

Supporting your Mental Health after dealing with a medical emergency

Medical emergencies can be a shocking and jarring event for all those involved, from the patient to the bystanders and rescuers. Any emergency situation can have negative effects on an individual's mental health, but in particular, Cardiac Arrests can have serious and long-term impacts to all those involved.

Different people may respond to this trauma in different ways, but it's important to recognize those feelings and react accordingly.

Signs of stress to watch out for include:

- Physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, aches and pains
- Distancing from family, friends and colleagues
- Emotional distress such as increased anger, irritability and anxiety
- Struggling to focus and remember
- Withdrawal from normal activities
- Feeling empty, isolated, guilty, shameful or listless

After a traumatic event, if you notice yourself or others showing signs of distress, be sure to take action. Some, or all of these can be done to improve overall mental well-being:

- Understand that these are normal responses to traumatic events, it's ok to not be ok sometimes
- Talk to a trusted friend or family member (for their benefit, don't share specifics or gory details- just discuss the response you are having to the event)
- Engage in healthy behaviours such as hydrating and eating nutritious food
- Take part in manageable physical activities, such as walking, swimming or other light movement
- Follow a routine and stick to your normal activities and environments whenever possible

Most importantly, know when to seek professional help. If these other coping mechanisms have not had a positive impact on your well-being, then it's time to reach out. There are some supports and resources listed below.

We encourage anyone involved in a serious incident to consider accessing some kind of support, whether that be Peer Counselling, internal Employee Assistance programs or these resources.

- [Mental Health Helpline](tel:1-877-303-2642) – 1-877-303-2642

- Crisis Text Line - Text CONNECT to 741741
- [Kids Help Phone](#) – 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
- CMHA 24 hour Distress Line 1-866-797-0000
- CMHA Online Crisis Chat - [Online Crisis Chat \(cmha.ca\)](#)
- [Connex Ontario](#)- Call, Text, Livechat

Or please visit the following websites:

- [Mental Health and Wellbeing - Canadian Red Cross](#)
- [Social and peer support | Heart and Stroke Foundation](#)