

WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF

When you've experienced a trauma, it can be a shock to your whole system. The following are some ideas to help you cope with any physical or emotional symptoms you may be experiencing.

Eat well-balanced and regular meals, even if you don't feel like it. Good nutrition is very important when you are feeling stressed.

Get plenty of rest.

Exercise regularly. It can help work off some physical stress symptoms, leaving you feeling calmer and better able to relax. If you're feeling lethargic it can help energize you and clear your mind.

Avoid caffeine, especially if you are having trouble sleeping.

Avoid the use of drugs or alcohol, including prescription and over the counter drugs to numb the pain. It will only complicate or delay your recovery.

Structure your time and set priorities. Maintain your basic normal routine, but give yourself permission to skip the extras for a while.

Don't make any major life changes or decisions.

Do make as many small daily decisions as possible to reassert your sense of control.

Don't try to avoid or deny reoccurring thoughts or feelings about the incident. They are normal and will decrease over time.

Give yourself permission to feel rotten and to share your feelings with others.

Do things that you enjoy. Take mini-breaks: go out to dinner, take 10 minutes alone, watch a movie.

Talk with people you trust: your family, friends, co-workers. Don't be afraid to reach out. People do care.

Don't be afraid to set limits with others when you don't feel like talking. You don't have to discuss the incident or your feelings when you don't want to.

Don't label yourself as "crazy". Remind yourself you're having **normal** reactions.

Write down your thoughts and feelings. This can be especially helpful if you're having trouble sleeping or when you wake from a troubling dream.

Ask for help if you need it. If you are having trouble coping on your own help is available from many sources.

- ~ Professional assistance from a counselor may sometimes be necessary. This does not imply weakness or craziness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful to handle by yourself.
- ~ In the workplace you may be able to get assistance from your co-workers, the human resource department, or company EAP.
- ~ Church, friends, family, and other community resources can be valuable sources of support.