
Coping with Stressful Events

What is a stressful event?

A stressful event is a powerful and overwhelming incident. Often they are experiences which are life threatening, or where there has been a significant potential threat to someone's physical or psychological wellbeing.

Behavioural

- ! Avoiding places or activities that serve as reminders
- ! Withdrawing socially
- ! Reducing engagement in regular activities

The things described above are normal reactions to a stressful event and they are part of adjusting, making some sense of what happened and coming to terms with it. With understanding and support from others (e.g. family, friends, colleagues) things may resolve more quickly. Recovering from a stressful event doesn't mean forgetting your experience or having no reaction when remembering it. It means, over time becoming less reactive and more confident in your ability to cope.

What can be done about it?

There are a range of things you can do to look after yourself in recovering from a stressful event.

- ! Be aware that you have been through a stressful experience and allow yourself to experience your reactions to it. It may help to remind yourself that your reactions are normal.
- ! Look after yourself by getting plenty of rest (even if you can't sleep), regular exercise, and by eating regular, nutritious meals.
- ! Try to resume your routine as soon as possible.