

Making Use of Your EAP After A Major Incident

Regrettably, we live in times of increasing turbulence – every day there are events that have significant human impact. Increasingly natural disasters, civil unrest, acts of terrorism, corporate takeovers, political events and changing financial markets are taking a toll. People are sometimes surprised at how much a major event or trauma can affect us in our everyday life, even when we have not been directly impacted.

Common reactions and emotions in adults

- ▶ Anger over situations that you can't influence
- ▶ Increased and /or ongoing anxiety or stress
- ▶ Feeling alone or homesick if you are not close to family and friends
- ▶ Concern for family or friends overseas – whether in an area of direct concern or not
- ▶ A need to find a focus for angry feelings
- ▶ Emotional turbulence including fear, anxiety and sadness
- ▶ An awakening of memories or losses experienced at an earlier time
- ▶ Experiencing changes to normal patterns including eating and sleeping disturbances
- ▶ Feeling drained, fatigued and exhausted

Looking after the needs of children and adolescents

- ▶ Media images and reporting are widespread – it is difficult to escape the stories and images
- ▶ Television footage often depicts graphic images that may be distressing to children
- ▶ Children may not understand the situation but will be aware of the impact on others
- ▶ Fear (sometimes out of proportion) for friends and family overseas
- ▶ They may be exposed to peer pressure to conform to the views of others
- ▶ An increased need for routine and certainty is likely to be expressed
- ▶ Encourage discussion – ask what your child understands

How you might feel at work

- ▶ Concentration and interest may dissipate
- ▶ Performance may be lowered
- ▶ Difficulty, or reduced interest, in taking on new tasks or projects
- ▶ Increased focus on doing “what needs to be done” and going home to your family as soon as possible
- ▶ Feeling preoccupied with personal issues and problems
- ▶ Feeling inwardly focused
- ▶ Developing a pessimistic world view

How you can help others at work

- ▶ Let people talk to you about the situation if that is important to them
- ▶ Recognise that some of your colleagues may feel distracted and concerned
- ▶ If you are concerned about a colleague, ask if they are ok
- ▶ Listen to individual stories and concerns, but be cautious of giving too much advice
- ▶ Understand that you may have different views or reactions to others at work
- ▶ Try to minimise your demands on others if you sense they are feeling overloaded

How EAP counselling can assist

- ▶ Providing an environment where individuals can discuss their concerns
- ▶ Suggesting strategies to manage anxiety, stress and other reactions
- ▶ Helping individuals to normalise the feeling they are experiencing
- ▶ Providing strategies on how best to assist children and adolescents
- ▶ Conducting group debriefs or discussions to help people express their feelings
- ▶ Offering a totally non-judgemental and supportive environment for discussion

Your EAP is there to help

Remember the EAP offers support through confidential face-to-face and telephone counselling and appointments can be made by phoning your EAP provider, Davidson Trahaire Corpsych (DTC), on **1300 360 364**.

