



BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES After a major traumatic incident



If you have been affected by a major traumatic incident and would like to receive assistance, please contact the CST Emergency Support team:

CST Emergency Support information
www.cst.org.uk/emergency-assistance

CST's Psychological Support Helpline
0800 032 8477

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is for people who have been affected - directly or indirectly - by a terror incident and for those treating them. It highlights common emotional and behavioural changes that may occur following the incident. We all respond differently to stressful events, but most people's symptoms will resolve by themselves, without any psychological or medical treatment, within a period of 4-6 weeks.

Both the World Health Organisation and NHS emphasise that psychological trauma treatment should not be offered before a month, or a month and a half, after exposure to a traumatic incident. However, if there are concerns that the individual might harm themselves, it is important to contact their doctor.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Experiencing some distress is entirely *normal* and most people will recover by themselves. Some of the signs which children or young people may experience are:

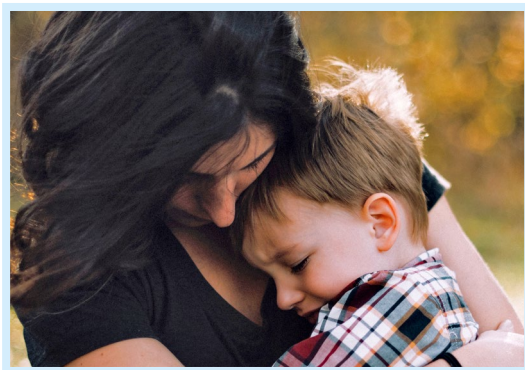
- Recurring thoughts of what happened
- Problems sleeping
- Bad dreams and nightmares
- Irritable behaviour
- Feeling down It can also be helpful to acknowledge that what happened was very serious, but rare.
- Not getting involved in activities they generally enjoy
- General behavioural problems

Reactions to a trauma can be quite varied, but young people will usually benefit from:

- Being with family and friends
- Returning to school
- Continuing with normal routines

- Being with family and friends
- Returning to school
- Getting back into normal routines
- Knowing that they can talk about what has happened, without being pressured into doing so
- Receiving open and honest information

Children should be given the message that it is totally acceptable to discuss their experiences.



*Image credit:
Jordan Whitt

SUPPORTING ADULTS

Experiencing some distress is entirely *normal* and most people will recover by themselves. Some of the signs which adults may experience are:


- Recurring thoughts of what happened
- Problems sleeping
- Bad dreams and nightmares
- Irritable behaviour
- Feeling helpless
- Feeling like they should have done more to help




Social support from trusted family and friends is crucial.

- It is important to deal with any practical issues such as housing, food, shelter
- Trying to get back to the routine
- Allow people to talk about their experiences, but do not force them to do so.
- For some it might be helpful to have quiet time to process what has happened, while others might want to talk through the details and process what has happened to reduce the feeling of helplessness
- Look for support in social groups such as faith groups
- Allow people to make their own decisions wherever possible

For further reading on this matter, please see works by the following experts: Atle Dyregrov, anne Eyre, Kisane Prutton, Jenny Ormerod, Sarita Robinson, Noreen Tehrani, William Yule.



 National Emergency Number (24-hour) **0800 032 3263**
London (Head Office) **020 8457 9999**
Manchester (Northern Regional Office) **0161 792 6666**

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