

# Tips for Coping after Trauma

First, recognize that the feelings and reactions you are having – as long as they are not destructive to you or others – are normal and okay. Trauma can cue a wide array of emotions including shock, fear, worry, anger, sorrow, sadness, hopelessness, and confusion, to name a few. You may also have physical reactions such as stomachaches, heart racing, headaches, tremors, and being jumpy. Whatever you are feeling is okay. Know that these intense emotions and reactions will not remain with you forever.

Talk to a trusted friend, family member or spiritual advisor. They can help you talk through your feelings and validate that you are not alone in your feelings and reactions as well as help you to process your feelings. Social support can be especially helpful as you navigate this difficult time. Victim service professionals may be available in your community as an additional source of support or can help connect you with others if you are feeling alone and isolated.

Do something practical. In situations where we feel are out of our control, sometimes it is helpful to focus your attention on things that are small, practical, and within your control whether it is just taking a shower or checking in on a loved one. Take it day by day and even minute by minute.

Practice and strengthen self-care activities. Often after a traumatic event, our inclination is to pull back from taking care of ourselves because we feel overwhelmed. However, now more than ever it is important to take care of your basic needs and intentionally tend to your self-care. This includes good sleep hygiene, daily exercise, and eating healthy. Stay active! Take a brisk walk, run, and/or do some quick calisthenics. Exercise can release stress hormones. Use calming techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, prayer, yoga or stretching can also be helpful.

Download and explore free self-help apps with resources for stress management and coping with painful emotions. The NMVVR developed the TRANSCEND app that offers guidance for managing distress after mass violence incidents.

