

Consumer Handout | Canberra Health Services

Following road trauma

Common reactions after road trauma

Emotional reactions

After a road accident, you might feel many different emotions. These can include:

- shock or disbelief
- sadness or fear
- guilt or anger
- shame
- feeling overwhelmed or powerless
- you may also feel numb, grateful or relieved.

Physical reactions

Your body might react in these ways:

- shaking or sweating
- breathing fast
- fast heartbeat
- upset stomach
- crying
- trouble sleeping
- feeling nauseous, dizzy, tired and exhausted
- headaches.

Mental and emotional reactions

You might:

- keep thinking about the crash
- avoid driving or being in cars
- have flashbacks (feel like it's happening again)
- sleep or eat differently
- find it hard to focus
- get scared easily
- drink more alcohol
- think badly about yourself.

What can help?

These are things you can do to feel better

- Know that you went through something very stressful., Give yourself time to heal.
- Let yourself feel your emotions. These feelings will usually get better over time.
- Try to keep your normal routine. If you need time off work or school, plan your day with times for eating, sleeping, exercise and time with others.
- Don't feel guilty if you have fun or feel happy. It is okay to enjoy life again.
- Try not to use alcohol or drugs to block your feelings. If you can't sleep, talk to your doctor or read the factsheet 'Coping with Sleep Problems After Road Trauma'.
- Talk to people who care about you. Being with family and friends is vital to recovery. Ask for help when you need it.
- Talk to someone you trust. You can also talk to a professional counsellor.
- You might feel upset by things that remind you of the accident. Try to spend less time watching or listening to the news or on social media.

Professional support

You may face ongoing challenges on how an event has impacted you.

You can get help from your doctor (GP), an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counsellor through your work or a counsellor through your Third-Party insurer.

Trauma Support Services are available on the NSW State Insurance Regulatory Authority website - sira.nsw.gov.au/theres-been-an-injury/what-to-do-first/motor-accidents/trauma-support-service

Support services

- ACT Trauma Service - (02) 5124 3293 ACTTraumaService@act.gov.au
- Canberra Hospital Social Work Department - (02) 5124 2316
acthealthtchsocialwork@act.gov.au
- Coroners Counselling Service - racr.org.au 1300 364 277
- Grief Line - griefline.org.au/ 1300 845 745
- Lifeline - <https://www.lifeline.org.au/> 13 11 14

For more information scan the QR code or go to:

<https://www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/resources/health-information-sheets-search?collection=actssict%7Esp-information-sheet-finder&query=&f.Categories%7Ccategories=Emergency+and+trauma>





Acknowledgement of Country

Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and contribution to the life of this region.



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