breathing, pacing yourself, self care and compassion all help.
- The human system always tends towards stability/regulation as long as you are not impatient!

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- You may expect **changes** in yourself and others.
- **Self-compassion** is essential for your recovery.
- Be **compassionate** towards others too: we can never fully know how they are thinking and feeling.

Dr. Nikki Scheiner, October 2025



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