

MEDIA RELEASE

Following the traumatic events on Friday in Christchurch and continuing over the weekend, members will be feeling challenged to cope with everything in their lives.

Such tragedies can ripple throughout society and affect us in a wide variety of places.

Each of us will process the shock and the trauma of events in different ways.

For pharmacists to continue to provide good professional practice, we need to make sure we are looking after ourselves.

- Acknowledge that we have been shocked
- Talk with colleagues, friends or families
- Get support
- Take meal breaks
- Go easy on tea, coffee and alcohol
- Get proper sleep

For us to be calm and competent at work, we have to feel things are ok at home and with the family.

Here is some advice from the Canterbury Primary Response Group

All Right? Psychosocial Messaging – Christchurch Terror Attack

Normalising our reactions

- A lot of us are feeling on edge and upset right now – this is a completely normal reaction
- Disasters and big shocks take a toll on all of us and coping is not always easy.
- During scary or surprising events, our brains react by releasing adrenaline. This response is our natural alarm system – our body telling us to be alert and ready for action. It's there to help us, but afterwards we can feel shaky, queasy or on-edge, and that's totally normal.

Looking after ourselves and each other

- There are small things we can do to look after ourselves and others, even when times are tough.
 - Be kind to one another. Kindness is contagious, and boosts endorphins.
 - Take a digital detox, and focus on an activity you love. Reading, games with the kids, or a short walk.
 - Spend time with people you love - we all need each other. Talk about how your feeling.
 - Focus on the things you can control.

Supporting our kids and whānau

- Children take their cues of parents — so if you're okay, they'll be okay too...
- Be mindful how much 'worry' you're displaying, just be as cool as you can!
- Keep children away from the media.
- Answer their questions pretty matter of factly and in very 'general' terms. Drama it down. You don't have to get the answers exactly right here. Ensure you talk too about the police and how they did a really good job of keeping us safe. Keep the reassurance low key too — over-reassuring can make us think we need to be worrying more than we are!
- Let them talk about it, but don't let it 'take over' - use distraction to keep their mind off it - we've got the board games out!
- Stick to your normal routines as much as you can.

In the words of our good friends at The Worry Bug:

- "Reassure them that the world hasn't changed, this is an unusual situation and things will go back to normal soon. When you listen you don't need to solve, you just need to listen

and be empathic. Feelings usually retreat after a short while if they are listened to and acknowledged."

For parents of teens...

- Try and keep them off or away from the social media as much as you can, but it's okay if they need to have it on tap right now – it can be a great way for them to be checking in with friends and supporting each other.
- Let them know there's a lot of hype out there.
- Say that you're sticking with credible sources of information as they report only the things released by the police and people actually 'in the know'. If they are really affected by this 'hype' tell them it's time to put the phone down or away. Keep the reassurance low key too.

For schools

- In the week starting 18 March All Right? will be promoting free *Sparklers wellbeing activities* that promote kindness, friendships and strengths in a classroom setting.
- All Right? will also be sharing Sparklers activities that focus on understanding emotions and managing worries.

Support is available

- Traumatic events affect each of us differently, and we all need a bit of support from time-to-time.
- If you or someone you know is struggling, there is free help available. Free call or text 1737 any time, 24 hours a day. You can also call Lifeline on 0800 543 354 or text HELP to 4357.

Supporting patients from our Muslim Communities

Be aware that some Muslim patients:

- May feel unsafe leaving the house, including coming to practices or other health services.
- May not seek help for mental health due to internalised stigma.
- May be further traumatised by delays in the burial and appropriate ceremonies (due to police involvement).

Consider:

- Offering home visits to Muslim patients, if appropriate and desirable for the patient.
- Contacting your Muslim patients to enquire about their well-being.

If you need support, contact CEO Richard Townley on r.townley@psnz.org.nz or 04 802 0037.

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