

After a Traumatic Event: What You Can Do

You May Experience ...

The following list describes a variety of normal reactions to a traumatic event. You or others may experience some of these in the weeks following the event. These reactions are generally temporary and not of great concern.

- Recurring thoughts or images of the event
- Heightened response to loud noises, shouting or crying – easily startled
- Discomfort being alone
- Difficulty concentrating and/or deciding what to do next
- Strong desire to contact people who are important to you
- Feeling sad, scared, angry, irritable, or confused
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increase or decrease in appetite
- Physical problems—headaches, stomachaches, sore muscles, etc.
- Discomfort being in places that seem unsafe to you
- Feeling vulnerable, a loss of control
- Feeling exhausted
- Difficulty making decisions and thinking creatively
- Feeling guilty that others have suffered more than you have
- Recall of past traumas or losses
- Fear of leaving loved ones or your home
- Feeling excited and alive, or empty and depressed, or both intermittently

If you have been busy performing necessary tasks after the event, you may have a delay in your reactions until after you stop being busy. Recognize we may all be on different timetables, so don't expect others to handle things or be feeling the same way you do or vice versa. Be tolerant of your own, and others' reactions.

What to Do ...

- Believe in your ability to bounce back!
- Talk to other people about your experiences, reactions & feelings
- Take it easy – don't push yourself!
- Plan extra time to do usual tasks – you may be distracted and not able to function as efficiently as usual
- Re-establish your normal routines as soon as you can do so comfortably – this helps you regain a sense of stability and predictability
- Check to see if your decision-making ability has been impaired (ask for feedback on how you're doing).
- Discuss your current emergency plan with significant others and prepare for future crises.
- Don't forget to eat and eat "smart" – avoid junk food, excessive sugar, alcohol, and caffeine
- Rest and get some exercise
- Recognize that information about the event can be upsetting as well as helpful
- Turn off your radio and television when you start to feel overwhelmed by the news
- If you are having trouble sleeping, listen to soothing music or drink a glass of milk at least a half hour before going to bed
- Reach out to help others – either through volunteer activities, donations of money or supplies, personal support to friends and neighbors
- Work on beginning to accept what has happened

If you are feeling overwhelmed, consulting with or seeing a counselor may be helpful. For more information or to arrange a referral, please contact us at: 1-800-344-4222. You may also visit our website at www.concernhealth.com