

Most people will recover without needing professional help. But sometimes the stress can be too much to handle alone.

Ask for help if after a few weeks you:

- Feel depressed, fearful or very jumpy.
- Have a lot of nightmares or trouble sleeping.
- Are still thinking about the event all the time.
- Are not able to do your job.
- Use alcohol or drugs to get away from your problems.

If you are not able to take care of yourself or your children, or are thinking about suicide, seek help immediately.

Where to go if you need further help
Effective treatments are available for those who are struggling to cope or feel overwhelmed.

Talk to your GP in the first instance.

Specialist psychological support is also available from Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's 24 hour helpline, 'Cumbria Partnership Direct' on 0800 171 2333.
www.cumbriapartnership.nhs.uk.

Other help is also available from:

Your local Red Cross office
www.redcross.org.uk

Samaritans
0845 790 9090
www.samaritans.org.uk

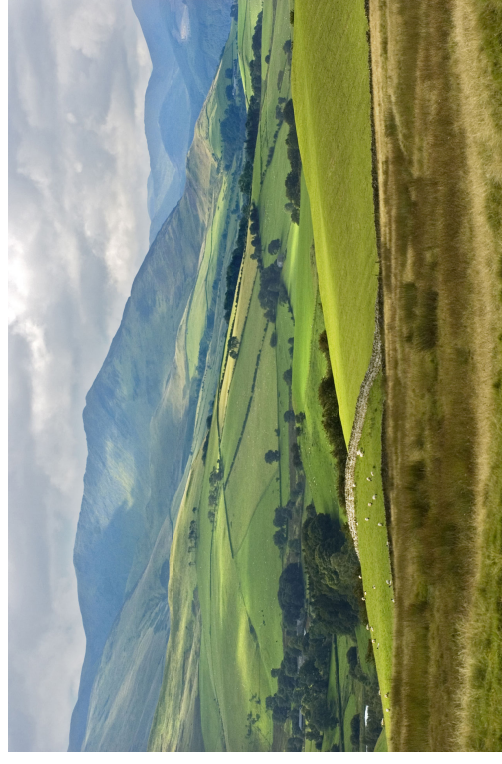
CRUSE Bereavement
07071 780761
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Childline 0800 1111

If you would like this information in an alternative format (large print, tape or Braille) or different language please ring the NHS Cumbria Public Engagement Unit on 01539 797878. Calls from TypeTalk users are welcome.



Cumbria Partnership 
NHS Foundation Trust



Introduction

Many of us have been affected by the recent shootings. Events like this are extremely rare. When they do happen, it is normal to have strong reactions. Some people will have lost someone close and will be having to come to terms with their loss.

Normal feelings and sensations you may experience

People who experienced or witnessed these events may feel dazed and even numb. They may also feel sad, angry, helpless, or anxious.

Some people may just feel happy to be alive or even guilty at surviving when others have died. Many people will have thoughts about how close they or their loved ones were to danger.

It is not unusual to have bad memories and flashbacks or bad dreams.

You may avoid places or people that remind you of the shootings. You may feel less safe in your home or community than before.

You may have a short temper and get angry easily. You may also experience physical reactions such as fast heartbeat, stomach churning, shaking and dizziness when reminded of the event.

You might have trouble sleeping, eating, or paying attention.

All these are normal reactions to stress.

This is your mind's way of trying to make sense of it all.

Reactions are likely to be strongest if you witnessed deaths and shootings, felt that your life was in danger, or if you were involved in the immediate care of victims. However as part of a close knit community, many of us will be affected in some way and have stress reactions, even if we were not directly involved.

It may take time for you to feel better and for your life to return to normal

You may have strong feelings right away. Or you may not notice a change until much later, perhaps after a few weeks or even months.

Stress can change how you act with your friends and family and can affect your performance at work or school. Give yourself time to recover.

These steps may help you feel better

A traumatic event can disrupt your life. There is no simple fix to make things better right away. There are things that can help you, your family, and our community to recover. If it feels right for you:

- Follow your normal routine as much as possible.
- Talk to your loved ones. Follow your own inclination as to how much to talk about your feelings, but don't bottle things up.
- Be careful not to skip meals or to overeat.
- Don't use alcohol or drugs to excess.
- Exercise and stay active.
- Accept help from family and friends.
- Help other people in your community, but don't take on too much.
- Take time to sleep and rest.
- Let children talk about their emotions and express themselves in play.

You know yourself and the people you love best, so you are best placed to decide what works for you.