



# **“Acute Stress Disorder (ASD)”**

ASD describes a collection of feelings, behaviours, and experiences that can occur during the first month after a person is exposed to a potentially psychologically traumatic event (e.g., actual or threatened death, serious injury, sexual violence).

*#WordsMatter*

Enhancing Mental Health Literacy

# **“Acute Stress Disorder”**



## **ASD reactions may include**

- ***Immediate feelings of terror, panic, anxiety, rage, or sickness when you are exposed to a sound, sight, or smell that reminds an individual of the event***
- ***Vivid and intrusive memories of the event that feel as if the event is happening again (“flashbacks”)***
- ***Nightmares and disturbed sleep***
- ***Feeling emotionally numb***
- ***Avoiding places, people, or circumstances that remind an individual of the event***
- ***Being hyperalert to threat or danger***
- ***Feeling that things are unreal or that you are living in a dream (depersonalization or derealization)***

*#WordsMatter*

**Enhancing Mental Health Literacy**



# **“Acute Stress Disorder”**

- ASD may develop into posttraumatic stress disorder after one month.
- ASD is diagnosed if there is no other physical or mental health condition that better explains the person’s condition.

*#WordsMatter*

Enhancing Mental Health Literacy



# **“Acute Stress Disorder”**

**Find more resources here:**

**For PSP:**

<https://www.pspmentalhealth.ca/>  
PeerOnCall: <https://www.oncallapp.ca/>

**For Healthcare Workers:**

<https://www.beyondsilence.ca/> <https://healthcaresalutesoinsdesantesalute.com/>

**For Families:**

<https://www.pspnet.ca/en/for-families-of-bsp>

*#WordsMatter*

Enhancing Mental Health Literacy



# Glossary of Terms

## Background

The Glossary of Terms was created to promote a shared understanding of many common terms used to describe mental health challenges arising from exposure to potentially psychologically traumatic events and stressors.

The initial iteration of the glossary was intended to

1. Facilitate open discourse and conversations among the many partners and stakeholders at the National Conference on PTSD held in 2019; and
2. Assist in developing the Federal Framework on PTSD. To date, Act C-211 stands as the only federal government Act that acknowledges the importance of work-related risk factors in the development of PTSD in certain professions.

# COLLABORATING

The Glossary of Terms brings together a diverse, multi-institutional, pan-Canadian group of academics, clinicians, and policy makers. Together, we are working towards a broadly accepted set of terms for clinicians, scientists, policymakers, people with lived experience, and the general public.



Canadian Institute for  
Pandemic Health  
Education and Response

**CIPHER**



**ICEISP**

Institut canadien  
d'éducation et d'intervention  
en santé en cas de pandémie

