

Advice for adults and parents 1: Look after yourself

- Be kind to yourself and others through this stage. We will all react differently to traumatic events – some people will respond instantly and overtly (such as crying loudly), others will go quiet and withdraw (disassociation), yet others will get irritable or hyperactive.
- While we hear about the five stages of the grief cycle (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance), it is not really as linear or clear-cut as that. The stages might be shortened, lengthened, in any order, or even miss out steps. Recognise, accept and be patient with how you and others are feeling as you all work through your grief.
- Acknowledge what has happened – both negative and positive. For example, it was horrific but it showed the endurance of the human spirit.
- Do what works for you – talking to someone, writing your feelings down, expressing your fears creatively, prayer or contemplation, doing something practical, helping others, going for a walk by yourself, or to gatherings to be with others.
- Recognise how you react to such events and aim to get some level of control, that is, of whatever you can control; sustain your supportive relationships; have a plan to move forward and try to distract yourself from going over and over distressing things.
- Find a way to deal with what the event might bring up – from the past, how it affects you now, or its possible lingering effects. If it begins to have a serious impact on your everyday functioning or relationships **seek help**.
- Look at those around you to see how others might be also be affected and what support or comfort you might be able to give them. Take care, because others might not always want your help so don't take it personally. Know when to step forward and also when to step back.
- Many people not in the midst of the situation want to do something to help. This is a natural human reaction. However, your good intentions could have unintended consequences, such as providing goods that are not needed nor appropriate, or arriving in a situation that puts you or others in danger. If unsure, donate or raise funds for an approved organisation.