



Carelton Wellbeing

How to cope after a violent event

Acknowledge the emotions you feel

After a violent or scary event, it is important to acknowledge and name any emotions you may be feeling (such as fear, guilt, anger, or shame). It can help to say it aloud or write it down. You can say things like, "I was really afraid," or "I am still afraid."

People sometimes deny their emotions to protect themselves. Distractions like food, alcohol, drugs, or bingeing television shows delay the healing process. Until you acknowledge and deal with your emotions, the trauma cannot begin to heal.

Turn to people who support you

Now is the time to lean on social systems that already work for you. Avoid isolating yourself and return to the people with whom you are comfortable. Trusted friends, family, or community members can validate what you are feeling and help you remember that you are not alone.

Practice self-care

If you are someone who exercises, doing so after a traumatic or violent event can help relieve anxiety and stress. It can make you feel happier and sleep easier. Other self-care tactics like eating healthy food and practicing mindfulness can also help you feel relaxed and less stressed.

Find comfort in routine

It is important to try to follow your normal daily routine as much as possible. Regular meals and a consistent sleep schedule benefit both mental and physical health.

Being mindful throughout the day can also help. Deep breathing techniques and “verbal first aid” phrases (“I’m going to be OK,” or “I’m safe”) can be repeated several times throughout the day.

Seek professional help

Professional help is available for added support. Health professionals can show you ways to boost resiliency. They can also suggest small changes to help you take good care of yourself. Some signs that you should seek help include:

- Trouble sleeping.
- Irritability.
- Unexplained stomach pain or headaches.
- Withdrawal from activities you used to enjoy.

Either witnessing or falling victim to a violent event can be very disruptive. Talking to friends and family may help ease your fears. Remember that you are not alone, and that help is available.

We are here to help.

To learn more about available resources and find support, contact us today.

carelonwellbeing.com/stateofrhodeisland

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