



THE CONSORTIUM ON TRAUMA,  
ILLNESS, AND GRIEF IN SCHOOLS

## Self-Care and Coping Strategies After a Traumatic Event

*After a traumatic event, you may experience all kinds of reactions in what you think, how you feel, and/or how you behave. Here are some ideas to help you cope with these reactions.*

- ☞ Remind yourself that you're normal and having normal reactions to a not normal event.
- ☞ Give yourself permission to feel rotten. Sharing your feelings can help.
- ☞ Eat well-balanced and regular meals. If you're struggling to eat, start with small amounts of plain foods.
- ☞ Get plenty of rest.
- ☞ Exercise – it can help alleviate some of the physical symptoms you may be feeling.
- ☞ Avoid caffeine, especially if you're having trouble sleeping.
- ☞ Structure your time and set priorities. Maintain your basic normal routine but give yourself permission to skip the extras for a while.
- ☞ Making small daily decisions reasserts your sense of control.

- ☞ Avoid making any big life changes for a while.
- ☞ Be aware of numbing your pain with overuse of alcohol or drugs.
- ☞ It's normal to have recurring thoughts or feelings about the incident. They will decrease over time.
- ☞ Talk to others – it is the most healing medicine.
- ☞ Do things you enjoy: watch a movie, read, walk, take mini breaks for yourself
- ☞ Set limits with others when you don't feel like talking. You don't have to discuss the incident or your feelings when you don't want to.
- ☞ Writing or journaling your feelings can help with sleepless nights or bad dreams.
- ☞ Ask for help when you need it whether it be from family, friends, clergy, EAP at work, or other professional assistance.