

Employee fact sheet:

Coping After Trauma or a Distressing Event



Trauma is not a diagnosis. It is a response to an overwhelming, frightening or distressing event. This may include experiencing or witnessing violence, an accident, a sudden loss, a workplace incident, a natural disaster or a situation where your physical or psychological safety felt threatened.

For many people, trauma reactions reduce over time with safety, support and recovery. For others, the impact can continue and may contribute to anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Regardless of the severity of the trauma, it can be beneficial to seek professional support.

If you have experienced a potentially distressing event, or a distressing event is affecting how you feel, sleep, work or manage daily life, speaking with someone can make a real difference.

What trauma can feel like

Trauma can affect your mind, body, emotions and behaviour. You may feel different from your usual self, or notice reactions that seem to come out of nowhere.

Trauma may affect	What this can feel like
Emotions	Feeling fearful, numb, angry, sad, guilty, ashamed, helpless, irritable or overwhelmed.
Body	Feeling tense, exhausted, shaky, jumpy, nauseous, restless or physically on edge.
Thoughts	Replay of what happened, intrusive memories, difficulty concentrating or feeling unable to make sense of the event.
Sleep	Trouble falling asleep, waking often, nightmares or feeling unrested.
Behaviour	Avoiding reminders, withdrawing from others, staying busy to avoid thinking or feeling more alert to danger.
Work and daily life	Difficulty focusing, reduced confidence, emotional reactions or finding everyday tasks harder than usual.

These reactions do not mean that you are weak or failing. They may be your mind and body trying to process something distressing.

What can help following a traumatic event

The days after a traumatic event can feel overwhelming. Looking after your wellbeing, connecting with others and seeking support early can make a big difference.

1. Take things one day at a time

Focus only on today. Break tasks into small, manageable steps and do what you can.

2. Look after the basics

Try to maintain regular sleep, eat nutritious food, drink water and move your body. Small routines can help create stability.

3. Connect with others

Spend time with people you trust. Talking about how you feel can help you process what has happened.

4. Be kind to yourself

There's no "right" way to feel. Allow yourself time and space to recover.

5. Limit overwhelming inputs

Take breaks from news, social media or conversations that feel too much.

6. Reach out for support

If you are struggling, seek support early. Speaking with a professional can help you understand your reactions and manage the impact.

Seek professional support

Speak with your GP, psychologist or access support through your EAP, if your wellbeing, work or daily life is affected.

Through your EAP with PeopleSense, you can speak confidentially with a qualified psychologist for support and practical guidance.



Reaching out early makes a real difference.
Contact **PeopleSense** to book a confidential
appointment with a qualified psychologist.

If you are having thoughts of self-harm or suicide, seek urgent support immediately. Call 000, Lifeline on 13 11 14.

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