

## The following support resources are available:

These community organisations have up to date information

### KW Community Website

[www.knowlewest.co.uk](http://www.knowlewest.co.uk)  
Search for 'Helping Yourself'

### HWCP Community Website

[www.hwcp.org.uk](http://www.hwcp.org.uk)  
Search for 'Community Support'

**KWHP - 01173 772252**

## NHS Talking Therapies

If you are suffering from depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, excessive worry or low mood, then NHS Talking Therapies can help.

Vita Health Group provides the local Talking Therapies services on behalf of the NHS to adults 16-years and over, who live and are registered with a GP in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

**Visit:** [vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-services/nhs-mental-health/bristol-north-somerset-and-south-gloucestershire-mental-health-services/](http://vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-services/nhs-mental-health/bristol-north-somerset-and-south-gloucestershire-mental-health-services/)

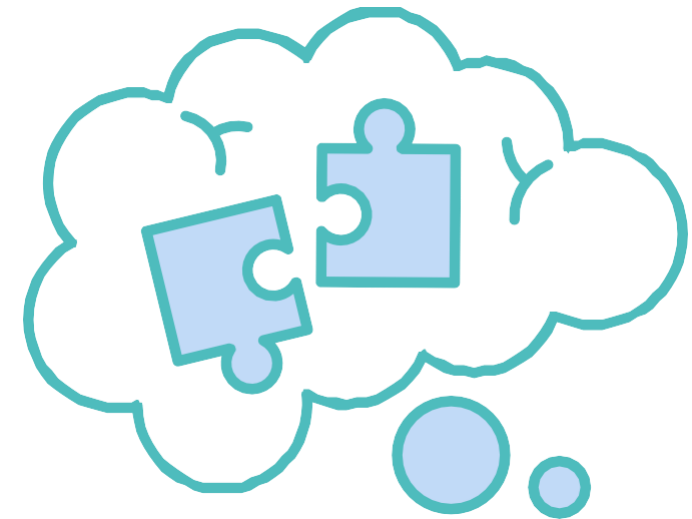
**Call: 0333 200 1893**



**Bristol, North Somerset  
and South Gloucestershire**  
Integrated Care Board

To request this leaflet in an alternative format, email [bnssg.customerservice@nhs.net](mailto:bnssg.customerservice@nhs.net) or ring 0117 900 2655

## Responding to a critical incident in your community



This leaflet explains how your body and mind may react after experiencing a critical incident.

We are all unique and have different experiences in life, as a result we respond in our own way to the world around us. We may not understand why we feel this way, or why we are having difficulty feeling anything at all. This is OK and by no means unusual; it is normal to experience conflicting emotions, thoughts and behaviours following a critical incident.

We hope this leaflet reassures you that how you and others may be interpreting and interacting with your environment is your body's natural way of responding to a critical incident.

## What might we experience after a critical incident?

- Feeling scared for the safety of your family or friends.
- Feeling agitated or jumpy, sometimes phrased as being on 'high alert'.
- Feeling anxious or unsafe and actively looking for signs of danger.
- Experiences of flashbacks. These may consist of visions, sounds or sensations which can feel real and overwhelming.
- Struggling to fall asleep or consistent broken sleep.
- Feeling extra sensitive or reactive.

- Aggression and anger such as losing your temper over minor inconveniences or snapping at those around you for no real explanation.
- Feeling in shock, on autopilot or in 'survival mode' feeling numb or struggling to express emotion.
- Tiredness, a lack of motivation or less interest in things you enjoyed.
- Being withdrawn, not wanting to spend time with others or go outside.
- Loss of appetite or eating more than normal.
- Needing the presence of others to feel safe or take your mind away from difficult thoughts or feelings.
- Desire to escape your own reality, such as increased screen time, gaming or being on social media.

## Why do we respond this way?

These responses are natural defense mechanisms our mind and body produce to help assess, react, and protect us from perceived or actual danger.

Often these reactions and emotions will naturally subside as we learn that we are safe and are able to return to day-to-day life.

However, for some, the emotions associated with a critical incident will stay with us, even when we no longer believe it necessary. We may feel stuck with these thoughts and feelings because we have not been able to truly process what happened.

If these feelings are persistent, feel unproportionate or overwhelming, it may be our body communicating that it needs more support to understand and heal from the incident.

## What can I expect in the future?

Everyone's experience is different and being impacted for a period after an incident, when others have seemingly moved on is completely normal.

For example, you may find that you worry more, are more concerned about the behaviors of those around you or feel despondent or demotivated in your day-to-day activities.

You can reach out to someone you trust for an honest conversation, or a local service, charity or organisation which can support you in navigating how you feel.