

Strategies

Many truck drivers won't seek help, and this can be detrimental in the long term. **We strongly recommend that you do.**

The truth is that everyone is human and road trauma can have a physiological effect on even the toughest of us.

If you won't seek help, here are several strategies options for you.

Keep a diary

When things are getting to you and you have flash backs on the incident, jot what you are thinking down. It only has to be brief, but a summary of your thoughts, also the date and time. Continue to do this, as it assists to get it out of your system. As the days pass you will find that time between these thoughts will become lesser. You will also begin to see that the thoughts are not as strong or horrific.

Via Email

Trans-Help has an email services. If you want to talk but can't pick up the phone to make that call we can offer support via email.

support@transhelpfoundation.com.au

Via Facebook

Trans-Help has a facebook page and offers support via the group or via private messaging. Go to face book and search Trans-Help Foundation or there is a link on our website.

Be Aware

Understand that those that do not seek help because they believe they can cope are those that are more likely to eventually suffer with depression. Depression is an illness and like high blood pressure and any other illness it can be treated.

Trans-Help Foundation is a nonprofit community based organisation dedicated to assisting transport families when in need, helping to reduce the incidence and impact of road trauma throughout the transport industry in Australia.

Please contact Trans-Help for more information.



Help Line
1300 78 79 96

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**Support for
Australian Truckers
& their families
when in need**

Witnessing an Accident



Understanding

1300 787 996

Truck drivers often are the first at the scene of an accident and see the most horrific things. Once the police and emergency services arrive, witness's names and contact details are taken and then told that they will be contacted. Very little consideration is given to the emotional trauma you have endured.

When the police contact you, you are required to relive the ordeal again, giving a detailed account of what you witnessed. When there has been serious injury or a fatality, this can be very traumatising.

Normal Reaction

You might be experiencing some of the following trauma reactions – flashbacks, sleep difficulties, anxiety, confusion, guilt, feelings of helplessness, anger, disbelief, irritability, wanting to withdraw from others, avoiding reminders of the collision (eg the site of the crash), shaking, low attention span and lack of concentration.

You might be preoccupied with what happened at the crash site, what you saw and heard, and the events following the collision.

You may feel that your basic assumptions about safety in the world have been shattered, and that you feel that nothing is 'safe' anymore.

You might be fearful of driving, fearful of having people who are important to you drive, or be afraid to be a passenger in a motor vehicle.

You may be over-critical of yourself and question whether you could have done something to help the person or people who were injured or died in the collision. You may wonder whether you made the right decisions at the scene. Survivor guilt feelings might be adding to your distress. If you were first on the scene, you may have tried to help a person in his or her last moments. You

may have a bond with that person, which few others really understand.

You may be grieving for those who have died and for their family and friends.

These are all normal and natural reactions to what you have experienced and are to be expected at this difficult time.

You might find that your thoughts and feelings may not be understood by others and that others expect you to 'get over it' because you did not know the person or people who died. Because of these feelings of being not understood, you may be avoiding talking about the crash, and what you saw, heard or smelt. This can lead to feelings of isolation.

If you have any of the above symptoms, it is suggested you visit your general practitioner and get some time off work. Your safety and the safety of others is important.

Who can help?

At times like these, supportive family and friends can provide the most help. However, following a fatal road collision, it can also be helpful to speak with someone outside of your network of family and friends.

Speaking with your general practitioner, a psychologist, a social worker or a counsellor experienced in trauma and grief can be useful.

Witnesses who have been involved in fatal collisions can receive ongoing support and information from qualified counsellors and trained volunteer peer supporters at the Trans-Help Foundation.

What can help?

Recognise that you have been through a traumatic event. Give yourself permission to have time and space to acknowledge what you have been through. But try not to become too isolated from other people.

Recurring flashbacks, dreams and thoughts about the trauma are normal. Don't try to fight them; they will decrease in frequency as time passes.

- Find someone who is a good listener. Talk about what you are thinking and feeling.
- Look after yourself. Get plenty of rest. Eat regular, well-balanced meals.
- Exercise regularly.
- Try not to use alcohol or drugs to numb the pain or thoughts.
- Reduce your use of stimulants such as coffee, tea, cola and cigarettes.
- Take time out to relax.
- Try to resume a normal routine as soon as possible.
- Ask for help when needed.

Counselling and Support

Trans-Help have a 24/7 support line, which is a good starting point. Staff on the phones can give you initial support and assist in debriefing you. It is imperative that you debrief as soon as possible, and as hard as this may be it will assist in the coping process.

The Trans-Help staff will discuss with you support and counselling options and assist in getting you appointments.