

## Helping your employees after a major event

After a major event, organisations are often looking for tangible ways to support their employees to understand and deal with the impact. One of the most beneficial ways to do this is to promote your employee assistance program (EAP). Your EAP is there to help when your employees and their families need support.

A wide range of issues and emotions can emerge following a major event. Whether individuals have been directly impacted, or whether they have just watched helplessly as events and the media reporting unfold, they can be significantly affected. Drawing on your EAP is a valuable strategy to help you during this difficult time.

### What are the common reactions and emotions for adults?

- ◆ Anger over situations that you can't influence
- ◆ Increased and /or ongoing anxiety or stress
- ◆ Feeling alone or homesick if you are not close to family and friends
- ◆ Concern for family or friends overseas – whether in an area of direct concern or not
- ◆ A need to find a focus for angry feelings
- ◆ Emotional turbulence including fear, anxiety and sadness
- ◆ An awakening of memories or losses experienced at an earlier time
- ◆ Experiencing changes to normal patterns including eating and sleeping disturbances
- ◆ Feeling drained, fatigued and exhausted

### How might your employees feel or present at work?

- ◆ Concentration and interest may dissipate
- ◆ Performance may be lowered
- ◆ There may be some difficulty, or reduced interest, in taking on new tasks or projects
- ◆ Increased focus on doing "what needs to be done" and going home to your family as soon as possible
- ◆ Individuals may feel preoccupied with personal issues and problems
- ◆ Individuals may feel inwardly focused
- ◆ Your employees may start to develop a pessimistic world view

**We're here when you need us**

**1800 808 374 ◆ [www.assureprograms.com.au](http://www.assureprograms.com.au)**

## How can we help our employees at work?

- ◆ Let people talk about the situation if that is important to them
- ◆ Recognise that some of your colleagues may feel distracted and concerned
- ◆ If you are concerned about a colleague, ask if they are ok
- ◆ Listen to individual stories and concerns, but be cautious of giving too much advice
- ◆ Understand that you may have different views or reactions to others at work
- ◆ Try to minimise your demands on others if you sense they are feeling overloaded

## What is the impact on children and adolescents?

In some cases, your employees may be concerned about their children, or be uncertain about the best way to deal with the events and information.

- ◆ Media images and reporting are widespread – it is difficult to escape the stories and images
- ◆ Television footage often depicts graphic images that may be distressing to children
- ◆ Children may not understand the situation but will be aware of the impact on others
- ◆ Children can experience fear (sometimes out of proportion) for friends and family overseas
- ◆ Older children may be exposed to peer pressure to conform to the views of others
- ◆ An increased need for routine and certainty is likely to be expressed
- ◆ It is important to encourage discussion – ask what your child understands

## How does our EAP assist us at this time?

- ◆ It provides an environment where individuals can discuss their concerns
- ◆ Your EAP can suggest strategies to manage anxiety, stress and other reactions
- ◆ The professional EAP team assist individuals to normalise the feeling they are experiencing
- ◆ It provides strategies on how best to assist children and adolescents and other family members
- ◆ It offers a totally non-judgemental and supportive environment for discussion

If you are uncertain where to start or how to offer support to your workforce, just call us. We are here to guide you through this challenging time.