Coping after violence

Feeling safe is important. It allows us to thrive and grow. But violence can make us feel like we're just trying to survive. So how do you get back to being you when you're working through the aftermath of a violent event?

How you might be affected

Being exposed to violence may challenge your beliefs about the world. It's common to feel shaken and confused. You may notice that you also feel:

- Fearful and worried about future threats
- Concerned about your own or others' safety
- Angry
- Irritable
- On high alert
- Distracted
- Negative

Stress can show up in your body. So you may experience:

- Stomach upset or pain
- A pounding heart
- Heaviness or pain in your chest
- Problems getting to sleep or staying asleep, as well as increased nightmares
- Fatigue

Note: It's important not to assume that stress is behind physical symptoms. Be sure to consult with your doctor if you're having physical pain or other changes such as those mentioned above.

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How to cope

Stress puts strain on both your mind and body. It's important to take care of your health. Here are some tips:

- **Eat well.** Eat healthy foods and stay hydrated.
- **Get your rest.** Try to get an adequate amount of quality sleep. Being well-rested helps you function better.
- **Breathe deeply.** Take deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth to help reduce stress and tension.
- **Move your body.** Find ways to get some exercise. This can help reduce physical stress and help you think more clearly.
- **Be patient.** People cope in their own ways and in their own time. So be patient — with yourself and others.
- **Be aware.** It may be tempting to turn to substances to cope, but misusing drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism can be very harmful.
- **Minimize media.** Reading or watching the news too much can leave you feeling worse. If you need to know the facts, get the information you need and then stop watching or reading.

When to get help

Sometimes our reactions to violence may overwhelm our normal coping skills. It can help to talk to a mental health professional. You may want to call us if it's been a few weeks and you're still experiencing symptoms. These may include:

- Trouble functioning at work or school
- Sleep difficulties
- Lack of pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- Appetite changes
- Irritability or increased reactivity
- Excessive worrying or feelings of panic

It's natural to be upset by a violent event — whether you're directly or indirectly involved. We're here for you. Confidential help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1-833-327-2386
https://www.resourcesforliving.com
Username: crisis support
Password: RFL

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