

# What can I do to help myself after a trauma?

- **Help your brain to make sense of what happened.** Talking about the event (when you want to with a person you trust) or writing this down can help. Other people may be able to help fill in missing information for you. However, it is also okay to say you don't want to talk about it if people ask you questions.
- **Give yourself time.** It is important to remember that coping with trauma often takes time and is not a linear process.
- **Allow yourself to have strong feelings.** It is okay to have strong feelings about what has happened. Acknowledge these feelings when they arise and remind yourself that you are safe, and that the trauma is in the past.
- **Do things you enjoy.** Plan things every day, no matter how small, even when you don't feel like it. Here are some ideas: watch your favourite TV show or film, listen to music or a podcast, meet up with friends, have a pamper session (e.g. take a bubble bath, use a face mask), spend time with family or pets, go to the gym, play sports or dance.

# Where can I find more help?

If things feel really difficult, or don't seem to be getting better, please speak to your GP, and/or medical team who can offer you some more support and direct you to other people that can help you. A trusted adult can support you to speak to your GP. Remember, it's okay to ask for help at any time.

## Helplines and useful resources

Text and telephone helplines

[www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/find-help/i-need-urgent-help/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/find-help/i-need-urgent-help/)

Useful resources

[www.camhs-resources.co.uk](http://www.camhs-resources.co.uk)

## More information on understanding and managing trauma

Managing trauma: Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust  
[www.penninecare.nhs.uk/trauma](http://www.penninecare.nhs.uk/trauma)

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## Looking after yourself following trauma

A guide for young people.

You may be reading this because you, or someone you care about, have been involved in a traumatic situation.

This booklet will help you understand the thoughts and feelings you may have after a traumatic event and suggest ideas you can use to help you begin to feel better.

## How might I be feeling after a trauma?

Trauma affects people in different ways, at different times – there is no right or wrong way to think or feel. Common reactions include:

- Nightmares and/or struggling to sleep
- Upsetting thoughts
- Memories and pictures of the event popping up when you don't want them to
- Feeling as though it is happening all over again
- Feeling anxious, jumpy and on edge
- Having panic attacks or physical sensations (e.g. dizziness, heart racing)
- Becoming upset at reminders
- Being more worried about bad things happening

- Finding it difficult to cope with everyday stresses
- Feeling scared to go out
- Finding it hard to be away from loved ones or wanting to be with them more
- Wanting to spend more time alone
- Feeling sad and irritable
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling guilty for what you did or didn't do about how you are feeling
- Feeling like things will never get better
- Feeling nothing or feeling numb.

These reactions are normal after a traumatic event and are a way for our bodies to process what has happened. Struggling after a trauma is not a sign of weakness – it is okay to not be okay.

Although things may seem hard now, it is important to remember that these feelings will usually improve with time.



## What can I do to help myself after a trauma?

There are lots of things you can do to help yourself begin to feel better. Here are some ideas:

- **Look after yourself** – eat well, get enough sleep and do a small amount of exercise every day.
- **Take pressure off yourself where you can** – does your room have to be tidy, can you get some time off homework?
- **Get back to doing things you used to do** – talk to the adults around you about what will make it easier to go back to school/college/hobbies and any worries you have about this
- **Remind yourself that it is in the past** – put a picture on your phone of something good you have done since or something you are looking forward to.
- **Ask for support.** While you don't have to talk about the trauma itself, it is important that you have someone to share your feelings with, like a trusted adult or professional.
- **Stay away from social media and the news if this is upsetting.**
- **Don't worry if you feel scared** – it does not mean you are in danger now.