

# Emotional Safety after a Violent Incident

## Speak to friends

Call them and discuss what happened. It's positive to talk about things rather than deny and hide what has happened. Don't think you are being a burden to them by wanting to talk, they will understand. You'll be surprised by how supportive the right friends or family members can be in challenging times.

## Call your support worker

If things are particularly rocky for you call the family violence service that is supporting you and ask for specific support and advice from your worker.

## Write things down

There will be many things to organise if you have court and other services to see, so write things down or ask friends or your worker to remind you. It's very easy to forget things when you are under such stress.

## Rely on your safety plan

Put all the things in your safety plan into place as soon as possible. This will boost your confidence and you will know you are secure in the house.

Put all the things in the children's safety plan into place. This will help them to feel safe and they will get the message that the violence will now stop.

## Have a friend stay for awhile

Have a friend, neighbour or relative stay in the house with you if this feels right for you, just until life gets back to normal.

## Keep to your daily routine

As much as possible, try to keep to your normal routine with the children. This will make them feel more secure and you will feel good because you are doing the daily things that make your family strong and happy.

## Talk to a counsellor

Talk to a counsellor as soon after the incident as possible. The WASH House has a counsellor or staff who you can see very quickly if necessary.

Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hrs a day. There is no cost and you can call from home at any time **13 11 14**

## Do the things that make you feel good

Make yourself a cup of tea and calm yourself down when you notice the wheels are beginning to spin. If you find yourself being judgmental of yourself, the children or others, and your head is going a million miles an hour, stop for a moment and just breathe. Remind yourself that you are dealing with a really difficult situation, you are taking action to make things better and you are coping as best you can considering the circumstances.



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Listen to your favourite music or cook something special for yourself and the children. At these times it's important to distract yourself from the old damaging thoughts.

Some women like to clean the house when they feel anxious as this gives them a feeling of order. Others can't concentrate on anything and like to watch TV or eat chocolate to calm themselves. Watching funny DVDs, or listening to the radio can help – choose something that feels right for you.

It really doesn't matter how you make yourself feel good, just know things will change with time and you will not feel this way forever. By being gentle and accepting of yourself at this time, you'll find you will heal quicker.

### **Re-establishing emotional balance**

Don't try and sort it all out yourself, give yourself time as you will go through a range of feelings after the incident and during the separation from your ex-partner. Remember you were together for a period of time and now life is changing and good changes take their own time.

### **Friendship & support**

Many women find that after it's all over they have very few friends or support systems left. Isolation from others was a way the ex-partner was able to keep control of them. Now that you have your independence back, reach out and join with others again. Even though you may feel wounded and shy, people love to support others when they can, so just ask if you can join in.

### **Use the WASH House as a resource**

The WASH House has ongoing women's groups and from time to time outings that are cost free and fun. You can meet new friends here and plug into a great new support system when you are ready.

Most areas will have community and neighbourhood centres or a women's health centre that also offer free or low cost activities.