

ulance
Victoria



Coping with a traumatic event

Medical emergencies are often unexpected and can be traumatic or distressing to the people present. Some people experience an immediate emotional or physical reaction, sometimes this reaction is delayed, and some people appear not to have a reaction.

It is important to remember that people react in

- u Anxiety or fear
- u Irritability or anger
- u Depression and/or grief
- u Trouble sleeping
- u Disturbing dreams
- u Difficulty concentrating
- u Reliving the event and flashbacks of aspects of the event
- u Withdrawal
- u Mood swings
- u Gastro-intestinal problems
- u Over-reaction to noise
- u Self-doubt and lack of confidence
- u Pre-existing personal problems may be more difficult to deal with.

These are normal reactions to witnessing an abnormal event.

Ideas to help yourself after a distressing event

- u Give yourself time to recover
- u Accept that your reactions are normal given the abnormal event you have experienced
- u Talk about the event with people you trust
- u Be prepared to ask for professional help if necessary and/or if reactions persist or interfere with your daily activities and enjoyment of life
- u Your local doctor is a good person to talk to especially if you are suffering any physical reactions following the event
- u Consider what you need to help you recover e.g. having company and staying with someone rather than being home alone
- u Postpone making any major life changing decisions until you are feeling better
- u Try to get back to your normal routine as soon as possible
- u Avoid excessive alcohol, nicotine and coffee
- u Eat healthy food
- u Get some exercise
- u Do things you enjoy
- u Spend time with people you feel comfortable with
- u Regularly monitor how you are going and what you might need to assist you to deal with what you experienced.

with the possible after-effects of witnessing,

If you are experiencing difficulties please seek professional assistance through one of the organisations listed in the brochure or your own existing professional support network.

