



TRAUMA RESPONSE

“HOW DO YOU FEEL?”

An event has just occurred. It is unexpected, certainly senseless and sometimes violent. It affects both you the victim and your family and friends. This single incident can take away your sense of security and well-being and will, for a short time, impair your ability to function normally.

COMMON REACTIONS

You may experience one or more of the following reactions...

PHYSICAL

- Changes in appetite
- Chest pains
- Dizzy spells
- Headaches
- Heart palpitations
- Insomnia/nightmares
- Lack of energy
- Neck or back pain
- Restlessness
- Shaky feeling

EMOTIONAL

- Anger / rage
- Anxiety or helplessness
- Denial
- Easily startled
- Flashbacks
- Heightened level of suspicion
- Inability to concentrate
- Irritability
- Overprotection of children
- Lack of interest in intimacy
- Losing trust in those you've trusted
- Loss of interest in sex

CHANGES AT WORK

- Daydreaming
- Decrease in quality of work
- Distraction
- Forgetfulness
- Making small errors
- Reluctance to get back to work
- Repetition of work tasks already done
- Tendency to over-work

One or more of the following tips may help you get through the period following a traumatic event.

- Avoid excess caffeine or alcohol
- Drink lots of water
- Get a good night's sleep
- Include fiber and green vegetables in your diet
- Participate in moderate exercise ie: take a walk
- Encourage yourself to go back to work
- Keep to your normal routine as much as possible
- Maintain regular activities outside of the home ie: work, errands, appointments, sports, etc.
- Return physical surroundings to its original appearance
- Talk about the specifics of the event with your friends, family and coworkers - tell them it's important for you to talk it out
- Take a warm (not hot) bath
- Write down your thoughts

SUPPORT THE FAMILY CAN GIVE

- Listen
- Encourage openness and listen to whatever they need to say, however many times it needs to be said. Don't give advice, just listen. Don't minimize. Remember, the person needs to repeat the experience of what happened.
- Control your reactions
- Maintain focus on what actually occurred and how the person is feeling
- Encourage your family member to go back to work. Although the person may feel like quitting, it will not change what has happened and may prevent full recovery
- Include the whole family in the healing process
- Include all family members in discussions so that they can gain perspective and cope with their feelings as well as the person affected
- Watch for signs of strain in your relationship
- Marital problems are common after a traumatic event. Family members can access community-based counselling services, Employee Assistance Programs or private counselling
- Take care of yourself
- Don't take on more than you can handle to support and protect the affected family member. Ask your friends and other family members for help.

SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS AND COWORKERS

- **Acknowledge the Event**
Don't pretend it didn't happen. Be an attentive listener. Don't ask a lot of questions; let your friend set the pace.
- **Offer long-term support**
There is no set recovery period for a traumatic experience.
- **Offer practical support**
"Do you want some company for lunch?" or "Would you like a ride home?" rather than "Let me know if I can help."
- **Be observant**
Look for signs of prolonged emotional distress (more than 4 - 6 weeks). Suggest additional support or counselling if this distress remains.



**IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS
OR NEED ASSISTANCE**

WE CAN HELP

519-585-2363

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Waterloo Region

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