

## Medical Services

Family Doctors may be of help. Some short term medical treatment may be all that is needed to get you on the path to recovery. The service is free and many doctors have excellent networks and resources if additional support is needed. Psychiatrists can also be helpful. You will need a referral from your family doctor to see a psychiatrist but there may be a long waiting list. These services are free and psychiatrists can prescribe medications which may assist your recovery.



## Psychological Support

Psychologists, Therapists or Counsellors are often of great assistance to those persons who have been through a traumatic event. Although there is a cost, the services are usually short-term and well worth it.

Try to find a professional who has had trauma training. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is one of the therapies found to be most effective for treating persons who have been involved in a traumatic event.

## Worksafe BC:

If you are in British Columbia and you have been involved in a workplace related trauma, and if your employer does not provide psychosocial support, Worksafe BC will provide you and your colleagues with psychosocial support at no cost to your employer.

If you have been affected by a traumatic event arising out of and in the course of your employment and if you have been diagnosed by a psychiatrist or psychologist with post-trauma stress you may be eligible for compensation from Worksafe BC.

## Police and RCMP Victim Services

If you have been involved in a MCI where a crime was committed, you can reach out to Victim Services for support immediately after the MCI and if there are to be court procedures, Victim Services will support you throughout the process. They can be accessed through your local police detachment or provincially.

## Crisis and Mental Health Lines

Crisis and Mental Health Lines are available in all provinces and territories. They are operational 24 hours a day and have trained personnel ready to talk and listen. They also can connect you with local support services and resources.

## Faith-Based Services

Pastors, rabbis, priests, imams and other faith-based leaders can provide you and your family with support. Even if you have not been practicing your faith on a regular basis, reaching out to faith-based leaders can bring comfort and help you to find meaning in what has taken place.

## Where Can I Get Help?

## When and Where to Get Help Following a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI)



*“Reaching out was hard, but it was the best thing I ever did. It got me the help I needed to get on with my life and start the healing process.”*

The following information is meant to help provide you, or a family member or friend with help following a MCI. Following a traumatic event, this pamphlet includes some of the more common places where people can get help.

### **What is a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI)?**

An MCI is any event where people have been through a traumatic event involving multiple casualties. This could be after a major transportation accident, an earthquake, a mass shooting or other event. People's lives may have been threatened; there may or may not be injuries, or deaths.

Because there is little advance warning, there is little time to prepare emotionally to cope with the stressors related to a MCI.

### **When Should Someone Get Help?**

It is common to experience a range of reactions after a MCI. These reactions can be physical (e.g., shaking, nauseous), emotional (e.g., anger, crying), cognitive (e.g., confused thinking, difficulty sleeping), behavioural (e.g., withdrawing, increased alcohol consumption) and spiritual (e.g., questioning one's faith or purpose in life).

You should expect to take some time to process what has happened to you but over time the symptoms will start to reduce in intensity and frequency. If you start to notice any of the following, it may be time to reach out for help

- you are not feeling better,
- you are having trouble coping with things that normally were not a problem before
- you are using alcohol or drugs to cope
- you are having trouble sleeping,
- you are having trouble focusing
- your family or friends are concerned about you

### **If Children are Involved**

Fortunately, most children are quite resilient and will recover from an MCI without any long-term effects. However, if after a few weeks you notice your child is having trouble sleeping, is talking obsessively about the event, is whiny, clingy, or is having trouble coping, you should get help. It is important to provide help as soon as possible to promote positive coping and minimize negative effects.

### **What kind of help is available?**

It is important not to wait to get help. The sooner you can get help, the faster the healing can begin and the shorter the recovery.

It is also important to find appropriate help that works for you. If the first time you access a resource and don't feel it is the right service for you, don't quit – find another resource that fits. Some people might find that their family doctor is able to provide them with the necessary short-term assistance while in other cases peer support in your workplace might be more beneficial.

### **Take the time to look after yourself. You are worth it!**

#### **Self-care**

Helping begins with yourself. Most people are pretty hard on themselves, particularly following an MCI. Positive self-talk is important. Instilling a sense of hope in yourself, and taking time out to exercise, to rest, to eat healthy, and keep yourself hydrated will help. Some people find mediation can be very helpful.

### **Your Family and Friends**

Talking to trusted family members can help. Even if you don't feel like it, try to stay connected to family members and friends through social gatherings and celebrations. Staying connected and maintaining normal activities and functions are important steps in the healing journey.

### **Your Workplace**

Your workplace may have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or Family & Employee Assistance Program (FEAP). These programs are confidential, paid for by your employer and can provide you and your family with the short-term assistance you may need.

If you belong to a union, your union shop steward may be able to assist you in obtaining support. Many professional associations (e.g., lawyers, doctors) may be able to connect you to resources as well.

If you are a police officer, fire fighter or paramedic, your organization may be able to provide you with access to Critical Incident Stress (CIS)

Management services including a peer led defusing or a debriefing (CISD).

