

How to Take Care of Yourself

There are many things you can do to help yourself heal. Since most of the response to trauma is physical, it's especially important to take care of your body.

Try to:

- Slow down - remember to breathe
- Drink water - it helps wash the chemicals out of your body and cleanses your system
- Get as much rest as possible
- Exercise or stay active
- Know your limits
- Connect with people you care about
- Avoid things that are stressful
- Be patient
- Reach out to your spiritual or faith community, if it feels right
- Don't be hard on yourself
- Talk to someone
- Avoid making big decisions
- See your doctor
- Let people know what you need
- Avoid too much exposure to news coverage of the event
- Take time for yourself
- Be kind to yourself
- Listen to your body

You may feel funny or guilty getting back to normal activities or enjoying yourself, but these can be equally important in healing.

It's OK to:

- Laugh
- Go to a movie
- Play with a child or pet
- Work in your garden
- Do something fun

What if there is an Emergency?

Emergency Services

Dial **911**
Cambridge/Somerville Psychiatric
Emergency/Crisis 24-hr **617-665-1560/1572**

What if you don't start feeling better?

If you still have reactions that are uncomfortable or confusing after a week or so, contact your doctor or counselor and speak with them about it. If you don't have a doctor or counselor, here are some numbers for local resources that will make it easier for you to find help.

Community Support for Trauma – Individual, System and Group Interventions

Somerville Trauma Response Network **617-625-6600 x4325**
Trauma Emergency Pager **617-540-5400**
Somerville TRN Cell **857-221-0942**

Mental Health

Somerville Mental Health Clinic **617-623-3278**
Somerville Mental Health Clinic - Child Services **617-629-6628**
Somerville Teen Connection at SHS **617-575-5690**
Cambridge Health Alliance
Outpatient Child Psychiatry **617-665-3458**
The Family Center **617-628-8815**

Suicide Resources

Samariteens **1-800-252-teen (8336)**
(Suicide and depression teen-to-teen hotline)
Samaritans **617-247-0220**
(MA 24 hr crisis hotline - suicide and depression)
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
Youth Crisis Line (Nine Line) **1-800-999-9999**

Please remember - you don't have to go through this alone

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When bad things happen...

Information on dealing with trauma for you, your friends and your family

Somerville Trauma Response Network

City of Somerville
Health Department

Joseph A. Curtatone
Mayor



Understanding Trauma

Life can be difficult or stressful for everyone at times.

When something sad or bad happens, especially if it is unexpected or violent, you may experience trauma as a result. For example, the death of a child or a series of violent incidents in your community can be traumatic not only for those directly involved, but for other community members as well.

Trauma is a normal reaction to a painful event and can happen to anyone. It affects people in a lot of different ways, depending on their personalities or previous experience, and can cause distress and disruption to everyday life.

Recognizing trauma early can help you cope and start the healing process.

Can Trauma Affect You?

Trauma can affect anyone.

- *If you or someone you know has been involved in a sudden or violent event, you may have a traumatic reaction.*
- *If you have experienced a trauma in the past, it is normal for a new event to bring back difficult or painful memories. You may need extra support to help you feel better.*
- *If something bad happens in the world, you may find yourself affected personally by the trauma.*

What Happens After Trauma?

A traumatic event can affect you in many different ways - some are obvious, some more subtle. Knowing what to look for may help you understand what's going on for you and how to help yourself.

You may be surprised to learn that after a traumatic event your body responds by releasing chemicals.

These chemicals (also called hormones) can make changes in your mind and your body that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable. These changes are all normal, but may vary from person to person.

These may come up immediately after the event and last for up to a few weeks. If any of these reactions last longer than a week or so or are too difficult to handle, seek help from your doctor.

Everyone reacts differently to trauma, but here are some common responses:

Responses to Trauma

Physical

- *Eating too much or too little*
- *Sleeping too much or too little*
- *Nausea, diarrhea, dizziness, headaches*
- *Sweating, rapid pulse chest pain*
- *Being easily frightened or startled*
- *Increased use of drugs or alcohol*

Emotional

- *Frustration, irritability, nervousness, guilt*
- *Mood swings*
- *Fears about safety*
- *Feeling helpless or powerless*
- *Sadness, crying or feeling numb*
- *Feeling like you want to die*

Mental

- *Difficulty concentrating, making decisions*
- *Losing track of time*
- *Confusion, forgetfulness*
- *Flashbacks – replaying the event*
- *Nightmares*

Spiritual

- *Changes in spiritual practice*
- *Questioning faith*
- *Emptiness, apathy*
- *Despair*
- *The way you see the world is shattered*

Social

- *Changes in social activity*
- *Isolating yourself or clinging to others*
- *Loss of trust*
- *Feeling like nobody understands*
- *Changes in sexual behavior*