

## When Should You Seek Professional Help?

It is possible that the person is so severely affected by the event, that it might be advisable to seek professional help. This is particularly the case if the reactions mentioned earlier persist for more than 4 weeks.

Watch for the following signs:

- Your reactions and emotions are not returning back to normal
- You persistently experience nightmares or suffer from insomnia
- You frequently have unwanted memories of the event
- You avoid certain situations or places that remind you of the event
- You consume more alcohol, drugs or take a large amount of medication
- Your quality of work is affected
- The relationship to your partner is significantly affected or you suffer from sexual problems
- You have no one to talk to about your feelings, even though you feel the need to talk

Take these signs seriously. If you are experiencing them, please seek professional help to avoid severe serious disorders. There are a number of institutions available to assist you, among them outreach clinics, psychotherapists, spiritual counselors and physicians.

## More Information On Where To Get Professional Help:

Presented by:  
Arbeitsgemeinschaft  
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## HOW TO COPE WITH STRESSFUL EVENTS

**Informational Brochure for those affected by the Events and their Families**

This informational brochure might help you cope with your present situation.

### **Possible Reactions**

Extremely stressful events such as accidents, violent acts or catastrophes evoke powerful reactions and feelings in those, who were affected by them. This also pertains to eye-witnesses and rescue personnel. These events can cause strong emotions and reactions immediately after the event, such as:

- Helplessness
- Fear
- Depression
- Feelings of guilt
- Severe mood swings
- Disorientation
- Inability to function in normal life

These and similar reactions are normal after an extremely stressful event. Usually, they subside within a few days.

Sometimes additional symptoms may appear, such as:

- Person is extremely nervous and jumpy
- Problems sleeping, nightmares
- Feelings of futility, hopelessness
- Memory lapses, concentration problems
- Stressful memories or images continue to intrude
- Loss of appetite, severe fatigue
- Increased need for alcohol or sedatives

Also these reactions usually subside in the weeks after the event and eventually disappear.

### **What Can You Do?**

After experiencing a stressful event, it might be helpful to give yourself some space. Take time to overcome and recover from what has happened.

- Pay attention to your needs and take time to meet them
- Do not suppress your feelings, talk to someone about it
- Try to return to your routine life as soon as possible

- Do not expect that time will efface your memories. Your current feelings will be there for quite some time.
- Do some of the things you usually enjoy and relax you.
- Do not hesitate to seek psychological and spiritual help.

### **How Can Friends And Family Members Help?**

Friends and family play a very important part in helping the person deal with the stressful event. Just knowing you are not alone can really help.

If the person who underwent a stressful event wants to talk about it,

- listen
- take time for him/her
- Take his/her feelings seriously.

After some events, it is necessary to organize and take care of some things. Practical assistance with these tasks can also be very helpful. It is most important, however, to help the person affected by the event to return to his/her normal as soon as possible.