

Coping Methods After Traumatic Events

Each person's experience after a traumatic event is different, but there are a number of common responses that are experienced by the majority of those involved.

Be assured that the feelings you're experiencing can be distressing, but they can be normal reactions in a normal person to an abnormal event. It can sometimes be difficult for those who were not involved to understand what those directly impacted are going through, so if this was you, you could show this tip sheet to friends and relatives, and perhaps discuss your reactions to the event with them.

COPING SUGGESTIONS

→ PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Give yourself permission and time to grieve/adjust.
- Focus on your strengths and coping skills.
- Join or connect with support groups.
- Focus your energy and resources on the priorities in your life.
- Set small realistic goals to help manage your day.
- Try relaxation techniques that might have worked in the past.
- Remember that you are not alone.
- Remember each person will react differently and will find different strategies useful, depending on their personality and life experiences.

→ PRACTICAL

- Try to eat healthy meals and exercise.
- Avoid too much coffee and tea; caffeine can inhibit sleep.
- Avoid numbing the pain with alcohol (or other drugs).
- Get enough rest to increase your reserve strength.

- Connect with friends and family so you can safely share your experience.
- Exercise, such as swimming, walking and team games, will produce chemicals called endorphins in the body which help to support wellbeing.

→ SEEK FURTHER ASSISTANCE

- If the symptoms continue to be distressing.
- If they continue for more than five or six weeks.
- When you feel numb, empty or have distressing thoughts and feelings.
- If you have no one you feel you can talk to about the experience and how you feel.
- When you are using alcohol or drugs to help you cope.
- If you have concerns about the way you or your family are coping.

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