Mental Health Center | mental health helpline | Diversity Hub

Post-webinar resource

How to take care of yourself and support others

Key guidance after a traumatic event – keep it and share it with others.

General tips

1 Limit excessive exposure to information

Constantly viewing graphic content does not help restore a sense of safety. It can increase agitation, anxiety, and helplessness.

2 Separate facts from imagination

In the first days after an event, a lot of unverified information and speculation circulates. Rely on trustworthy sources and notice when your mind jumps to worst-case scenarios – these are imaginings, not facts.

3 Reconnect with everyday life

Notice what is real right now, what remains within your control, and what you can focus on.

4 Don't be ashamed of your sensitivity

Feeling deeply affected by someone else's tragedy does not mean you are weak. However, it's important to help yourself regulate your emotions so that empathy does not lead to emotional overload.

5 When should you seek professional help, and where can you find it?

- suicidal thoughts accompanied by intent or a plan;
- a suicide attempt or self-harm;
- severe disorientation and loss of touch with reality;
- inability to take care of basic needs;
- severe agitation or behavior that poses a threat to oneself or others.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Mental Health HelpLine (support available in English)	**+48 881 203 715**
Crisis Intervention Center in Kraków, 24/7	**12 421 92 82**
Support Center for adults in mental crisis, 24/7	**800 70 2222**
Emotional support for adults	**116 123**
Helpline for children and young people	**116 111**
Immediate threat to life or health	**112**

Book a consultation →

How to support others

First and foremost, it's important to remember that **support isn't about "fixing" someone.** It's about being there for them as they regain a sense of safety and strength.

1 Be present

You don't need to have ready-made answers or solutions.

YOU CAN SAY

- *"I'm here if you need me."*
- *"You don't have to be alone right now."*
- *"We can just sit here together."*
- *"You don't have to explain anything to me."*

2 Listen, but don't force them to talk

If the person wants to talk, let them speak at their own pace. **Don't ask** for more details. Don't force them to recount the event from start to finish.

YOU CAN SAY

- *"If you want to talk about it, I'm here to listen. If not, that's okay, too."*

3 Don't downplay their emotions

✕ Avoid saying

- *"Don't think about it."*
- *"You have to be strong."*
- *"Others have it worse."*
- *"Everything will be okay."*
- *"Time heals all wounds."*

✓ Instead

- *"I understand that this has really affected you."*
- *"That's a really difficult experience."*
- *"You have every right to feel that way."*
- *"You don't have to figure everything out right now."*

4 Help them regain a sense of safety (if you feel up to it)

After a traumatic event, a person may feel as though the threat is still present. The following may be helpful:

- a quiet place
- limiting excessive news and graphic content
- contact with loved ones
- regular meals and rest
- a walk or gentle exercise
- performing simple daily activities

IF THE PERSON IS VERY AGITATED, YOU CAN CALMLY SAY

- *"Look around. We're here right now. We can pause for a moment and see what you need."*

5 Offer specific help

Sometimes it's easier to accept specific help than a general question like, "Do you need anything?" Offer to:

- prepare a meal
- go grocery shopping
- drive them home
- accompany them to an appointment
- help them run errands
- get in touch with loved ones

6 Don't expect a quick return to normal

The person may function differently for a while. They may be more irritable, withdrawn, tired, or need more space.

Don't judge them based on how they used to function.