

Keep in mind - a stress reaction may not occur weeks after the event

It may help to:

- Alternate periods of appropriate physical exercise with relaxation during the first 24-48 hours
- Structure your time - keep busy
- Do allow yourself to have feelings
- Don't adopt a "I'm a man" attitude- this will not help you in the long term
- Talk about what is happening to you
- Take care not to increase your normal intake of alcohol, caffeine or other stimulants - try to cut down for a few days
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible
- Talk to other Lifesavers and check out how they are doing but don't compare yourself to them this can lead to judging your reaction as wrong
- If you are having difficulty sleeping- get out of bed, make a hot drink, do some writing, watch television - don't just toss and turn for hours
- Eat well balanced meals even if you don't feel like it
- Do make as many daily decisions as possible which will give you a feeling of control over your life
- Don't make any big life changes
- Seek further assistance from your peer

For Families and Friends:

- Be available to listen if the person wants to talk- encourage but don't pressure them
- Reassure them that their reactions will subside over time
- Try not to take emotional outburst personally
- Ask them if they need any assistance with everyday tasks
- Give them private time, avoid saying things like "lucky it wasn't worse" and avoid telling stories about other incidents, instead tell them that you are sorry that such an event occurred and you want to understand and to assist them
- Don't be afraid to ask what you can do that would be helpful

If your symptoms have not begun to subside after 1-2 weeks contact your Branch Support Person who will assist you in finding appropriate counseling.

The following referral agencies may be helpful for 24hr emergency support:

Lifeline | 13 1114

Salvation Army Care Line | 9331 6000



Critical **INCIDENT INFORMATION**

Your Peer Support contact person is:

Contact No: _____

Trauma Panel Coordinator

Trish Newton - M | 0411 659 982

TIPS | Traumatic Incident
Peer Support

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Being a member of the Surf Life Saving Association by it's very nature may mean that at some stage you will be involved in a critical incident.

In Surf Lifesaving these incidents may take the form of:

Rescues, drowning, abuse, aggressive behavior, violation of safety rules, needle stick injuries, stings, heart attacks, fin chops or asthma attacks

Not all people will experience a stress reaction to a critical incident. Keeping in mind the uniqueness of each individual there are some common reactions to trauma. The purpose of this brochure is to provide education about signs and symptoms of trauma and what might be done to help.

Sometimes the stress reactions may be experienced immediately after the event, sometimes it may take weeks before the reaction appears. Reactions are uncomfortable but are important part of recovering and getting on with life, symptoms will usually reduce over a 4 to 6 week period.

SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS THAT CAN BE EXPERIENCED MAY INCLUDE:

Physical

- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Vomiting shakiness
- Increase heart rate
- Shock
- Difficulty breathing
- Appetite changes

Thoughts

- Concentration difficulties
- Confusion
- Nightmares
- Hyper vigilance
- Intrusive images of the incident
- Intrusive thoughts of the incident
- Difficulties making decisions
- Poor problem solving
- Increase or decrease awareness of surroundings
- Memories of previous events
- Self blame

Emotions

- Fear
- Guilt
- Grief
- Anxiety
- Denial
- Numbness
- Anger
- Depression
- Agitation
- Feeling abandoned
- Sadness
- Frequent mood swings

Behaviour

- Withdrawal from others
- Avoidance and fear of the situations that may remind you of the incident
- Emotional outbursts
- Decline in work performance
- Sleep disturbance
- Change in Social Activity
- Changes in usual communication style