



What happens next?

This will depend upon the situation. If the incident was as a result of an accident, police and other transportation investigators may want to talk to you about the situation and find out about what you saw and heard.

If one or more people died in the incident, there will likely be a Coroner's Inquest. You may be required to testify about what you experienced.

Where can I get some emotional support?

If you find yourself or your family needing some emotional support, don't hesitate to reach out for help. Often it just takes one or two counseling sessions to feel better.

- Persons who are trained to work with individuals who have experienced a trauma include psychologists, social workers and counsellors. BC211 is the province-wide referral service including crisis and trauma counselling <http://www.bc211.ca/>
- If your workplace has an Employee Assistance Program, this would also be a good program to check out.
- Your family doctor is someone you can turn to for support. They can provide you with a referral if you would like.
- Contact your local Police Victims Services Program for immediate support for you and your family.
- VictimLINK is the province-wide telephone service that provides information and support for victims of crime:
- 1-800-563-0808

What Can I Expect After a Mass Casualty Incident?



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. Mass casualty incidents can be scary for those involved: the victims, their family and friends, by-standers, the public, and often, the first responders.

The following questions are often asked by people who been through a traumatic event involving multiple casualties. This information is general in nature; contact your local authorities to answer specific questions.

This was a pretty scary experience – I'm still feeling quite anxious – how long will this feeling last?

It is very normal to feel anxious after such an experience. These types of situations can be frightening for a lot of people. Some of the other reactions you might experience include:

- Feeling tired or depressed
- Having difficulty sleeping or having nightmares
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling irritable or angry
- Re-experiencing the incident
- Physical reactions such as sweating, rapid heartbeats, headaches or nausea.

If after a month or so you are still experiencing these kinds of reactions, or if you are having difficulty getting through your normal day-to-day activities, it's important to connect with some of the supports mentioned in this pamphlet.

I'm concerned about my children; how they are going to respond afterwards?

Young children will typically respond to an event such as this by following your lead as a parent. If you are able to appear calm and take the situation in stride, your children will follow your example and will likely feel more safe and secure.



Some children may indicate that they have an upset tummy, have difficulty going to sleep, may complain more or cling more to their parents. Others may demonstrate behaviours that no longer seem appropriate for their age (e.g. thumb sucking or tantrums). Younger children may reenact the situation through play; for example, if they were involved in a car crash they may use toy cars to replay the incident. Other children may talk constantly about their experience.

This type of behaviour is common and is normal. There is no cause for concern unless it carries on for an extended period of time and affects your child's ability to cope on a day-to-day basis. Talking calmly to your child in age-appropriate language about what happened, and why it happened will be helpful. Keeping to normal routines will also be important.

Are there going to be any long-term effects?

Everyone will experience the event differently – there is no “right” way to feel after such an event. In many cases, after taking some time to process what happened, people start to feel “normal” again. Some people, however, report feeling like they can't return to how they used to feel; that everything feels different. This is common and you can think of it as finding a “new normal” – not better or worse than before, just different.

What should I tell my family and friends?

Most people, fortunately, have not experienced going through a similar incident. You should be prepared for a lot of questions from people regarding what happened. Certainly if you are comfortable talking about the incident, you should do so. However, you may wish to keep various aspects of the experience private and you can ask others to respect your request.

Using such phrases as, “It was a difficult experience,” and “I'm sure you can understand why I would not want to discuss it right now,” can be polite and indicates to others that you don't want to talk about it.