



## *Have you recently experienced a traumatic event?*

After experiencing or witnessing a distressing situation, such as bushfire, flood or earthquake, or a serious accident, or a physical or sexual assault; it is very common for people to experience emotional aftershocks.

Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing or may later experience some strong emotional or physical reactions. Reactions may include fear, disbelief, anger, sadness, sleeping difficulties, loss of appetite, fatigue, problems in concentration or memory or withdrawal from people. In most instances, these are normal reactions to abnormal situations.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or a few months and occasionally longer.

Recovery after trauma doesn't necessarily mean forgetting the experience or having a lack of emotional pain when remembering it. Recovery means becoming less distressed and having more confidence in your ability to cope as time goes on.

With the understanding and support of loved ones, stress reactions usually pass more quickly. If you lack support or are finding it too difficult to manage your distress or if your reactions persist for more than a month, professional assistance from a Counsellor may be helpful. The University counselling service details are listed on this flyer.

### *Helpful Tips*

Remember, you are not going crazy

- A traumatic, unexpected event has happened to you. Everything may feel crazy to you but, in truth, you are experiencing a very natural human response to crisis and loss.

Take one moment at a time

- Attempting to solve all problems at once can become overwhelming. Be easy with yourself and take one step or one issue at a time and count each success.

Be gentle with yourself and others

- Each of us handle loss, trauma and grief in a different way. There's no right or wrong way to cope with tragedy.

Reach out and talk to people

- Talk to the people who understand is the most healing medicine. Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with friends, family and health professionals. Journal your feelings if you feel unable to talk to others, this helps to make sense of what has happened and what it means to your life

Balance your life with relaxation and do things that feel good to you

- Make time for relaxation, such as listening to music, taking a bath, watching TV dramas. Get plenty of rest and eat well-balanced, regular meals even if you don't feel like it.
- Pamper yourself. You need it at this time.

Maintain as normal schedule as possible

- Familiar people, activities and environment will often help giving you a sense of comfort. Try to maintain a regular daily routine but take it easy.
- Keep informed of the facts of the incident but take regular break from the media coverage of the event.

Avoid any big life changes

- Try to put off big decisions such as changing course, institutes or jobs in the days and weeks after the event.
- But do keep making daily decisions for yourself, this will give you a feeling of control over your life.

Avoid substances that numb the pain

- Overuse of drugs or alcohol can seem like a short-term solution, but they can lead to more problems in the long term and complicate the situation.

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*Counselling Service (Student Support Services)*

You are not alone. Come and talk to us.

Website: Email: [counselling@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:counselling@westernsydney.edu.au)

Phone: 1300 668 370 (option 4 then option 1)

Office locations

Bankstown - Building 11

Campbelltown - Building 16

Hawkesbury - Building K4 (Monday - Thursday)

Liverpool - 100 Macquarie Street, Ground Floor

Nirimba - Building U8

Olympic Park - 8 Australia Ave, Level 4

Parramatta - Building EB.3.04

Parramatta City - Building 1, Level 1

Penrith (Kingswood) - Building P, Level 1, Room 04



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