LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Difficulties managing emotions

- Feeling numb/nothing
- Feeling overwhelmed or out-of-control
- Depression
- Sudden explosions of anger
- Anxiety, restlessness, inability to concentrate
- Panic attacks
- Specific irrational fears and phobias
- Obsessive-compulsive behavior

Difficulties in relationship with self

- Confusion about personal needs, wants, feelings, identity
- Difficulty trusting one's self
- Low or inconsistent self-esteem

Difficulties in relationships with others

- Difficulties with trust
- Difficulties with intimacy
- Confusion about affection, love, sex

Body-related issues

- "Body memories"
- Substance abuse/addiction
- Self-destructive behavior and self-injury
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings, suicide attempts or gestures
- Difficulties and dilemmas with food and eating
- Difficulties with sexuality (from avoidance to promiscuity)
- Prostitution

Dissociative reactions

- Memory loss, gaps in memory
- Numbing of body sensations
- All-or-nothing thinking
- Flashbacks
- "Spacing out", daydreaming, "going away inside"
- Thoughts and feelings appear and disappear "out of nowhere"
- "Parts of self"

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