

# Coping with a traumatic event

Some tragedies involve unthinkable acts of violence, which can be difficult to understand. We're here with support when you need it.

If you turn on the TV, pick up a newspaper or go on the internet, you'll likely find the news is full of stories that can evoke strong emotions. When violence strikes closer to home — like in your community — it may be even harder to process. Resilience is the ability to cope with your emotions and allows you to bounce back from tough situations.



## What are common responses to a traumatic event?

**Intense feelings.** Right after the event, you may feel shocked and overwhelmed. For a while, you may be jumpy, irritable or depressed. It may be hard to focus, concentrate or make decisions.

**Physical stress.** For example, headaches, dizziness and nausea. Keep an eye on these, as you may need to seek medical attention.

**Unexpected emotional reactions.** For example, hearing sirens or loud noises may cause strong emotions, reactions or grief. You may also have changes in sleeping or eating patterns.

**Strained relationships.** You may find yourself fighting with friends and loved ones. Or you may feel withdrawn and tend to keep to yourself. Try to get back to socializing with at least one or two family members or friends.

## Some tips for recovering from a traumatic event

**Ask for help.** Talk to others about your thoughts and feelings, if you feel comfortable doing so. Identify supportive and helpful people you can turn to when you need help or advice. Also try keeping a journal.

**Choose when to connect.** Disconnecting from media may give you time to focus on important things — like your health or stress management.

**Change your perspective.** Try to find something you've learned from the negative experience. It may be helpful to gain a broader perspective.

**Focus on your feelings.** Acknowledge your feelings as they occur to you. Self-awareness is an important first step in learning to manage your feelings.

**Practice healthy behaviors.** Get plenty of sleep, eat a well-balanced diet and get physical activity.

**Start a routine.** Get back in the habit of sleeping and eating at regular times. Consider taking up a new hobby or other activities that you enjoy.



While people may process trauma in different ways, there are a variety of resources available to yourself and loved ones on [optumwellbeing.com](https://optumwellbeing.com)

Our Critical Support Center offers emotional support resources and information when you need it most. Find a variety of topic areas including mental health, traumatic events, natural disasters, grief and loss, supporting adolescents in crisis, and more.



## Critical support when you need it

Visit [optumwellbeing.com](https://optumwellbeing.com) for additional critical support resources and information.



## Call for support at

Your Optum benefit offers support from specially trained, mental health specialists to help anyone who is overwhelmed, depressed, or searching for answers.



**This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.** This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Consult with your clinician for specific health care needs, treatment or medication. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and is subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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