

Grief: What Can Be Done?

Trying some of the following hints may be helpful to relieve the normal emotional pain and stress that may come with a Traumatic Event. These ideas are based on healthy living and are not at all complicated.

For Yourself

- Have someone you are comfortable with stay with you.
- Try to get more rest.
- Contact friends.
- Don't try to fight reoccurring thoughts from the events, they are normal and will decrease and become less painful over time.
- Keep your schedule as normal as possible.
- Eat regular, well-balanced meals.
- Try to maintain your usual level of activity.
- Express your feelings as they occur.
- Talk with people who care about you.
- Try not to let yourself get bored.
- If feelings last a long time, or stay intense, consider talking with a counselor.

For Family Members and Friends

- Listen carefully.
- Spend time with the traumatized person or people.
- Offer your support and listening skills.
- Reassure the person of their safety.
- Help with daily tasks, like cooking, child-care, etc.
- Give them some private time and space.
- Do not take their anger or other feelings personally.
- Saying things like "Lucky it wasn't worse" are not as helpful as telling them you are sorry they have experienced such an event and that you want to assist them in any way possible.

If the aftershocks you or your friend or family members experience are severe, become worse, or last longer than 6-8 weeks (this may differ from person to person), you may wish to speak with a professional counselor.

Some possible sources of counseling:

- Central Michigan 2-1-1, (Landline phone users can dial 211, cell phone/pay phone users (866) 561-2500)
- Ingham County: 517-346-8008, weekends: 1-800-372-8460
- Jackson County: 800-284-8288, 517-789-1200 evenings
- Livingston County: 517-546-4126, 517-780-3329 evenings
- Washtenaw County: 734-971-9605, or Catholic Social Services: 734-971-9781

What You Should Know About Stress

You have experienced a Traumatic Event. Even though the event itself is over, you may be experiencing, or may later experience, some strong emotional and/or physical reactions. This is very common, in fact, quite normal, for people to have aftershocks when they have had an overwhelming experience such as you have had.

Sometimes these aftershocks or stress reactions appear immediately after the event. At other times, they may appear a few hours or a few days later. In some cases, weeks or months may pass before the aftershock reactions appear. Stress reactions can last a few days, a few weeks or a few months. Occasionally, the stress reaction may last even longer depending upon the severity of the Traumatic Event.

With understanding and help from others such as family, friends and co-workers, stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally the event and aftershocks are so painful that counseling may be needed. This does not imply weakness. It simply indicates that the event was just too powerful for a person to fully manage by himself or herself.

Common Signs of Stress

-
- Grief
 - Isolation
 - Shock
 - Anxiety
 - Shortened Attention Span
 - Sadness
 - Worry
 - Easily Startled
 - Shakiness
 - Upset Stomach
 - Increased Heart Rate
 - Muscle Aches
 - Dizziness
 - Difficulty problem-solving
 - Memory problems
 - Difficulty making decisions
 - Concentration problems
 - Seeing event over and over
 - Fear
 - Depression
 - Irritability
 - Guilt
 - Numbness
 - Anger
 - Feeling lost
 - Headaches
 - Sweating
 - Problems sleeping
 - Diarrhea
 - Chills
 - Slowed thinking
 - Disorientation
 - Distressing dreams
 - Confusion