

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



TALK
TO US

Get in touch



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British Sign Language (BSL) users
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Good self-care

Reading or hearing evidence can be distressing

Given the nature of the evidence, this is not surprising. Some people may have not heard such accounts, or as many of them, before. Others who may have had more experience with such material and so expect not to be affected may still find it upsetting; that is not unusual.

We recognise the importance, in these circumstances, of keeping us all – applicants, witnesses, members of the public, legal representatives, and our own staff – safe from harm. We have therefore prepared this leaflet to let people know about the possible effects they may experience after reading or hearing evidence.

You may find some or none of these apply. Impact may also be delayed so it is useful to be aware of possible consequences – emotionally, behaviourally, and in how we think.

Reactions to look out for are:

- Losing concentration
- Sudden unexpected recollection of distressing events or information, leading to feelings of fear, anger, or sadness
- Nightmares or anxious dreams – sometimes they may feature information you have heard or seen
- Avoidance – doing everything possible to avoid upsetting emotions or to avoid reminders of distressing experiences
- Arousal – feeling on edge all the time, feeling as if something terrible is about to happen, being irritable and quick to lose your temper or cry, being easily startled
- Cynicism – becoming increasingly cynical and doubtful in response to individuals or information you see or hear
- Poor sleep that lasts longer than normal
- Avoiding doing things you usually enjoy
- Losing or gaining weight unexpectedly
- Feeling extra watchful of loved ones
- Feeling suspicious and that the world is less safe than before
- Thinking you are the only one who can do your job
- Recurrent minor illnesses
- Avoiding work or staying at work longer than usual
- Not taking care of yourself when you are sick

If you find you are feeling like this, above all do not worry; a few simple things can help:

- Time and space to think about why you may be feeling this way
- Regular exercise
- Distractions – activities, social life, hobbies
- Good food
- Good sleep
- Taking time off
- Watching your alcohol intake
- Being able to express your feelings with people you trust

If you find these effects last more than a couple of months and are disturbing your home, social, or work life, you should contact your GP who will discuss it with you and may suggest you see someone who can offer specific help.

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