



# COMMUNITY TRAUMA RESPONSE TEAM

## NEXT STEPS AFTER THE UNEXPECTED LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

### WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Psychological trauma is an emotional or behavioral response to disturbing or stressful events. Examples of such events could include being assaulted, losing something or someone of significance, surviving a natural disaster or being involved in a traffic accident. Observing a disturbing event or learning that a loved one has been involved in a tragic incident can also traumatize a person. Regardless of the source, it is important to understand an event that may seem ordinary to one person may be traumatic for another. It is also important to recognize that trauma can be acute, resulting from a single event and it can also result from repeated exposure to stressful events. Another form of trauma is vicarious trauma, which can be experienced by those who are in close contact with someone who has been traumatized, such as a family member or caregiver.

### HOW DOES TRAUMA IMPACT A PERSON?

Traumatic events leave an imprint on our brains, and that imprint can cause short-term and long-term reactions in a person. While reactions vary, many people will re-experience the event via memories, flashbacks or nightmares. These can be vivid, frequent and sometimes difficult to control. Another common reaction is increased feelings of anxiety or fear. Other reactions can be physical, such as digestive problems, fatigue or hyperarousal. There are a number of emotional and physical responses to trauma, but these are some of the most common. Left unresolved, psychological trauma can result in the manifestation of other health problems.

### HOW DOES A PERSON RECOVER FROM A TRAUMATIC EVENT?

First, it is important to understand that experiencing unpleasant and unwelcomed reactions after a traumatic event is normal and to be expected. These reactions are normal responses to abnormal events. We all have different life experiences and we develop different coping skills. Some people will see reactions naturally start to subside in a short period of time while others may experience prolonged reactions to the event. A common fear is that a person will develop PTSD after a traumatic event. PTSD is not automatic. In fact, according to the CDC, about 50% of those with PTSD recover within 3 months without treatment. Studies have also shown a correlation with PTSD and avoidance behaviors. It is best to avoid ignoring or suppressing your thoughts and feelings. To help maintain your mental health, connect with trusted people in your life and discuss thoughts and feelings. Stick to your routine; don't avoid reminders (people, places, etc) of the event. If/when reactions become prolonged, severe or start to interfere with your everyday life, it may be an indication that professional help is warranted. There are many effective treatments available to and recovery IS possible. Much like grief, recovery from trauma cannot be rushed; however, time is a critical component in recovering from a traumatic event. Another key to recovery is taking healthy steps in the right direction as soon as possible. That is the primary reason that the CTRT exists. We are here to help you create a plan that will build resilience & promote recovery. Pain may be inevitable in life, but together we can minimize suffering.

### CONTACT US

Again, please know that if you have questions, concerns or just need someone to talk to, we are here for you. We also welcome your feedback on our services.