



HOW TO COPE WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS

- Reach out – people do care.
- Talk to your friends, family and teachers - talking is the most healing medicine.
- Remember you are normal and having normal reactions – don't label yourself as crazy or mad.
- It is acceptable to cry.
- Spend time with people who have a positive influence on you.
- Sticking to your “normal” routine helps. Structure your time – keep busy.
- Take time out – go for a cycle or kick a football.
- Make as many daily decisions as possible. This will give you a feeling of control over your life, e.g. if someone asks you what you want to eat – answer them, even if you're not sure.
- Make a special effort to take care of yourself during this time. Try to get some extra sleep, eat nutritious foods and get some exercise, even if it is just a walk
- It is acceptable to smile.
- Some people find that writing or drawing is helpful. What about writing a note or letter to the family of the person who died or the person themselves?
- When the stress level is high there is a temptation to try to numb the feelings perhaps with alcohol and drugs, this complicates matters rather than bringing relief.
- If your feelings and reactions seem different from those of your friends, remember everyone reacts differently.
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal – don't try to fight them – they'll decrease over time and become less painful.
- Provide some balance to the negative things that have gone on by doing something special or fun for yourself. Think about something that makes you feel good. Then make it happen – like going to the cinema, listening to music, calling a friend, etc. Laughter is good medicine. Watch a funny movie or play a silly game with younger children to lighten your spirits.
- Be careful of using social media during times of grief. Traumatic events can generate a lot of commentary.

Useful websites: www.spunout.ie; www.youth.ie; www.reachout.com.au

Above all, realise that what you are experiencing is normal following a traumatic event. Be understanding of yourself and others.