

Emotional Reactions After a Traumatic Event

After hearing about a traumatic event, such as the recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida, it is normal to have a flood of emotions. It is important to understand the reactions you may experience in the following days and weeks, and learn how to effectively cope with them.

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Many people experience feelings of shock and disbelief immediately following a traumatic event. These reactions are normal and even help you cope with the immediate situation. Following shock and disbelief, other emotions and reactions begin to set in such as anxiety, depression, frustration, anger and behavior changes. Many people even experience physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches and tiredness.

Coping Techniques

The following coping techniques can help restore your sense of control and well-being:

- Get support from people you love and trust. Talking about the event can help you process it.
- Your Employee Assistance Program can help navigate this difficult time.
- Give yourself time. National tragedies like this are shocking. News coverage will be excessive, as we try to make sense of a senseless event.
- Children can be especially vulnerable to these events. It is important to reassure them that they are safe. Talking to them on an age-appropriate level is important. Focus on those who were courageous and helped others.
- Take care of yourself. Eat well-balanced meals as best you can, get rest and try to get some exercise.
- Avoid using alcohol or non-prescription drugs to handle your emotions.
- Limit exposure to media coverage of the event. The 24-hour news cycle can make us dwell on every detail of the event. Instead, focus on the positive things going on in your community and the world.



Getting Help

Some people manage to get through the aftermath of a traumatic event using their own support systems. Others find that professional help allows them to gain a sense of control and emotional well-being. **If you are experiencing overwhelming feelings of sadness, anger or despair, it is important to seek professional help immediately. Your BHS Care Coordinator can assist you with getting the help and resources you need. Call your Coordinator today at 800-245-1150.**