

Beyond the school term: supporting yourself after exposure to suicide

When a school community goes through difficult times or you are facing these personally, this can often be taxing on yourself and families in multiple ways. Sometimes a common response for education staff is to 'be in action'. This means putting your own feelings and reactions aside to help the school manage, to continue with school routines, support students or implement crisis management plans. Commonly, little thought is given to yourself until well after the event when the 'dust has settled'. Previous traumas or difficulties may resurface during a time of trauma. Difficulties in our personal lives may complicate how we cope with stress.

As you head towards the school holidays, you can sometimes "crash", and realise just how impacted you have been. How can you support yourself in the upcoming break?

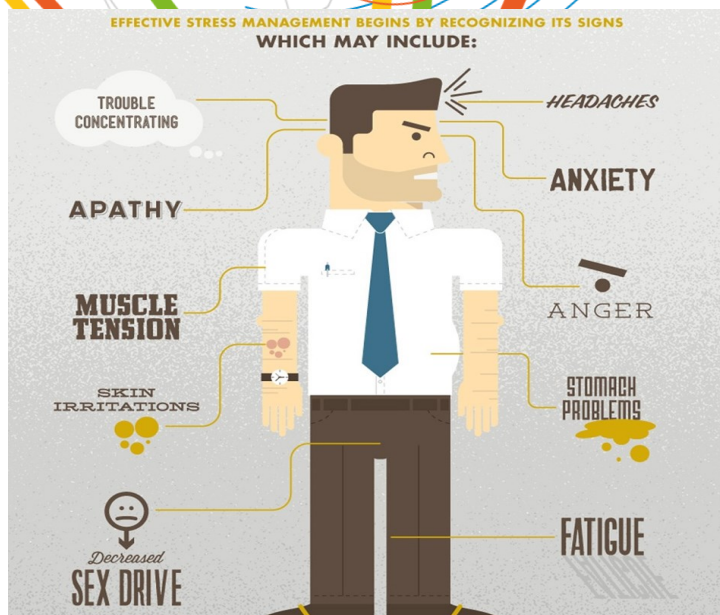
Find ways to:

- Connect to family, friends, hobbies, community, spirituality, nature
- Laugh
- Have a creative outlet
- Exercise
- Talk about your experiences (family, friends, professionals)
- Reflect: process the year that was
- Be kind to yourself

Support Services

- Better Access to Mental Health Care Plan (through your GP)
- EAP: Davidson Trahaire Corppsych: 1300 360 364 or 9273 8800
- Suicide 24hr call-back service: **1300 659 467**
- www.keepingcool.edu.au online resource and support education staff
- Family, friends, church & community
- Beyond blue or black dog institute
- Compassionate friends
- Family, friends, church and community

EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT BEGINS BY RECOGNIZING ITS SIGNS
WHICH MAY INCLUDE:



What's the big deal about stress or grief (vicarious trauma)?

Stress, grief and vicarious trauma can come about in a variety of ways that can have detrimental effects to our health and wellbeing. Vicarious trauma can occur subtly through exposure to other people's traumatic stories. This can occur weeks, months or years after events have occurred.

How can we recognize this in ourselves?

PHYSICAL SIGNS:

Feeling exhausted; trouble sleeping or too much sleep; headaches; becoming easily sick

PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNS:

Feeling emotionally exhausted; negative self image; cynicism; resentment; lowered sense of enjoyment;

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES:

Withdrawing from family and friends; missing work; increased drug/alcohol use; anger/irritability; avoiding tasks

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, seek help and support. If we don't care for ourselves we will not be strong enough to care for others.