



AFTER A TRAUMATIC EVENT: HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

FIND SUPPORT

When a random act of violence occurs, people may want to turn to their friends and family for support. If your community has been affected, you may need to look elsewhere. Meeting with others in a support group is helpful. Make sure it is led by a trained and experienced counselor. Don't isolate yourself.

Even if you were not directly affected, it's important to protect yourself against "vicarious trauma," or "secondary traumatic stress." Those are terms for secondhand exposure to others' pain and misfortune. When a community is affected, the scary information can seem to bombard you. If this is your situation, look into support groups for "families of" or "friends of" people who have gone through trauma. Talk with a friend outside of the situation.

Take advantage of any resources like on-the-spot counseling. Look for the people who are helping in this situation. You may need to take advantage of resources that you haven't used before. Social services and aid are there to help.

Even if you are hurting emotionally or financially from the event, it may make you feel better to give back. Donate time, effort, or money if you can. Don't overextend yourself.

RE-ESTABLISH YOUR ROUTINE

Get back into your routine as soon as possible. It may be impossible to have the exact routine as before. Get back to work in some capacity. Recreate another home, if needed. Keep small things the same. Can you still have mealtimes at the same time? Exercise? Go out for coffee?

EDUCATE AND PREPARE YOURSELF

Do some research. Look into how often these types of events happen where you are. Figure out what aspects of your life you can control at the moment. This is not the time to make major life decisions. Instead develop emergency plans and safety kits.

LIMIT MEDIA

Limit where you get news and the amount. Otherwise, you will feel buried in the same topic. Cut back on social media. Things might be posted that could trigger fear or anxiety.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Practice deep breathing when you feel anxious. List things you are grateful for to improve your outlook. Stay hydrated. Eat well. Get rest. Don't push yourself. As long as you are getting stronger each day, you are making progress.

If feelings of helplessness, despair, or anxiety don't ease, or if it is difficult to get through your day, consider seeing a mental health specialist.

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