

How to help?

- Ensure the trauma survivor that he/she has nothing to feel guilty about for the occurrence of the traumatic event.
- Be compassionate.
- Encourage the trauma survivor to express and share his/her emotions. Provide a secure and warm atmosphere and be a good listener.
- Explain to the trauma survivor that the stress he/she is going through is completely normal.
- Encourage the trauma survivor to get professional psychological support, if needed.
- When the trauma survivor starts pulling himself/herself together, keep being supportive and be there for him/her.

Don't forget to protect yourself as well! Supporting a trauma survivor can sometimes be overwhelming. You, too, need to share your feelings with your close friends and family members.

We are here to help; if you have experienced or witnessed a traumatic situation and need to talk and share... or, if you want to get an expert's opinion on the ways to help a loved one who has experienced or witnessed a traumatic event.

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TRAUMA



It's **NOT** your fault!

Ask for help!



It takes time to come to terms with a traumatic event. Give yourself time to deal with the stress!

What is Trauma?

Situations that are perceived as a threat to one's own or a close friend/ relative's life or physical integrity. They occur suddenly and cause a lot of stress for the people affected.

Traumatic events can be divided into two groups:

- 1- Stressful situations that we all might experience in life.
Ex: traffic accidents, sudden deaths or news of a serious illness, rape, fire...etc.
- 2- Natural disasters that human-beings have no control over
Ex: earthquake, storm, flood...etc.

Different people react in different ways to a traumatic event. Some people may have immediate reactions while some others have delayed ones. Some people may show intense levels of emotion whereas for some others, it could be experienced in a milder way. All of these reactions are NORMAL.

One crucial thing is that; for a certain amount of time after experiencing a traumatic event, people have some trouble continuing their familiar, routine lives. Same traumatic event might affect different people in various different ways.

The intensity of experiencing 'trauma' varies. Different factors play a role in this:

- The severity of the traumatic event and the destruction it caused in survivor's physical life and psychological well-being.
- The survivor's maturity level and capacity to cope with the stress.
- Emotional and financial support provided to the survivor by others around.
- Country's socio-economical support system that is being provided after a certain traumatic event.

Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviors After Experiencing a Traumatic Event:

- Sorrow, shock
- Anxiety, fear, anger
- Numbness
- Guilt, shame, helplessness
- Change in belief systems (traditional, cultural, religious...etc.)
- Hatred and hostility (toward world, life, destiny, people...etc.)
- Obsessiveness, compulsiveness
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Self-harm
- Not enjoying life
- Conflict and break-ups in close relationships (friendship, intimate, family...etc.)
- Difficulties in concentrating and memory problems
- Reduction in sexual desire or abstinence
- Sleep and eating disorders

Mistakes While Helping a Trauma Survivor:

- Underestimating the trauma and its stressful outcomes.
- Expecting the survivor to recover easily and quickly.
- Blaming and criticizing the survivor as being 'weak' if it takes long for him/her to recover.
- Trying to persuade the survivor that he/she has to forget about the traumatic event and that it is the best not to think or talk about it.
- Excessive protection and avoidance of all kinds of stimulus that may remind the survivor of the traumatic event.