

## When to seek professional help

1. a) if you feel you cannot handle intense feeling or body sensations b) if you feel that your emotions are not falling into place over a period of time c) if you feel chronic tension, confusion, emptiness or exhaustion d) if you continue to have disturbing bodily sensations / symptoms
2. If after 2-3 months you continue to feel numb and empty and do not have the appropriate feelings described. If you have to keep active in order not to feel
3. If you continue to have nightmares and poor sleep
4. If you have no person or group with whom to share your emotions and you feel the need to do so
5. If your relationships seem to be suffering badly or sexual problems develop
6. If you have accidents
7. If you continue to smoke, drink or take drugs to excess since the event
8. If your work performance suffers
9. If you note that those around you are particularly vulnerable or are not healing satisfactorily
10. If as a helper you are suffering exhaustion

**DO REMEMBER that there is light at the end of the tunnel**

**DO REMEMBER that if you suffer too much of too long Help is available**

Staff: speak with your Line Manager who will refer you to the HELP Service. Line Managers can find our referral form on Info-net; return the form to [help.referrals@bsuh.nhs.uk](mailto:help.referrals@bsuh.nhs.uk)

The HELP Service offer: One to One Psychotherapy: EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing) sessions for those staff presenting with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms.

**PTSD** – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder happens to some people after experiencing a major trauma. If you continue to experience emotional reactions after a traumatic experience (more than a month afterwards) you may be suffering symptoms of PTSD. <https://www.bsuh.nhs.uk/working-here/human-resources/advice-support-and-wellbeing/help-health-employee-learning-and-psychotherapy-services/what-happens-when-we-experience-a-major-trauma/>

**EMDR** - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing is a powerful psychotherapy technique which has been successful in helping people who suffer from trauma, anxiety, panic, disturbing memories, post- traumatic stress and many other emotional problems. EMDR is a relatively rapid type of therapy which can provide lasting relief and is one of the treatments of choice for PTSD in the NICE guidelines (2005).



# HELP

**Trauma Leaflet – BSUH NHS Staff**

**HELP Services**

**Rm118, Sussex House**

**Abbey Road, Brighton BN2 1ES**

**Telephone: 01273 696955 Ext: 3692**

## **Coping with Stress created by Change, Loss or Trauma**

Sometimes in life we experience difficulties brought on by change or a traumatic event. This may relate to work or home. We sometimes experience stress as a result of events, such as: relationship breakdown, bereavement, the loss of health, (of self or another), caring for a loved one/relative, changes at home or work pressures. Your experience is a very personal one. Below are a varied group of reactions you, or others, may experience during and after the change, stressful event, or trauma has passed.

### **Normal feelings and emotions experienced**

FEAR – of damage to oneself and those we love

-of being left alone, of having to leave loved ones

-of breaking down or losing control

-of a similar event happening again

HELPLESSNESS – crises show up human powerlessness, as well as strength

SADNESS – for deaths, injuries and losses of every kind

LONGING – for all that has gone

GUILT – for being better off than others, (being alive, not injured, having things)

SHAME – for having been exposed as helpless, emotional and needing others, for not having reacted as one would have wished

ANGER – at what has happened, at whoever caused it or allowed it to happen

-at the injustice and senselessness of it all

-at the shame of indignities

-at the lack of proper understanding by others, the inefficiencies

-WHY ME?

LET DOWN – disappointments that alternate with hope

HOPE – for the future, for better times

SHOCK – for bereavement – their deaths were sudden, violent or occurred in horrifying circumstances / or the situation experienced came as a shock – no warning of the situation coming

### **Physical and Mental sensations**

Nature heals through allowing these feelings to come out. This will not lead to loss of control of the mind, but stopping these feelings may lead to nervous and physical problems. Crying gives relief.

You may feel bodily sensations with or without the feelings described. Sometimes they are due to the crisis, even if they develop many months after the event. Some common sensations are tiredness, sleeplessness, bad dreams, fuzziness of the mind including loss of memory and concentration, dizziness, palpitations, shakes, difficulty in breathing, choking in the throat and chest, nausea and diarrhoea, muscular tension which may lead to pain (headaches, neck and backaches, dragging in the womb, menstrual disorders, change in sexual interest).

## **HEALING**

Remember that pain of the wound leads to healing. You may even come out wiser and stronger.

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### **SOME DO'S AND DON'TS**

**DON'T** bottle up feelings. **DO** express your emotions in a safe environment.

**DON'T** avoid talking about what happened. **DO** take opportunity to review the experience within yourself and with others you trust. **DO** allow yourself to be part of a group of people who care. For a time it is normal to want to withdraw from people.

**DON'T** expect the memories to go away immediately – the feelings may stay with you for a long time to come

**DON'T** forget – if you have experienced a bereavement that your children will experience similar feelings to yourself

**DO** take time to sleep, rest, exercise and think and be with your close family and friends

**DO** avoid alcohol – a good rule is to drink in moderation and don't drink when you are sad

**DO** try to keep your lives as normal as possible after the acute grief/stress, keep a gentle routine

**DO** drive more carefully. **DO** be more careful around the home

**WARNING: Accidents are more common after severe stresses**