You may find this leaflet helpful if you have been involved in, or affected by, a traumatic incident, in particular the recent events in Westminster.

It provides information on how you may expect to feel in the days and months ahead, and to help you understand and have more control over your experience.

**Coping with stress following a major incident**

**Where to find more help?**

Contact your GP or NHS111 about possible symptoms of anxiety, depression, or post traumatic disorder, visit NHS Choices - www.NHS.uk or call the Samaritans on 08457 90 90 90

**More information on post trauma reactions**

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/
healthadvice/problemsdisorders/
posttraumaticstressdisorder.aspx

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Post-traumatic-
stress-disorder/Pages/Treatment.aspx

www.gov.uk/guidance/westminster-attack-
march-2017-support-for-people-affected

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**Do:**

- Take time out to get sufficient sleep (your normal amount), rest and relax, and eat regularly and healthily.
- Tell people what you need. Talk to people you trust. You don’t have to tell everyone everything but telling nobody anything is often unhelpful.
- Take care at home or when driving or riding - accidents are more common after a traumatic or stressful event.
- Try to reduce outside demands on you and don’t take on extra responsibilities for the time being.
- Make time to go to a place where you feel safe and calmly go over what happened in your mind. Don’t force yourself to do this if the feelings are too strong at the moment.

**Don’t:**

- Bottle up these feelings. Think whether it would be helpful to talk about them with somebody you trust. The memories may not disappear straight away.
- Get embarrassed by your feelings and thoughts, or those of others. They are normal reactions to a very stressful event.
- Avoid people you trust.
In addition, if a child has witnessed or experienced a traumatic event it is quite natural for them to be stressed. They may be very upset and/or frightened. This should not usually last beyond four weeks.

If symptoms of being very upset continue beyond four weeks, this may indicate Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and it is important to seek help for your child.

These are typical reactions after a traumatic event:

- Nightmares.
- Memories or pictures of the event unexpectedly popping into their mind.
- Feeling as if it is actually happening again.
- Playing or drawing about the event time and time again.
- Not wanting to think or talk about the event.
- Avoiding anything that might remind them of the event.
- Getting angry or upset more easily.
- Not being able to concentrate.
- Not being able to sleep.
- Being more jumpy and being on the lookout for danger.

What to look for:

Children experiencing PTSD might show that they think differently either about themselves or other people. They might:

- Blame themselves or show lowered self-esteem.
- Describe thinking that they are a bad person or talk about thoughts of deserving bad things to happen to them.
- Show less trust in other people and be less able to experience a sense of safety.
- Experience overwhelming feelings in the form of shame, sadness and fear.

What to do:

If you have any concerns about your child, it is important to seek help via your GP. There are some very effective treatments including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for children and young people experiencing the effects of trauma.