



# ***St Paul's College Mental Health Toolkit***

## ***Information & Support***

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*This toolkit has been designed to give you the most relevant information about trauma responses, tips on self care and information on the services available for support*

**WELLBEING**  
**2022/2023**

# What You Can Do To Help Yourself: Self-Care and The Five Ways To Wellbeing

## Connect with other people

Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing.

- Spend time with family or friends
- Make future plans
- Attend social events
- Use Technology to stay in touch

## Give to others

Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing

Try saying thank you to someone you care about

- Ask friends or family how they are and really listening to their answer
- offering to help someone you know with DIY or a work project
- volunteering in your community, such as helping at a school, hospital or care home

## Be Active

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness. Evidence also shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing. Remember this can be any form of exercise this does not have to be too taxing.

## Pay attention to the present

Paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you.

Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

## Learn new skills

Research shows that learning new skills can also improve your mental wellbeing

- Take up a new hobby
- Try learn a new skill like cooking
- Learn a new language
- Learn to paint or draw
- Try craft or woodworking



# How might I feel after a traumatic event?

After a traumatic event it is common for people to experience some of the following things:



## Avoid feelings and situations

You might avoid memories, thoughts, feelings, things, people and places associated with the event.

## Loss of memory

You might be unable to remember parts of the event.



## Have distressing Memories, dreams and flashbacks

You might have distressing memories, dreams or nightmares about the event. You might also experience the event as if it is happening again (this is known as a flashback).



## Feeling upset when reminded of the event

You might feel particularly upset when you are near where the event happened or in an environment that reminds you of the event.

## •Difficult feelings – These can include:

- Feeling negatively about yourself, others or the world
- Blaming yourself or others for what happened
- Negative emotions like fear, horror, anger, guilt or shame
- Being unable to feel happiness, satisfaction or love towards others.
- Feeling afraid, anxious, sad, horrified, helpless, overwhelmed, angry, numb or disorientated.

## •Changes in the way you act – These can include:

- Not doing or being interested in things you used to enjoy
- Feeling detached from other people
- Acting in ways that are reckless or self-destructive
- Being angry and aggressive towards people or things
- Being hypervigilant
- Overtiredness
- Disturbed sleep or insomnia.

# Key things to do during the initial days afterward to look after yourself

- Be kind to yourself – take pressure off yourself in whatever way you can. Self care is not selfish, it's sensible.
- Eat and hydrate, we can sometimes ignore the basics when we feel overwhelmed, but these things matter when recovering
- Try to do normal things with other people, our instinct can be to isolate ourselves, but this can cause more negative feelings
- Get support from those you trust
- Sleep and rest, sleep helps us to process information and maintain both a health mind and a health body
- Avoid alcohol and drugs, this will often mask problems not solve them, especially in the long run.
- Talk about the incident if you feel you would like to, but if it doesn't feel like the right time yet, don't force yourself.

## Give yourself time

It can take time to recover from a traumatic event. It might take a while for you to accept what has happened or to learn to live with it. Try not to put pressure on yourself to feel better straight away



## Tips to support your Wellbeing

- **Notice how you're feeling**

For the first few months following a traumatic event, you might want to pay attention to how you are feeling over time. If you don't feel like you are getting better, or if you start to feel worse, you should speak to your GP.

- **Talking about the event**

After a traumatic event you might want to avoid things that remind you of the event and avoid talking about what happened. However, if you feel like you want to talk about it, then do it. The subject of the event should not be off-limits. Research has shown that talking about the event and your feelings when you are ready and able can help you to be more resilient.

- **Speak to others that have experienced the same thing as you**

It might help you to speak to other people who experienced the same traumatic event as you, or who have had similar experiences. However, people recover and react to the same events in different ways. Try not to compare your own recovery to someone else's. If you feel able to support others who have been affected by the event, then that can be helpful too.



## Tips to support your Wellbeing

- **Ask for support**

Seeking support from friends, family or other people that you trust can help you to cope better after a traumatic event. As well as offering emotional support, they might be able to help you with practical tasks, or just spend time with you doing 'normal' things.

- **Avoid spending lots of time alone**

Being around other people has been shown to make you less likely to experience poor mental health after a traumatic event. While this might not be possible, if you live alone you might want to see if you can move in with family or a close friend after a traumatic event. If this isn't possible, try to spend more time with people close to you, or stay in contact with them over the phone or through video calls.

- **Stick to your routine**

Try to keep to the routine you had before the traumatic event as much as you can, even if that feels difficult. After the event you might find that you're eating and exercise habits change, and that you find it hard to sleep. Try to eat and exercise regularly and get enough sleep.



## Tips to support your Wellbeing

- **Consider seeking professional help**

Some people can find it helpful to speak to their GP if they are struggling. Generally, it is not helpful to seek professional mental health support in the first month after a traumatic event, unless your GP recommends this because your symptoms are so severe.

- **Take care**

After a traumatic event, people are more likely to have accidents. Be careful around the home and when you are driving. Try not to use alcohol or illegal drugs following a traumatic event as a way to cope. While they can make you feel better in the short term, they won't help your recovery in the long term.

- **Avoid consuming too much media about the event**

After experiencing a traumatic event, it can be tempting to watch or read lots of things about it on social media or in the news. This is especially the case for higher profile events like terrorist attacks or natural disasters. However, it is best to avoid watching, listening to or reading lots of media related to the event, especially if when you do so it causes you distress.



# When should I seek professional help?



Everyone deals with traumatic experiences differently. Many people will be able to recover after a traumatic event with support from family, friends and their workplace. In the early stages, psychological professional help is not usually necessary. Even when you have recovered from a traumatic event, you probably won't forget about it. You might still feel negative emotions about it or find it upsetting to think about from time to time. Many people will still experience feelings that are overwhelming in the first few weeks after a traumatic event, this is normal. Most people recover naturally from these events. However, some people may need additional support to help them cope. For example, people who have had other traumatic events happen to them and people with previous mental health difficulties may be more at risk.

You should ask your GP for help if:

It is recommended that you seek professional support if after the first few weeks you are still experiencing the following difficulties:

- Feeling upset and fearful
- Finding it difficult to stop thinking about the incident
- Having nightmares
- Feeling more irritable
- Feeling more jumpy
- Struggling to work or look after your home and family
- Starting to have relationship difficulties
- Using drugs or drinking alcohol more than usual
- Acting very differently to before the trauma
- Struggling to enjoy life
- Feeling emotionally numb

# Where can you go for support?

text about it

50808

SAMARITANS

Ireland



JIGSAW

Young people's  
health in mind



Supporting people affected  
by mental ill health



ALONE

YOU'RE NOT ALONE



# *Where can you go for support?*

*Please speak to any member of staff if you have further questions or need support, we are always here to help!*

**DRUGS.ie**  
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

Women's  Aid

**SOUTHSIDE  
TRAVELLERS**  
action group



**Support**

