

## Coping with a personal crisis



### Information for service users

Some, if not most of us, will experience a traumatic event at some point in our lives. This will be something outside our usual experience such as crime, road accidents, and injuries at work. These events may affect us personally, but they can also sometimes involve our families and friends and the wider community. Our reactions to these events will be both personal and unique to each of us, but there will also be similarities. The following information will help you understand how others have reacted in similar situations. It is important to remember however that our reactions do often settle down within a short space of time and we do return to our everyday lives and usual selves.

#### How you might feel following a traumatic event:

- Numbness or shock
- Fear – a strong sense of helplessness
- Feeling vulnerable and exposed
- Fear that something similar might happen again
- Sadness
- Tiredness – feeling exhausted
- Guilt for not having acted how you would have wished
- Anger at what has happened
- Irritability with yourself and/or others
- Thinking about the event over and over again
- An inability to concentrate or make decisions

#### Other symptoms: A crisis can also produce physical symptoms such as:

- A need to keep busy
- Sleeplessness and bad dreams
- A feeling that the event is actually happening again. This is sometimes called a 'flashback'
- Muscular tension such as headache or neck pain
- Feelings of panic
- Loss of memory of the event

#### Changes in your behaviour:

- Eat more (or less)
- Sleep more (or less)
- Smoke more
- Drink more alcohol

#### Some do's and don'ts:

- ✓ Do take time out to rest and be with people who are important to you
- ✓ Do try to keep your life as normal as possible. You may find concentration difficult at first
- ✓ Do things you enjoy
- ✓ Do go at your own pace
- ✗ Don't give yourself a date by which to feel better
- ✗ Don't allow others to tell you when it's time you were over it, even though they mean well
- ✗ Don't be critical of your reactions
- ✗ Don't avoid talking about what has happened
- ✗ Don't expect to feel better every day – most people have good and bad days

#### When to seek further help:

- If the memory of the traumatic event continues to overwhelm you
- If you continue to have difficulties with sleep
- If you feel that you are becoming increasingly withdrawn from people and social situations
- If your work performance is suffering
- If there is no-one you can really talk to about how you feel
- If your relationships are affected
- If you are becoming more irritable and angry and feeling that you are 'about to burst'

## Where to find help:

There is help available to you. Your doctor might be your first point of contact. Further specialist support will be available through the doctor's surgery, local NHS Trusts and some voluntary agencies.

**Useful telephone numbers**  
**Samaritans - 08457 90 90 90**  
**Focus Line - 0800 027 2127**  
**Victim Support - 0845 30 30 900**

## Finally:

- Remember that it is normal to experience a range of reactions to traumatic events.
- Remember that your body is reacting to the trauma and trying to come to terms with it.
- Remember that symptoms do lessen in intensity and usually fade away within a few weeks.
- Remember to be kind and patient with yourself.

If you need this information in another language or format please telephone  
0116 295 0903 or email: [Patient.Information@leicspart.nhs.uk](mailto:Patient.Information@leicspart.nhs.uk)

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