



# Information about Mental Health Crisis in adults and children

When people have been exposed to violent events, which would be shocking to any person, it is normal to experience a number of reactions.

## ADULTS

### Common psychological reactions

- Agitation and restlessness
- Anxiety reactions, often accompanied by body reactions such as tremors, sweating and heart palpitations
- Recurring thoughts of the traumatic event both during the day and at night
- Feeling of unreality/emptiness
- Nightmares
- Elation/lack of initiative
- Self-reproach
- Guilt
- Crying
- Anger/irritability

### Common body reactions

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Sleep disturbances

## CHILDREN

Children react to what they have witnessed. Children's feelings and thoughts do not always show, and they are not always able to tell what they have witnessed.

As with adults, both psychological and body reactions can be observed in children:

### Common reactions with children

- Change in behaviour
- Rapid changes in mood
- Sadness
- Irritability and anger
- Anxiety
- Isolation
- Sleep disturbances
- Stomach aches or headaches
- Concentration problems

## What you can do yourself

It is very common to feel the need to tell about the traumatic event again and again. It is a good way of coping with the event. It is thus a good idea to ask one's family, friends, neighbours or colleagues to listen.

Many will be able to cope with the traumatic event with the support of family and friends.

If possible, it is worthwhile to talk to other people, who were involved in the same event about what happened to them and the reactions they have experienced.

Children need to be properly informed - in short and simple terms about what has happened and what is going to happen. Children tend to be very "considerate" of the adults, for example if the adults are sad. This can lead to children making their own - often faulty - conclusions, instead of asking for explanations. In situations of distress, children depend on adults they know and become insecure, if the adults are not there.

It is appropriate for children to see that the adults are sad. This can make it easier for both children and adults to discuss why they are sad.

If you are very affected by the situation yourself, stay with the child/children and let another adult support you.

## Where and when to seek help?

Both children and adults might need professional help and support, if the reactions to the event become increasingly aggravating or lasting. People can always consult their GP, who can provide a referral to a psychologist or psychiatrist.

### Acute cases:

Outside of the GP's office hours, call 1813 to be referred to a psychiatric emergency.

Further information on psychiatric emergencies:  
[www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/akut](http://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/akut) or use the QR-code to the right.

Emergencies are open 24 hours unless otherwise stated.

