



NTEU at NMMU

Coping With A Shocking or Traumatic Event

In the course of a lifetime most of us will experience, directly or indirectly, several personally shocking or traumatic incidents. Witnessing, experiencing or being close to a shocking event is one such example. There are normal reactions to these intense and/or abnormal events. Although some of these reactions can be painful, they are part of the natural healing process. If you have experienced an intense personal situation or a shocking/traumatic event recently, some possible responses might be:

Typical Responses

- Shock and disbelief-Immediately after learning about a traumatic event many people feel numb or feel like such an event can't be real.
- Speculation about what happened and information seeking - Listening to or watching news, checking the internet for updates, talking to others about what you know or have heard.
- Wanting to turn off the TV and the radio "make it all go away" for a while.
- Feelings of sadness or anger about the tragedy and discussing these feelings with others.
- Wanting to check in with loved ones, even if they are not close to the disaster or in immediate danger. It is normal to want to touch base with someone you care about.
- If you are in a role where you need to attend to or provide for others, you may not be aware of your own feelings until the immediate crisis is over.

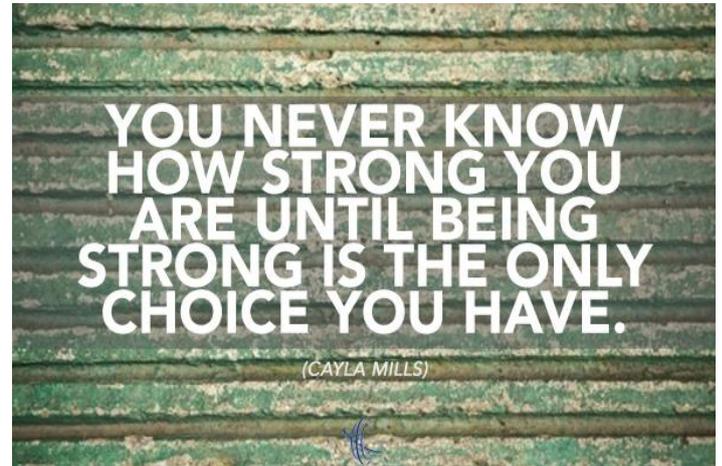
In the hours and days following such tragedies, the shock begins to wear off and it is possible that other feelings may emerge. It is also possible that no other feelings will emerge. Everyone's reaction is individual and perfectly OK. In the cases when other feelings emerge-these feelings might include anger, sadness, fear, panic or depression. It is important to share these feelings with people whom you trust.

What You Can Do To Take Care Of Yourself: Promoting a Healthy Response

- Talk with people about what you are experiencing-parents, friends, teachers, residence hall staff members (RA or Residence Hall Coordinator), pastor, counselor-someone you feel comfortable sharing with.
- Breathe - slow and deep abdominal breathing.
- Maintain regular exercise.
- Eat healthy-don't skip meals, don't eat excessively.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule as much as possible.
- Schedule your time and meet as many of your usual commitments and activities as possible.
- Take time to be alone in order to listen to yourself. Give yourself permission to have your feelings, whatever they are. Also, give yourself permission NOT to have intense feeling about the situation.
- Don't withdraw for an extended period of time.
- Avoid overextending yourself in your work or in new commitments.
- Remind yourself that you're normal and are having normal reactions-your reactions may be different from your friends and that's OK-reactions are very individualistic.
- Engaging in excessive substance use (alcohol or other drugs) to numb or escape is not advisable. It often only delays or intensifies emotional responses.
- Don't label your reactions or the reactions of others as weak, strange, wrong, or crazy.
- Transfer the energy of anger into productive activities within your community.
- Ask others directly for what you need and want.
- Help others.
- Pray, meditate, spend time in nature, or do whatever suits your belief system and allows you to connect with something larger than yourself.

Sometimes It Might Be Good To Consider Professional Counseling if:

You are experiencing memories of previous losses, traumas, or crisis.
You are experiencing heightened feelings of anxiety, fear for your own safety, or rage.



IMPORTANT DID YOU SUFFER DAMAGE TO YOUR VEHICLE DURING THE STUDENT PROTESTS?

As you may be aware, NTEU informed Management on 21 October 2016 that we are holding the NMMU liable for damage to staff vehicles after the students stoned several cars during protest action. To further this claim, we need to gather information from our members in this regard.

If you have suffered damage to your vehicle during the student protests, please follow the following guidelines:

1. Report the incident to the SAPS, preferably within 24 hours, so that you may obtain a case number.
2. Also report the incident to campus security immediately.
3. Make sure you have all the details such as date, time of incident and also your vehicle's details.
4. If you have any photographs of the damage to the vehicle, take it with you and submit it.
5. Make sure that a concise statement is taken detailing the incident.
6. Get copies of your statements and supporting information.
7. Obtain quotations for the damage repairs.
8. Submit copies of your statements and supporting information to NTEU on nteu@nmmu.ac.za.
9. If you are covered by your own insurance against incidents, please lodge a claim immediately. You have 30 days from incident to do so. Most insurance policies include SASRIA cover.
10. There are no guarantees that a claim against the NMMU will be dealt with *timeously* and members with own insurance *must lodge a claim with their own insurance to prevent not being compensated at all.*

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- You are crying more than usual in response to sadness and fear.
- You are experiencing difficulty sleeping or nightmares.
- You become angry or upset more easily than typical.
- You notice a tendency to isolate yourself or withdraw.

Changes in behaviour are usually significant when they interfere with usual activities, change behaviour in significant ways, or persist for more than two weeks. If you are having these responses, ask for help.

Contact the NMMU Wellness call centre line on 0800 205 333 and ask to speak to a counsellor. Or alternatively contact the NMMU Psychology Clinics on South [x2330] and Missionvale[x1353] campuses for immediate assistance.

Info sourced from: <http://counseling.eku.edu/coping-shocking-or-traumatic-event>