



## How to Help Someone Who Has Experienced an Adverse Event

- Remain calm and be attentive to the person and their story.
- Listen carefully without interrupting or attempting to provide solutions.
- Reassure the person that they are safe. Do what is necessary to help them feel safe.
- Assess their ability to perform everyday tasks and provide help where needed.
- Don't take their anger or other emotions personally.
- Don't tell them they are "lucky it wasn't worse." These types of statements do not console traumatized people. Instead, express empathy for how difficult the event was, and let them know you want to understand and assist them.
- If the person doesn't improve over time, encourage them to contact mental health professionals such as the Employee Assistance Program

## You Have Experienced an Adverse Event

### Strong emotional and physical reactions

It's very common and quite normal for people to respond to an adverse or traumatic event with strong emotional and physical aftershocks. These stress reactions may appear immediately after the event or may appear hours or days later.

Here are some healthy ways to help you through these emotional and physical reactions:

- **Maintain your normal routines.** Structure can help you regain a sense of control in your life.
- **Give yourself permission to have a reaction.** Don't label yourself crazy or weak because you have a difficult time after a traumatic event.
- **Talk to safe people about your experience.** Share your feelings.
- **Reach out to co-workers who experienced the same event.** It may help you understand that you are not alone and that your response is normal.
- **Get plenty of rest.**
- **Do things that feel good to you.** Be self-nurturing.
- **Within the first 24-48 hours, physical activity** alternating with relaxation can alleviate some physical reactions.
- **Eat well-balanced and light meals.** Even if you don't feel like it.
- **Beware of numbing the pain** with overuse of drugs or alcohol.
- **Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks** are normal — don't try to fight them — they'll decrease over time and become less painful as you work through the event.

**If your reactions do not improve over time, or the symptoms interfere with your daily life, call the Employee Assistance Program for professional support.**

**Call 1.800.832.7733 or [eap@imail.org](mailto:eap@imail.org). All contacts are free and confidential.**