

**VICTIM
SUPPORT**

Coping with trauma



Easy Read Version

Coping with trauma



This booklet can help if you have been a victim of sexual assault, abuse or violence.



You may be feeling lots of different things such as shame, guilt, sadness, anxiety and many others.



We want to help you get control over these feelings.

We will give you some tools to help you cope with how you feel about yourself.

We will also tell you how to get help if you are struggling.

What is trauma?



Trauma is when you have gone through frightening, stressful or upsetting things like sexual assault or rape.



It can also be because of many other things like a bad accident, illness or someone close to you dying.



Trauma can affect your emotional and mental wellbeing.

Wellbeing is all the things that keep you happy and healthy.



It can cause post traumatic stress disorder.

This is when you relive what has happened to you through nightmares and flashbacks.



Trauma can make you feel many different things.

These include anger, sadness, guilt and shame.



It can affect the way you think about yourself and others.

For example you may not trust people because you think that everyone is going to hurt you.



You might have problems sleeping and find it difficult to concentrate.



It's important to remember that these are all common and normal reactions to have.

Coping with trauma



There are many things you can try that might help you to cope with trauma.

You could try:

- Talking to someone you trust like a family member, friend or support worker. Tell them what you are feeling and going through
- Try writing down what you are feeling and thinking. Ask someone to help if you need to
- Listen to music, or try some arts and crafts to express how you are feeling
- Try self-defence classes like karate or judo. Look on the internet for classes near you or there may be some online ones you could do. This might make you feel more confident
- Get help from a professional such as a therapist or find a support group
- Remember to take care of yourself and your needs.



What are flashbacks?



Flashbacks are memories of things that have happened to you in the past.

You might have flashbacks about your abuse which can be very upsetting.

It can make you feel like you are reliving the trauma.



Flashbacks can be triggered by lots of different things.

It could be a sound, a taste or something you touch.



It's important to know what your warning signs and triggers are.

This will help you to feel more in control.

Writing them down might help you to recognise them.

What are panic attacks?



Panic attacks are when you have sudden feelings of panic or fear.

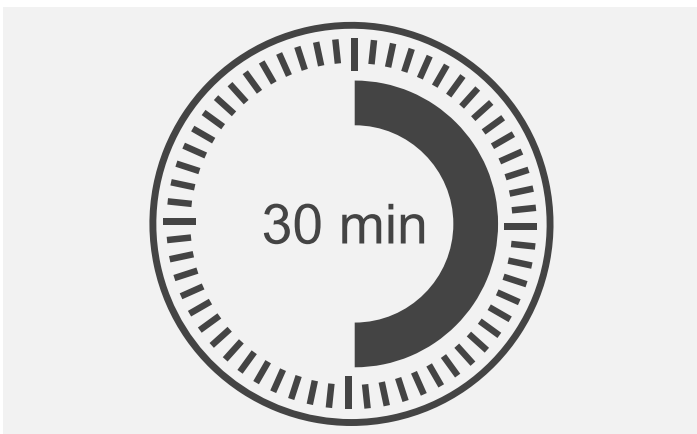
It is our body's response to stressful or dangerous situations.

They can be very frightening and upsetting but they are not dangerous.



Some of the symptoms are:

- Your heart beating very fast
- Feeling faint
- Sweating
- Feeling short of breath
- Feeling sick



They can start very quickly and can last as long as 30 minutes.

Finding out what triggers a panic attack can help you to manage them.

Coping with flashbacks and panic attacks



There are lots of different things you can do to help you cope with a panic attack or flashback.



Try saying out loud “I’m having a panic attack” “or I’m having a flashback”.



Stamp your feet, clap your hands and move your body.

Show yourself that you can still move.



Breathe slowly in and out and count to five.

Go to a place where you feel safe.

Check your senses

Think about the things you can:



Feel



Taste



Hear



Smell



See

This should help you to feel calmer.

What is disassociation?



This is when your mind is somewhere else and not in the present.

It is a way of coping for people who have survived trauma.



You might have gaps in your life where you can't remember anything that happened.



You might not remember things that happened when you were a child.



You may travel to places you didn't plan to go to or take on a new identity, such as being someone else.

Coping with disassociation

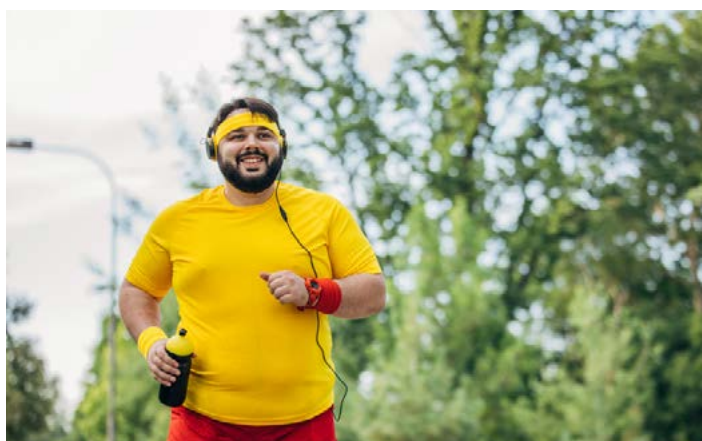


Keep a diary.

Write down the things that happen and keep a note of when you disassociate.



Talk to someone or join a support group.



Take care of yourself.

Eat healthily and get lots of sleep and try to exercise.



Think of being in a safe place.

Check your senses by doing the exercise on the page before this.

Getting help



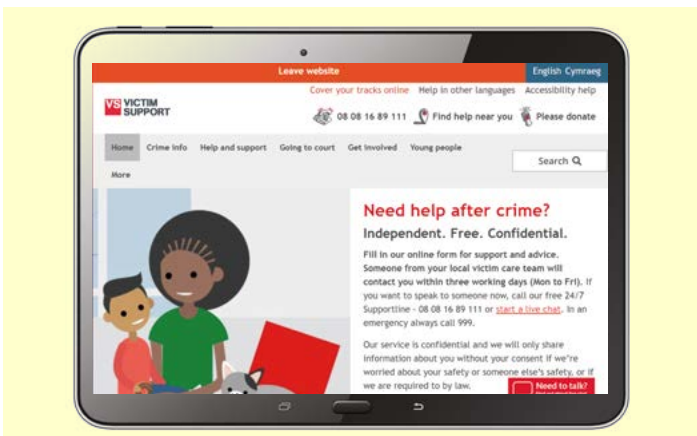
We are an independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.



For more information and support contact us by:

Calling Supportline 08 08 16 89 111

Using Next Generation Text
(add 18001 before any of our phone numbers.)



Online at www.victimsupport.org.uk

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