

## Ideas to help others:

- Reassure them that they are safe and the event is over
- Be a good listener
- Just being there is helping
- Accept that the person may not be themselves for a while
- Encourage them to resume normal routines
- Ask them what you can do to assist them and be guided by their answer
- Avoid saying 'forget about it', 'pretend it didn't happen' or 'put it out of your mind'
- Allow them to make their own decisions
- Be aware that everyone is different and what may seem a small event to one person can be a major event for others
- Encourage them to see their local doctor or seek assistance from a professional counsellor

### Crisis Counselling, Help Lines & 24-Hour Emergency Numbers

See pages 2 & 3 in the Yellow Pages

## Support organisations

### Road Trauma Support Team Victoria Inc.

Tel: (03) 9819 9922 Freecall: 1300 367 797  
A free counselling, bereavement and referral service for the injured person, family, friends, witnesses & first on scene at accidents and those who may have caused an accident.

### National Association for Loss and Grief

[www.nalagvic.org.au](http://www.nalagvic.org.au)  
Tel: (03) 9650 3000 Freecall: 1800 100 023  
For information and referral to Loss & Grief services, practitioners, counsellors, educators and support and self help groups in you local area.

### S.I.D.S & Kids Victoria

Freecall: 1800 240 400 or 1300 308 307  
24 hr crisis & ongoing support for those affected by sudden and unexpected loss of a child under 6 years of age.

### Victims Support Agency

**Victims of Crime Helpline /Victim Support Services**  
[www.justice.vic.gov.au/victims](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/victims) of crime  
Freecall: 1800 819 817 or 1300 659 419 (Mon-Fri)  
Provides information and referrals to assist people who have been directly affected by violent crime.

### Kids Help Line

Freecall: 1800 551 800

### Lifeline (Australia Wide)

Tel: 13 11 14  
24hr Crisis Counselling Information & Referral Service

### Justlook

[www.justlook.org.au](http://www.justlook.org.au)  
Lifeline's "just look" is a comprehensive national database of low cost or free community services offered throughout Australia, including support, counselling and information. It is free, confidential and available 24-hours-on-line.

### Mensline

[www.menslineaus.org.au](http://www.menslineaus.org.au)  
1300 78 99 78

### WIRE (Women's Referral and Information Exchange)

[www.wire.org.au](http://www.wire.org.au)  
1300 13 41 30



## Dealing with...

# Trauma or medical emergencies

A guide to after-the-event care and counselling for witnesses



[www.mfbb.org.au](http://www.mfbb.org.au)

The **Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade** is an organisation dedicated to caring for the community. In most cases, our firefighters may not be able to provide support to those bystanders, family and friends who witness, or are involved in, a traumatic event.

Please be aware **your welfare** is important to us too.

This brochure provides advice on dealing with the possible after-effects of **witnessing** or being involved in a medical emergency.

It is important that you **make time** to take care of yourself and know where you can seek further assistance should you feel it necessary.

This brochure provides **guidance** to those involved in traumatic events but **does not** replace professional assistance.

If you are experiencing difficulties please seek **professional** assistance.

## Coping with a traumatic event:

Medical arrangements are often unexpected and can be traumatic or upsetting to the people at present. Some people experience an immediate emotion or physical reaction and sometimes this reaction is delayed.

It is important to remember that different people react in different ways.

## Some reactions or changes that you may notice:

- Anxiety or fear
- Irritability or anger
- Depression and/or grief
- Trouble sleeping and/or hyperactivity
- Disturbing dreams or excessive worry
- Poor concentration
- Reliving the event
- Withdrawal or mood swings
- Gastro-intestinal problems
- Sensitivity to noise
- Self doubt
- Pre-existing personal problems may be more difficult to deal with.

These are normal reactions to witnessing an abnormal event.

## Ideas to help yourself:

- Give yourself time to recover
- Accept that your reactions are normal given the abnormal event you have experienced
- Talk about the event with people you trust
- Be prepared to ask for professional help if necessary and/or if symptoms persist
- Your local doctor is a good person to discuss you experience with especially if you are suffering any physical reaction following the event
- Consider staying with someone rather than being home alone
- Postpone making any major life changing decisions until you are feeling better
- Keep your normal routine
- Avoid excessive alcohol
- Eat healthy food and exercise
- Restrict nicotine and coffee; you do not need further simulation
- Do things you enjoy