Have you experienced an overwhelming or frightening event?
Someone you know may also have been affected.

When a person experiences a crisis, it is normal to feel a range of different emotions including grief, sadness, anxiety, fear, anger or stress. These feelings may occur shortly following the event or they may not occur for some time afterwards. They may last a very short period of time or can last months or even years. In some people, the more serious psychological reaction – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may develop.

Read this pamphlet and learn how to get help. It is a useful guide to help affected persons to cope with physical or emotional stress.

You can feel better and get your life back!
Each person responds to a crisis differently. It is important though, to understand the different reactions that accompany the incident and to know how to care for yourself during times of extreme stress.

The information below has been created to assist you during times of stress and crisis.

WHERE TO GET HELP
Talk to your family doctor or a mental health specialist, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker about the terrible event and your feelings.
This is called “therapy”. Therapy can help you work through your terrible experience. A doctor may give you medicine to help lesson your tension and anxieties.
You can approach your family doctor or any of the following:

**INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH**
10 Buangkok View, Singapore 539747
Tel: 6389 2200 (Appointment Line)

**ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL**
376 Alexandra Road, Singapore 159964
Tel: 6472 2000 (Appointment Line)

**CHANGI GENERAL HOSPITAL**
2 Simei Street 3, Singapore 528899
Tel: 6550 3333 (Appointment Line)

**KHOO TECK PUAT HOSPITAL**
90 Yishun Central, Singapore 768828
Tel: 6550 8828 (Appointment Line)

**KK WOMEN’S & CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL**
100 Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 229869
Tel: 6294 4050 (Appointment Line)

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL**
5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074
Neuroscience Clinic, Level 4, Kent Ridge Wing
Tel: 6772 2002 (Appointment Line)

**NG TENG FONG GENERAL HOSPITAL**
1 Jurong East Street 21, Singapore 608605
Tel: 6716 2222 (Appointment Line)

**SINGAPORE GENERAL HOSPITAL**
Outram Road, Singapore 169868
Tel: 6321 4377 (Appointment Line)

**TAN TOCK SENG HOSPITAL**
11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng, Singapore 308430
Tel: 6357 7000 (Appointment Line)

**SENGBANGS GENERAL HOSPITAL**
110 Sengkang East Way, Singapore 544886
Tel: 6930 6000 (Appointment Line)
**COGNITIVE**
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Poor concentration
- Nightmares
- Confusion
- “Flashbacks” or crisis
- Self-doubt

**PHYSICAL**
- Tiredness or loss of energy
- Body aches and pain
- Breathing difficulties
- Rapid heart beat
- Choking in the throat/chest
- Sweating or chills
- Dizziness
- Muscular tension
- Trembling
- Distress, nausea, vomiting
- Headaches and/or back pain
- Change in sexual interest
- Muscle tension
- Dizziness
- Sweating or chills
- Choking in the throat/chest
- Breathing difficulties
- Body aches and pain
- Tiredness or loss of energy
- Self-doubt

**BEHAVIOURAL**
- Changes in activity level
- Social withdrawal or isolation
- Restlessness, agitation or pacing
- Eating or appetite changes
- Sleep disturbance/insomnia
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Inability to relax

**EMOTIONAL**
- Intrusive memories
- Disappointment
- Guilt
- Disinterest in activities, places, or people that are normal for the person
- Mood swings
- Feeling of hopelessness
- Depression
- Fear and anxiety
- Avoidance
- Shame
- Distrust, anger, guilt, and shame
- Shock or denial
- Feelings of helplessness
- Anxiety
- Self-doubt
- “Flashbacks” or crisis
- Confusion
- Nightmares
- Poor concentration
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Poor concentration
- Nightmares
- Confusion
- “Flashbacks” or crisis
- Self-doubt

**POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN**
- Loss of appetite
- Withdrawal and immobility
- Problems at school and inability to concentrate
- Sleep disturbance/insomnia
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Inability to relax

**TYPICAL REACTIONS TO CRISIS**

**EMOTIONAL**
- Intrusive memories
- Disappointment
- Guilt
- Disinterest in activities, places, or people that are normal for the person
- Mood swings
- Feeling of hopelessness
- Depression
- Fear and anxiety
- Avoidance
- Shame
- Distrust, anger, guilt, and shame
- Shock or denial
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- Self-doubt

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- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Inability to relax

**TIPS FOR COPING AND SELF CARE**

**Remember, you are not alone.** Help yourself and those around you in some simple ways:

**DO**
- Recognise and accept your feelings as normal responses to extreme circumstances.
- Reach out and make contact with others.
- Express your emotions.
- Allow yourself to mourn. You have the right to grieve this loss. Remember, crying can give relief.
- Express your emotions appropriately.
- Keep life as normal as possible after the acute grief.
- Get extra rest and set aside time to relax.
- Breathe slowly, deeply, and well. Relaxation begins with slow, deep breathing from your diaphragm.
- Eat regular balanced meals even if you don’t feel hungry.
- Be more careful around the home and on the road.
- Allow children to share in your grief.
- Let children talk about their emotions and express themselves through games and drawings.

**DON’T**
- Bottle up your feelings.
- Avoid talking about what has happened or what you are going through.
- Make major decisions or changes in your life.
- Depend on alcohol or drugs.
- Expect the memories to go away – they may stay with you for a long time to come.
- Forgive and forget.

**WHEN TO GET HELP**

**PTSD** develops in some people after they experience a traumatic event. Symptoms include vivid memories, anxiety and withdrawing from people and situations. These symptoms/reactions disappear in most people over time. However, in rare cases, symptoms may appear for several months or even years after the trauma. Some people with PTSD recover by themselves but others need professional help. It is normal for some of us to need professional help from others. You should seek professional help if you:

- Remain highly anxious, tense, confused, empty and exhausted after 4-6 weeks.
- Continue to feel numb even after a month.
- Have trouble expressing your feelings or relating to other people.
- Continue to have nightmares and poor sleep.
- Have no one to share your feelings with and feel the need to do so.
- Develop depression or have thoughts of self-harm.
- Suffer badly in your relationships or begin to develop sexual problems.
- Start being accident-prone.
- Begin to smoke or drink excessively or turn to drugs or other forms of relief.
- Continue to perform badly in your work.
- Worry that those around you are particularly vulnerable or not recovering satisfactorily.
- Experience chronic exhaustion as a helper.