Some Ideas To Help You

Keep Talking

Find someone to talk to who helps you cope and in whose company you feel relaxed. This could be a friend, family member or teacher. Tell a teacher if you are having difficulties concentrating at school. If you would rather talk to someone else, go to the 'further help' section for details of who to contact.

Express Yourself

Find a way of expressing your feelings. Some people like to write about their feelings or create a poem. Others prefer drawing, colouring, listening, composing or playing music.

Be Active

Burn off feelings of anger by playing sport, going a walk, hitting a pillow or making something out of clay. Keep your usual interests and hobbies going. If you do not have any particular interests this would be a good time to throw your energy into something new.

Respect yourself

Keep yourself physically well. Eat a balanced diet and keep yourself clean and well turned out. This will help your self-confidence.

Memory Lane

Find a way of remembering. You may want to do something special. Create something to remind you of the good memories from the past, e.g. a box of objects that are meaningful to you, a photograph album or planning a tree.

Think Positive

Tell yourself that the event is over and you are now safe. Tell yourself that you have the ability to find ways of coping and you will be a stronger person as a result. For example, you may start to value the smaller things in life and feel more compassion for others who experience life difficulties. Draw a picture of yourself as you would like to be, with your interests and goals around the edge. Appreciate all opportunities open to you.

Relax

Learn to relax, by breathing in ten deep breaths in your favourite colour. Practise tensing and relaxing muscles from the top of your head to the end of your toes. Use imagery and music, to help you unwind, e.g. imagine standing under a waterfall and feeling the water wash all your cares away. It is normal to need time to be alone or with close family/friends to deal with your feelings.

Further Help

Winston's Wish: www.winstonswish.org
Your local GP.
The Compassionate Friends (TCF).
www.tcf.org.uk Tel: 08451 232304
SAMARITANS 24-hour line. Tel:116123

Resources

Book: Relax by Catherine O'Neil.
Workbook: Finding a Way Through When Someone Close has Died: What it Feels Like and What You Can Do to Help Yourself: A Workbook by Young People for Young People by Pat Mood and Lesley Whittaker.

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A guide for Young People

How do I take care of myself when something dreadful has happened?

Cognus
Thinking about ... Education

With grateful thanks and acknowledgements to Cognus Ltd, for allowing us to share their information.

Your experience was a very personal one, although others shared it. Everyone involved will have been affected in some way.

You may experience a range of intense thoughts and feelings. If you have had a loss or separation in the past, your feelings may be especially intense.

This is a NORMAL reaction to an ABNORMAL event and these emotions may last for some time.

This leaflet will help you understand your feelings and find ways to cope.

What happened?

It is important to find out exactly what happened. You can ask adults questions so that you understand exactly what went on.

Emotional Responses

It is normal to feel a range of feelings after a traumatic event. You may experience one or many of the following:

Anger: Thinking - 'Why him or her?'

'It's so unfair!' 'I blame X for it'.

Fear: of 'losing control', of 'breaking down' or the unpredictability of life.

Shame: for being so helpless & 'emotional' or for not reacting as you wished to.

Memories: of people close to you who have died or are absent.

Shock and disbelief: Feeling numb, as though the event is unreal or like a dream.

Guilt: "It was my fault".
"It should have happened to me".
"What could I have done more?"

Confused: Wanting to remember and forget. Wanting an explanation to make sense of it.

Let down: Feeling that others do not understand you.

Left out: for not being 'there' at the incident or only for a brief time.

Possible Physical Responses

Tiredness.

Sleeplessness.

Headaches.

Loss of or increase of appetite.

Stomach problems.

Going through the day automatically.

Intrusive thoughts and flashbacks.

Difficulty concentrating.

Forgetting items.

Remember - these are normal reactions to abnormal events