

## My Coping Plan

This plan will help you think about what you are experiencing and different ways to cope. You might want to share it with your family and teachers so they can support you when you need it.

Signs and Symptoms I am experiencing?

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Coping Strategies I can use?

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How can other people help me?

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What if things get worse?

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## Useful contacts

**The Meadows**  
0191 301 8554

**Young Minds**  
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>  
This website has information and support for young people and their parents / carers

**Rollercoaster Parent Support group**  
For parents and carers who are supporting a young person with an emotional or mental health needs. The group meets once a month in Chester-le-Street and once a month in Newton Aycliffe.

Contact 07415 380 040 or 07500 783 634 for further information - there is also a closed Facebook group (Rollercoaster parent support group).



**The Meadows**  
Sexual Assault Referral Centre

# Managing TRAUMA

The aim of this guide is to help young people who have experienced a distressing incident manage the thoughts and feelings that they may have.



## Managing Trauma

The guide will talk you through:

- What trauma is
- Signs and symptoms
- Coping strategies
- My coping plan
- How to get further help



## What do we mean when we talk about trauma?

What do we mean when we talk about trauma? A traumatic incident is when something happens that makes you feel threatened, unsafe and highly distressed. Usually these are events that are out of the ordinary and don't happen to many people.

When you experience something like this, you may notice some changes in your thoughts, feelings and behaviours. This is normal and completely understandable.

You might feel fine for a little while after the incident, but this might change over time.

## Signs and Symptoms

After a traumatic incident, you may find yourself experiencing the following:

- Intrusive memories of what happened - this means that the memory comes into your head even when you do not want to think about it
- Nightmares and poor sleep
- Feeling scared
- Avoidance of reminders of what happened - so you might not go to some places anymore because



- it feels scary if you do
- Feeling on edge all the time
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Not feeling like yourself
  - Finding it hard to be around other people
  - Not trusting people anymore
  - Crying and feeling sad
  - Feeling angry



## Coping Strategies

Here are some things you can try to cope with some of the symptoms.

### Distraction techniques.

Distracting yourself from thoughts and memories can help you focus on the here and now:

- Count how many different shapes you can see in a room
- How many different colours can you see?
- Put some music on that makes you happy
- Do an activity like a crossword or a game where you have to concentrate
- Spend time with people you trust
- Play a game

### Grounding exercises.

Use your senses to bring you back to the present time:

- What can you see?
- What can you hear?
- Can you put your feet on the ground?
- Do you have an object you can carry with you to focus on? This can be something with a pleasant smell, or maybe a keyring with a photo on it
- You might want to say something in your head to remind you of who you are and where you are

### Don't try and push your thoughts away.

Imagine your mind is like a wardrobe. If you just shove things into it and slam the door, what will happen? At some point, your clothes will come spilling out. Therapy can help you organise the thoughts better, and "put them away" in your memory so you have more control over them.

### Talk to people.

You don't have to talk about what happened if you don't want to. But talking to people you trust can help remind you that you are safe and cared for. It can be good to tell people about how you are feeling, so they can help you.

### Coping cards.

If you find it hard to tell people what you are feeling, make up some cards to help. These could say things like "I feel really upset" or "I'd like you to give me some time alone" or "please will you distract me?"

### Use relaxation.

If you are feeling angry or stressed, doing some relaxation techniques can help. Things like deep breathing, listening to relaxing music or looking at a relaxing image. You might want to ask a family member to help you.

### Try and have a routine.

It might be tempting to hide away from everyone, but it is better for you to carry on with your life as much as possible.

### Sleep.

Bad sleep will cause problems for you the rest of the day - it's harder to concentrate when you haven't slept properly and this will mean that you are more likely to have bad thoughts and get stressed and angry. Try and stick to a proper routine, and listening to some relaxing music before bed.

### Self-care.

Make sure you look after yourself - eat properly, do some activity and do things that make you feel good.

### Keep a diary.

This helps you see your good and bad days, so you can think about what has worked or hasn't worked for you.