

Factors that can promote stabilisation and growth following very stressful life events:

Summary of some key issues to consider in promoting individual recovery based on recent relevant scientific and clinical information

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- taking care of the self and meeting fundamental needs for safety, shelter, rest, emotional connection, nutrition and physical exercise
- understand and anticipate normal stress reactions that may last for many months or years and be amplified on special occasions, anniversary times and during circumstances that remind us of very stressful life events.
- optimism and hopefulness including positive coping statements about the self and the future
- willingness and empowerment to take on the significant challenges already faced, and yet to be faced, as opportunities for learning and growth
- realistic appraisal of personal capacity for action in the past the present and the future
- humour (tension relief, changes and broadens perspective, positively influences immunological/physiological processes and improves psychological, physical and social health)
- focussing energies in the present and engaging in constructive action step-by-step, moment by moment, day by day
- determination and persistence
- warmth, compassion and friendliness to self
- maintaining mutual close social connection to other people and having fun together as much as possible without the abuse of alcohol or other chemical substances

- believing in a capacity to move from situations of little choice and control to personal agency
- willingness to unburden emotionally, whilst being sensitive to the internal and external resources of the listener
- being gentle and patient with ourselves and other people; assuming the best intention (unless very clearly demonstrated otherwise); and trying not to focus on blame or simple causal explanations or solutions
- understanding that each of us is unique and we bring our individual strengths and challenges to responding to very stressful life events.