



ASSIST TRAUMA  
CARE

ASSIST TRAINING

## **Arousal and Hypervigilance**

**Arousal and hypervigilance are common to both people and animals, and are part of an individual's healthy instinct for survival.**

**When danger is perceived physical reactions result, including an adrenalin rush, increased heart rate and muscle tension, and the individual makes the decision as to fight or flight.**

**It is normal and natural that exposure to a traumatic event will increase an individual's awareness of danger. The psychological consequence can be that a person's nervous system functions (perceptual, sensory and motor) are heightened, resulting in heightened arousal beyond optimal levels. This hyper-arousal does not extinguish easily or quickly.**

**A person suffering from hypervigilance or living in a state of hyper-arousal lives with the constant fear that trauma will reoccur. Changed perceptions can lead to mistaken appraisal of danger, with resulting emotional and physical reactions. These can in turn lead to panic attacks.**

