

## Lancashire Traumatic Stress Service

### How Can I Help Myself If I Have Been Involved in a Seriously Traumatic Event?

Whatever the type of traumatic event, the first thing to do is to be kind to yourself. Not everyone finds this easy. It is not unusual to hear people saying “I should have got over this by now” or “I must be a really weak person to be so affected”.

For some people too, this may not be the first traumatic event that they have experienced.

#### Practical things you can do include the following

- take each day at a time
- do things that make you feel safe and secure
- be patient with yourself; it can take weeks or months to feel that you and your life are back to normal
- try to re-establish your usual routines such as going to work or school
- spend time with family, friends, and others who may be able to help you through this difficult time
- give reassurance to children to help them to feel safe and to talk about their fears and worries
- take good care of yourself physically; eat well, exercise regularly, reduce alcohol and drug use and get enough sleep
- talk it over when you are ready, but, don't worry if you get upset or cry while you think or talk about what happened
- take extra care; after a major incident or event, people are more likely to have accidents

#### Things that are not so helpful include

- Bottling up your feelings isn't helpful; let yourself talk when you feel ready.
- Alcohol and drugs; while they can numb your feelings, they can also stop you from coming to terms with what has happened or cause more problems later.

Following the advice above might not be easy but it will help. It is understandable that you will experience a range of thoughts and feelings about the event.

Of course you will never forget about what happened. Traumatic events do get embedded in our memories and certain triggers, such as anniversaries, sounds, smells and tastes can give us sharp reminders of what happened.

For some people, experiencing a traumatic event may lead to a period of reflection and re-evaluation of things in their life which are important and valuable and things which perhaps no longer matter quite so much.