

Ways to support yourself through traumatic stress

- **Nominate and deal with feelings** as they come up, or they'll deal with you later.
- **Talk it out.** Connect with others such as friends or family.
- **Re-establish a routine**, there is support in the familiar.
- Help each other.
- **Appreciate** what you have accomplished.
- **Gentle exercise** such as walking can help reduce stress.
- **Relax:** try muscle relaxation techniques, deep breathing exercises and yoga.
- **Eat** regularly and eat nourishing foods.
- **Take time out** for you to do things you enjoy.
- Make short-term plans to keep you busy and interested.
- **Do not use drugs or alcohol;** avoid too much sugar and coffee.
- Remember it's OK to have feelings.
- Remember the symptoms will subside.
- If your progress is not to your satisfaction, **SEEK HELP.**

Who can help?

WEST KOOTENAY – BOUNDARY REGIONAL
Crisis Line 1-888-353-2273

SELKIRK TRAUMA ASSISTANCE TEAM (STAT)
Call any college campus or centre for assistance.

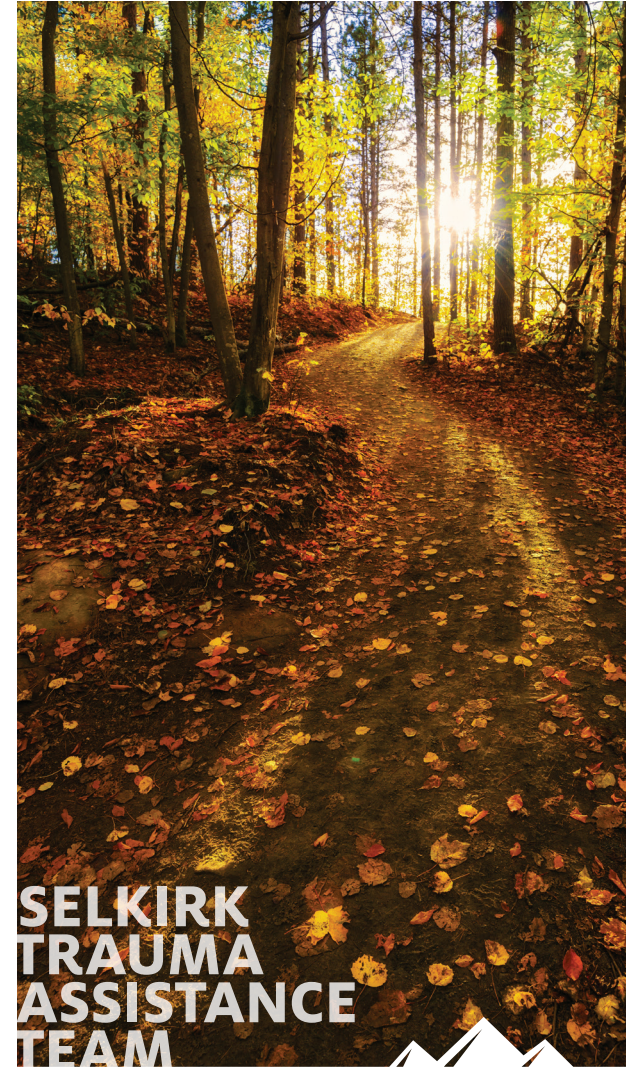
CASTLEGAR	250.365.7292
NELSON	250.352.6601
TRAIL	250.368.5236
GRAND FORKS	250.442.2704
KASLO	250.353.2618
NAKUSP	250.265.4077

Employees at Selkirk College can access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) by calling 1.800.387.4765.

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TEAM**

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMATIC STRESS

The impact of a traumatic or stressful event takes a toll on your mental and physical health. Fortunately, there are ways to support yourself and help is available.



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What is Traumatic Stress?

- A traumatic event is a jolt to our psychological systems.
- It is an event that we experience as sudden, unexpected, incomprehensible, shocking and personally upsetting, potentially resulting in emotional and physical trauma.
- Trauma experienced directly or indirectly can create powerful reactions.
- Research shows most individuals affected by a critical incident will experience at least some of the reactions listed in this brochure.
- Although unpleasant, these common reactions to a highly stressful event are normal.



Common Reactions to Traumatic Incidents

Symptoms may occur immediately or later and other stressors in an individual's life may well influence the process.

PHYSICAL

- Headaches, aches, pains
- Digestive problems (upset stomach, nausea)
- Loss of appetite
- Heart pounding
- Temporary hearing loss
- Temporary vision impairment
- Sleep disturbances (insomnia, nightmares)
- Sexual problems
- Dizziness, shaking, rubbery legs
- Fatigue, exhaustion

EMOTIONAL

- Anxiety, nervousness
- Denial, repression of feelings
- Guilt
- Anger
- Mood swings from giddiness to despair
- Loss of self-worth and self-confidence
- Grief
- Fear, unusual sense of vulnerability
- Helplessness
- Depression

COGNITIVE

- Disorientation
- Impaired thought processes
- Reduced judgement and memory
- Comprehension problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Loss of skills
- Inability to distinguish between trivial and important matters

BEHAVIOURAL

- Restlessness
- Withdrawal from family, friends, and colleagues
- Changes in reactions to others
- Changes in attitude to work
- Absent mindedness
- Increased number of mistakes
- Increased startle response
- Increased substance use

SUGGESTIONS FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY

- Listen carefully
- Spend time with traumatized person
- Offer your assistance
- Reassure them they are safe
- Listen, don't probe
- Don't make all their decisions for them
- Give them time
- Listen, listen and listen
- If you are unsure how the person you love is coping, please feel free to SEEK HELP

**REMEMBER:
IT'S THE SITUATION
THAT'S CRAZY,
NOT YOU.**

