

Often when we experience something challenging, i.e. the loss of a loved one, illness, ending of relationship, changes at work and when we look past our own lives to the rest of the world, it seems we feel alone, as if the world is going about its daily business oblivious to our own experience.



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**MOVING
FORWARD**

**UNDERSTANDING
RESILIENCE & TOLERANCE**

Here are a few typical or 'normal' reactions to a stressful event:

- Having no reaction at all
- Shock, disbelief and denial
- Anger at either ourselves, another, an institution or an external force e.g. mother nature
- Helplessness or feeling victimised
- A sense of loss of control
- Sadness at loss of either the perception of security or valued possessions
- Physical symptoms of stress such as headaches, body aches, upset tummy, tiredness, tightness in the chest
- Fear of a recurrence which could arouse feelings of panic or vulnerability
- Behaving in a way that is different to how you would normally e.g. social withdrawal, irritability, angry outbursts

These are just some examples and if you find your reaction different to any of the above, know this is just as 'normal'. Our reactions and responses to traumatic events can be varied but what we can all hold in common is the desire and commitment to move forward.

Ways in which you can support yourself are simple and fun. Consider some of these:

- Share your thoughts and feelings with people you can talk to.
- Accept the support and care of people when they offer it to you.
- Take care of your physical wellbeing by eating well, keeping yourself hydrated, exercising regularly and resting when you need to. There is a very important link between physical well-being and emotional resilience.
- Return to routines as soon as possible e.g. even if you are not hungry sit down for a meal when you would normally do so; go for a walk you would usually do.
- Manage your use of alcohol – any respite it may offer is temporary and will hinder any real progress
- Notice what has not changed and is still the same in your life
- Seek professional support if your worry or stress levels are not starting to dissipate – often just talking to someone who is neutral and trained is enough to afford you the space to get a better perspective.

All of these are sensible coping mechanisms but life is more than just coping, it is about living life well and to your fullest potential.

Consider the following strategies and how you could adopt them as part of your own approach to moving forward:

Control

Identify a sense of purpose for the overall direction of your life, one that meets your core values and needs and assume control of what you can do to achieve this.

Commitment

Renew your commitment to your work, interests, family and social network. They are the substance of your daily life and deserve your focus and energy.

Challenge

Look at any changes that have arisen from recent events as a potential positive rather than automatic threat.

Fun and relaxation

Consider that you are entitled to have fun and relaxation as part of your everyday life – you did before this challenge. So make a commitment to your well-being by planning in times for the activities you most enjoy with the people you most love.

Finally everything in life is transient, both the best and worse moments.

The changes with all its implications for ourselves, are not static and will moderate with time.

Life could be better if we decide it can be so. At the very least, consider this as a framework when you plan where to next.