

Advice for Patients Being Discharged Following an Accident or Assault

Emergency Department

This leaflet describes common emotional reactions which people may experience after being involved in or witnessing an accident or assault. If you are worried or have any further questions, please speak to your GP.

Emotional reactions

You may notice:

- Feeling tearful or upset
- Feeling anxious, on edge or jumpy
- Feeling irritable or angry
- Poor sleep or loss of appetite
- Having poor concentration
- Having thoughts, memories or 'pictures' about what happened come into your mind
- Having dreams about what happened or nightmares
- Feeling disoriented or that things do not feel real
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Not wanting to talk about what happened.

These reactions are common in the first four weeks following the traumatic event. They tend to settle down naturally in the following days and weeks and they tend to become less frequent and less distressing over time.

These reactions are not a sign that you are losing control or not coping. They are part of the adjustment process.

What can I do?

Look after yourself:

- Remind yourself that what you are feeling is common and understandable given what you have experienced.
- Remind yourself that it can take some time for thoughts and feelings to settle down.
- If you know what kind of support you want from friends or family then let them know.

- Try to keep to your usual routine, including eating regular meals and keeping a regular time that you get up and go to bed.
- Try to spend time doing activities you have a chance of enjoying or finding relaxing.
- Avoid using alcohol or non-prescription drugs to manage your mood.
- Watch your intake of caffeinated drinks as caffeine can mimic sensations of anxiety and can affect sleep.
- Talk about your feelings and what happened in your own time.
- Speak to your local faith leader if you want religious or spiritual support.
- Speak to your GP if you have questions or concerns about how you are feeling.

What next?

If after one month you are bothered by any of the above reactions or by changes to your mood that are getting in the way of everyday life, then please speak to your GP. Your GP will be able to give advice on what can help and may suggest a referral to your local psychology service for a short course of talking therapy.

If you live in England and are aged 18 or over, you can access NHS Talking Therapies Service which can provide psychological support around anxiety, depression and trauma. Your GP can refer you or you can refer yourself directly without a referral.

Find your NHS Talking Therapy Service:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-nhs-talking-therapies-service>

Useful sources of information

NHS England

Help and support after a traumatic event

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/our-work/help-and-support/>

Royal College of Psychiatrists

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsanddisorders/posttraumaticstressdisorder.aspx>

NHS UK

Stress, anxiety and depression

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/treatment/>

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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