

Regrettably, we live in times of increasing turbulence ... every day around the world there are events that have significant human impact. Increasingly local and global events will impact people everywhere – accidents, weather extremes, natural disasters, civil unrest, acts of terrorism, corporate takeovers, political events and changing financial markets. People are sometimes surprised at how much a major event or trauma can affect us in our everyday life, even when we have not been directly impacted.

Common reactions and emotions in adults

- Anger over situations that can't be changed or influenced
- Increased and / or ongoing anxiety or stress
- Feeling alone or homesick – particularly for those not close by to family and friends
- Concern for family or friends living away from them – whether in an area of direct concern or not
- Needing to find a focus for feelings of anger
- Emotional turbulence including fear, anxiety, helplessness and sadness
- An awakening of memories or losses experienced at an earlier time
- Experiencing changes to normal patterns including disturbance to eating and sleeping
- Feeling drained, fatigued and exhausted

Looking after the needs of children and adolescents

- Media images and reporting are widespread – it is difficult to escape the stories and images
- Television and online footage often depicts graphic images that may be distressing to children
- Children may not understand the situation itself, but will be aware of the impact on others
- Fear (sometimes out of proportion) for friends and family not living nearby
- In some situations they may be exposed to peer pressure to conform to the views of others
- There will be an increased need for routine and certainty
- Encourage discussion – ask what the child understands

Possible reactions of employees at work

- Concentration and interest may dissipate
- Individual and / or team performance may be lowered
- Difficulty, or reduced interest, in taking on new tasks or projects
- Emotional distress – this may continue for some time following an incident
- Increased focus on doing “what needs to be done” and going home to family as soon as possible
- Risk taking behaviour may develop and employees may become more demanding
- There may be a preoccupation with personal issues and problems
- Employees may be more inwardly focused and a pessimistic world view may emerge

How organisations can help employees

- Allow people to talk about the situation – allow some time to be spent discussing recent events
- Recognise that employees may feel distracted and concerned
- Ensure you have ongoing communication with all staff and ask how they are
- If there is any concern about an employee, don't assume they are ok – ask them
- Listen to individual stories and concerns, but be cautious on giving too much advice
- Understand that people are all different and may react in very different ways
- Try to maintain established routines and processes, and hold off introducing new systems if possible

How EAP counselling can assist

- Providing an environment where individuals can express and discuss their feelings and concerns
- Providing strategies to manage anxiety, stress and other reactions
- Assisting individuals to normalise their feelings
- Providing strategies on how best to assist children and adolescents
- Offering a confidential, non-judgemental and supportive environment for discussion

How managerAssist® can assist

- Providing coaching and support for managers / supervisors to assist them with individuals and teams

For assistance and appointments during business hours (7:30am – 7:30pm AEST),
and for emergency assistance at any time, please call:

1300 360 364
