

**What friends and relatives
can do**

- Spend time together** After the stressful event, spend time with the affected person.
- Offer support** Offer assistance and be prepared to listen, even if your support is not requested.
- Listen** Listen when the affected person wants to tell you something. Sometimes it does people good to talk about the stressful event again and again.
- Don't take things personally** Don't take anger and aggression personally.
- Preserve privacy** Allow the affected person to maintain their privacy. Create opportunities for withdrawal.
- Encourage self-responsibility** Support the affected person, but do not take too much responsibility away from them. Take care to ensure that the affected person remains active.

Info sheet

Info sheet for affected persons
and family members following
stressful events

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Stressful event	You have experienced a very stressful event. Everyone has ways of dealing with stress. However, you may experience strong emotional and/or physical reactions now or at a later date. The following are common reactions to an extraordinary event.	Common stress reactions	Time for feelings	Allow yourself time to mourn, and cry if you want to. It can be better to do this than to try and suppress or hide these feelings.
Stress reactions	Sometimes stress reactions or other emotional responses occur immediately, sometimes only hours or days after the event. In some cases, weeks or even months may pass before reactions occur.	Body Exhaustion, tiredness, nausea, drowsiness, headache, perspiration, insomnia.	Movement and rest	Keep yourself physically active (walking, sport). However, make sure you also give yourself enough time to relax.
Duration	The duration of the changes may vary between a few days and several months. In certain cases, it can last even longer depending on the seriousness of the event.	Mind Nervousness, difficulties concentrating, intruding memories, nightmares, uncertainty, increased vigilance.	Nutrition	Take care to eat a balanced diet and to sleep. Do not drink more alcohol than you normally would.
Support	The feeling may also arise that additional professional support is required (doctor or psychologist). This may mean that the event was so stressful and extraordinary that you cannot currently deal with it on your own.	Feelings Anxiety, depression, anger, helplessness, guilt, sudden emotional releases, panic.	One step at a time	Set yourself small, achievable goals in order to overcome changes. Take things one step at a time rather than trying to do everything at once.
		Behavior Withdrawal from other people, silence, sudden crying, loss or increase of appetite, restlessness, bad temper, inappropriate reactions, increased consumption of alcohol or medication.	Memories	It is common to have recurring thoughts and memories regarding the event. These will generally become less frequent and less intensive over time. Do not try to fight them.
		Ways to overcome stress		If you are still having problems a long time after the stressful event and things are not getting any easier, seek expert help (e.g. your family doctor or a psychologist).
		Talking Talk to people you trust about what is affecting you and how you are feeling. If you cannot sleep or do not have anyone to talk to, write your thoughts down.		
		Routine Pick up your normal daily and weekly routines again. Familiar, day-to-day tasks help to keep you grounded. Occupy yourself with things that seem sensible to you.		