

Traumatic Event Information

A RESOURCE FOR OUR LANGARA COLLEGE COMMUNITY

WHAT IS A TRAUMATIC EVENT?

Any situation that causes a person to experience unusually strong emotional reactions that have the potential to interfere with their ability to manage normal day-to-day activities, or have a large negative impact on the people involved or community members that have in some way been involved is considered to be a traumatic event. Langara has a large population of people from diverse backgrounds and experiences from all around the world. A caring and healthy community looks out for community members that may be impacted and responds with empathy and compassion.

People and communities are resilient. They often have the resources to manage the impact of a traumatic event without the intervention of a professional care provider. This is to be encouraged as it helps people and communities build their resilience and coping skills, as well as confidence in these skills.

HOW A TRAUMATIC EVENT CAN AFFECT YOU

How we react to specific events depends on many things. For example, personal proximity to the traumatic event, if you have previously experienced a traumatic event in your life, or if your present life circumstances are stressful or unstable, you may react more strongly than others. You may find you have reactions even though you have not been directly involved in the incident.

Recognizing the normal and natural reactions to traumatic events is the first step to coping with the personal aftermath of trauma.

SOME COMMON REACTIONS/STRESS RESPONSES

- Feeling exhausted for no particular reason
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Difficult or disruptive sleep patterns
- Eating disturbances
- Lack of energy for normal activities
- Feelings of guilt
- Difficulty concentrating on or remembering everyday tasks
- Feeling overwhelmed, confused, agitated, irritated
- Feeling confused, difficult to make decisions, lack of concentration
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs, particularly in reaction to difficult emotions or to help with falling asleep

While everyone's reaction is different, these initial reactions/stress responses are common, normal and vary from person to person and usually become less intense and less frequent over time. Most people find that things gradually subside over a period of days to months.

If these reactions/stress responses persist or become worse over time, you are encouraged to seek professional help.

QUICK TIPS

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOURSELF

- Talk to family, friends and others you feel comfortable with
- Get plenty of rest.
- Get some physical activity (such as a walk or bike ride)
- Try keeping a journal to write down your thoughts and feelings
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible and structure your time to keep busy
- Eat healthy meals and avoid drugs and alcohol
- Engage in activities you enjoy
- Spend time with good friends and loved ones
- Talk to others who have experienced a similar event
- Talk to others who experienced the same event as they may have similar feelings and insights
- Reach out to for professional support (counsellor, doctor, spiritual leader or other trusted individuals)

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP OTHERS

- Listen, avoid judgements
- Be empathic
- Accept that they will need space and time
- Offer to lend a hand with everyday tasks
- Reassure them that they are safe
- Understand their anger or other negative feelings are not directed at you
- Help people foster their personal resilience
- If you feel that someone needs more help than you or their support network can provide, urge them to seek professional help

FOR PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

STUDENTS:

Langara Counselling Services: 604.323.5221

www.langara.ca/student-services/counselling/index.html

LSU Empower Me Program, 1.844.741.63.89

www.studentcare.ca/rte/en/LangaraCollegeLSU_EmpowerMe_EmpowerMe

COLLEGE EMPLOYEES:

Employee Assistance Program

1.800.387.4765

Remember, self care and community care is important. Please share this information with those around you.