

## COPING WITH TRAUMATIC STRESS

Use natural supports. Talk with friends, family, a support group and co-workers.

Learn about trauma. It is helpful to learn more about trauma and how it may affect you.

Talk to other survivors of violence for support. Something helpful often happens when survivors are able to talk with each other.

Practice relaxation methods. These can include muscular relaxation exercises, breathing exercises, meditation, swimming, stretching, yoga, prayer, listening to quiet music, spending time in nature, etc.

Be aware of negative coping actions. They may reduce distress in the short term, but in the long-term, negative coping actions can be very damaging. Actions that may feel immediately helpful but that can cause later problems include things like smoking or using drugs, isolation, workaholism and unhealthy eating.

### **You may need more help if:**

- You have trouble functioning normally after a period of time.
- You feel overwhelmed or out of control.
- You are not taking care of yourself.

*If you need more help, consider:*

Calling a counsellor for help. Sometimes trauma symptoms worsen and ordinary efforts at coping don't seem to work very well. A counsellor can help you process the event and help you return to your normal functioning.

Talking to a doctor about the incident. A doctor can take better care of your physical health if he or she knows about your trauma symptoms, and doctors can often refer you to more specialized and expert care.

Taking prescribed medications. If trauma symptoms worsen you may want to consult your doctor about taking medications that are able to improve your sleep or reduce anxiety and/or depression.