



Severe reactions that call for immediate attention and/or intervention and/or referral include if the person:

- Is unable to sleep for a week or more and is confused or disorientated;
- Is unable to function normally and care for themselves or their family (e.g. not eating or keeping clean);
- Has lost control over their behaviour and is unpredictable or destructive;
- Threatens to harm themselves or others;
- Starts excessive or out-of-the-ordinary use of drugs or alcohol;
- Presents chronic health conditions which need specialised support;
- Presents symptoms of mental health disorders.

Remember that you're not alone and that there are people and institutions available to help.



**Migrants,
Refugees
and
Asylum
Seekers**



Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Conflict, persecution and violence affect millions of people around the world, forcing them to uproot.

When involved in an incident like this, we can react in different ways. Most of us have feelings and emotions, changing through time, although we don't always respond the same. Most of us adapt to the traumatic event in order to protect our own and other's lives:

We have a survival response!

Many times, we think that the actions we took during the situation don't rise up to our own and other's expectations. **THIS IS NORMAL!**

What can you do to help yourself?

- Recognise that this is a challenging time, but it is one that you can manage. Accept the uncertainty of the times ahead. You have tackled other hardships at other times in your life. Use the skills and resources that you have. Try to stay hopeful and positive.
- Recognise that you are not alone in what you are experiencing or feeling. There are many people feeling the way you are today.
- Try to protect yourself and your family from tough images/scenarios (destroyed places, injured people, e.g.).
- Allow yourself and your children to mourn any losses you have experienced. Try to be patient with changes in how you are feeling. These are a natural reaction to what you are going through.

- Look after yourself as much as possible and try to rest when you can. If there are other trusted adults around you, try to share childcare responsibilities throughout the day so each of you has some time to rest or work.
- Try to establish and maintain structure and routines, such as regular bedtimes.
- Try to keep yourself occupied with chores, work, and activities.
- Try to talk about your worries with adults that you trust, rather than talking to children about the things that are upsetting you.
- Maintain any spiritual, religious, or cultural activities that provide you and your family with comfort.
- Avoid any negative coping behaviours such as overeating, excessive gaming, or drinking alcohol to excess, as these will increase your stress levels and make worsen your situation in the long run.
- Remember that looking after yourself will help make you stronger and more able to look after the people you need to care for.

What might you be experiencing?

Physical

- Problems with sleeping
- Rapid heart rate
- Shaking
- Stomach problems like diarrhea or nausea
- Feeling very tired
- Muscle tremors and tension
- Back and neck pain due to muscle tension
- Headaches
- Inability to relax and rest

Behavioral

- Crying
- Hyper-alertness
- Laughing uncontrollably
- Immobile
- Over-eating or under-eating
- Unable to keep still
- Withdrawal and isolation

Emotional

- Fear
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Mood swings: feeling happy one moment and sad the next moment
- Being quickly irritated
- Feeling over-emotional

Cognitive

- Feeling confused
- Disorganised thoughts
- Difficult making decisions
- Dreams or nightmares
- Intrusive and involuntary thoughts

Spiritual

- Feelings of emptiness
- Loss of meaning
- Feeling discouraged and loss of hope
- Increasingly negative about life
- Doubt
- Anger at God
- Alienation and loss of sense of connection

People can react differently than others, either due to the excessive stress they are feeling, or due to other influential factors, such as previous experiences, levels of perceived threat or danger, or because of their chosen coping strategies.

When reactions are more severe, they interfere with daily functioning and can lead to harm. It is important to be able to identify such reactions and ask for help.