

How Can I Manage My Reactions to This Incident?

The incident you have experienced was like a shock to your system and your body is reacting quite normally. These reactions may last for a few days, a few weeks or even a few months. Try some of the following to help reduce the emotional pain associated with the incident you have experienced.

- Exercise vigorously within 24-48 hours of the incident; alternate with relaxation.
- Structure your time and keep busy; maintain normal routines.
- Don't label yourself as "crazy"; remind yourself that you are having normal reactions.
- Talk with people: your family, friends, co-workers
- Don't numb yourself with alcohol and drugs.
- Spend some time with others.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and to tell others you feel that way.
- Keep a journal; this is especially helpful to while away any sleepless hours.
- Do things that you especially enjoy.
- Don't make any major life changes or decisions for awhile.
- Do make as many daily decisions as possible to reassert your sense of control.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals, even if you don't feel like it.
- Don't fight recurring thoughts, flashbacks or dreams - they will decrease with time.
- Help co-workers by asking how they are doing and sharing your feelings as well.
- Reach out to others - people do care.

If you have trouble sleeping, try some of these things:

For difficulty getting to sleep:

- ⇒ Avoid caffeine in coffee, tea, colas and chocolates.
- ⇒ Do some gentle stretching exercises before going to bed.
- ⇒ Have a glass of milk before going to bed.
- ⇒ Avoid naps in the afternoon or evening.
- ⇒ Read a light book or magazine.
- ⇒ Listen to relaxing music.
- ⇒ Use a fan or "sound machine" to drown out noise.

For waking up at night:

- ⇒ Get up and have a glass of milk.
- ⇒ Don't toss and turn for more than 15 minutes - get up for at least an hour and do something productive or just enjoy the peace and quite of the night.

For disturbing dreams:

- ⇒ When you wake up with a dream or thought-provoking dream, write it down.
- ⇒ Turn on a light, look around and get up to "shake" the intense feeling of the dream.
- ⇒ Imagine your own ending to the dream.

For waking too early:

- ⇒ Get up early and enjoy the morning.
 - ⇒ Go to bed later so you can sleep later.
 - ⇒ Maintain a routine of going to bed and getting up at the same time.
 - ⇒ Put darker curtains over your windows.
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