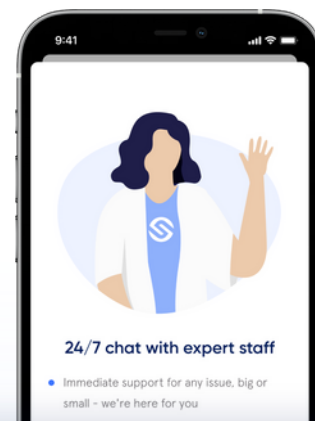


# The aftermath of traumatic events

## Sonder's guidance and advice



### Major events

#### Reactions to major events

If you're wondering you're feeling a certain way after a major event has happened in your life, you're not alone. Following a frightening or distressing event, it's normal to have strong reactions, whether physical, mental, emotional, or behavioural. Reactions may be instant or delayed.

**There is no 'normal' or 'wrong' reaction.**

#### What can reactions to trauma look like?

- Recurring feelings of anxiousness, stress, worry, or feeling that you're on 'high alert'
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Feeling extremely fatigued/disturbed sleep
- Being more protective than usual of loved ones
- Not wanting to leave your home
- Nausea or vomiting
- Increased heart rate
- Impaired concentration and memory
- Intrusive thoughts about the traumatic event
- Turning to substances such as alcohol

#### What are some subtle signs someone isn't OK?

- They appear teary or agitated
- Their appearance has changed (looking dishevelled or like they don't care anymore)
- They're not functioning how they usually do (being late, forgetful, distracted, etc.)
- They talk a lot about the traumatic event
- They make jokes about suicide, self-harm, etc.

If you notice these symptoms, reach out to the person directly or gently suggest they seek support.

#### How to provide support if someone isn't OK?

- Let the person run through whatever emotions they need (sadness, anger, distress) sometimes just a listening ear is a relief
- Let them know you're listening by being engaged with your body language and asking open-ended questions
- Help them consider next steps by asking guiding questions like 'have you spoken to Sponder?', 'Have you considered speaking to a GP?' or 'What can I do for you right now?'
- If their distress is very high, don't shy away from asking 'have you had any thoughts or plans to end your life?'. If they have, do not leave their side, and get emergency support (Emergency department, Lifeline, 000) incidents.

#### How can I make a difference in my workplace?

- Have more 1:1 conversations with others
- Be more observant of changes in people
- Encourage video calls when you're not physically together so you can see signs/body language
- Encourage 'water-cooler chat' either in person or on an informal digital channel
- Encourage/instigate group social activities
- Lead by example and take care of yourself - it'll encourage others to do so too

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