

For many, this may be the first involvement with law enforcement or the judicial system. As with any situation, education and information about how the judicial system operates can assist the victim and their family in the reduction of trauma.

The Victim Assistance staff can inform you about who to talk with and can help you contact the appropriate people. Many researchers have concluded that it is important to the recovery of the victim that he/she becomes positively involved with the police and prosecution.

Remember, involvement in a traumatic event can produce upsetting responses such as disturbed sleep, diminished appetite, and difficulty concentrating. These responses will likely subside with time.

A strong emotional response to a traumatic event is not abnormal. However, if the victim feels he/she is not healing or is still feeling overwhelmed by what happened, it may be good to at least consult with an experienced counselor who will be able to assess the severity of the symptoms, provide some feedback or suggestions and give appropriate directions. Often, your employer or health insurance carrier can assist you in identifying a counselor or mental health provider.

Resource and Referral Information

Crisis Hotline

602-222-9444

Teen Lifeline (Teen Crisis Hotline)

(602) 248-TEEN (8336)

Domestic Violence Shelter Screening

480-890-3039

Jewish Family & Children Services (Counseling)

(623) 234-9811

Catholic Social Services (Counseling)

602.749.4405

A New Leaf (Counseling)

623-934-1991

EMPACT

(480) 784-1500

Community Information & Referral

211

***El Mirage Police Department
Victim Assistance Unit
12401 W Cinnabar Ave
El Mirage, AZ 85335
623-500-3090
vau@cityofelmirage.org***

Coping With Trauma

**City of El Mirage
Police Department**

Victim Assistance Unit



What is a traumatic event?

Sometimes in life we find ourselves experiencing acute stress following a traumatic event. A traumatic event is an experience when a person sees or learns about a situation that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury of harm to oneself or others.

- Physical Attack
- Domestic Violence
- Serious Injury to Self or Others
- Witness to an Accident or Injury
- Threats of, or Act of Sexual Assault
- Told about the Unexpected Death of a Loved One
- Any Trauma Where A Child is Involved

Post-Traumatic Stress:

Post-traumatic stress reactions are physical, emotional and mental responses that may occur in persons who have been victims of particularly threatening or disorienting events. Not all victims react in the same way or with the same intensity.

Common short and long term physical symptoms of post-traumatic stress may include:

- Nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Headaches
- Skin rashes
- Lack of energy
- Weight loss or gain
- Hyperventilation
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Rapid pulse

What are some mental and emotional responses to traumatic events?

- Embarrassment
- Feelings of guilt
- Intrusive thinking
- Nightmares
- Mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness or memory lapses
- Difficulty showing emotion
- Inability to make decisions
- Disinterest in previously valued activities
- Exaggerated startle reflex

What Can You Do for Yourself?

There are many things you can do to cope with traumatic events such as:

- Understand that your symptoms may be normal, especially right after the trauma.
- Keep to your usual routine.
- Take the time to resolve day-to-day conflicts so they do not add to your stress.
- Do not shy away from situations, people and places that remind you of the trauma.
- Find ways to relax and be kind to yourself.
- Turn to family, friends, and clergy person for support, and talk about your experiences and feelings with them.
- Participate in leisure and recreational activities.

- Recognize that you cannot control everything.
- Recognize the need for trained help and call a local mental health center.
- Refrain from alcohol or other substances. These tend to numb the feelings and may increase recovery time.

What Can You Do for Your Child?

- Let your child know that it is okay to feel upset when something bad or scary happens.
- Encourage your child to express feelings and thoughts without making judgments.
- Return to daily routines.

What can you do for a friend/family that has experienced a traumatic event?

- Allow the person to talk and express their feelings.
- Be encouraging but not pushy (do not try and fix the problem).
- Offer to help; run errands, drop off meals, etc.
- Call and check on them periodically. Often persons will withdraw and will not reach out when help is needed.
- If you are concerned for a friend or loved one, contact a mental health professional or a crisis line to obtain assistance.

If things don't seem to be getting better within a few weeks, consider seeking outside resources for support.