

Reflection Exercises

Here are some prompts to help you understand how you may be feeling and identify some areas where you need more support. You can use these prompts to write journal entries or simply think about your experience.

1. If you had to recount the experience to a friend or therapist, where would you start? How would you describe it?
2. When you think about the event, how does your body feel? Is there any tension or discomfort?
3. Picture a close friend or loved one. If what you experienced had happened to them, how would you react? Is there a difference in the way you would talk to them compared to how you speak to yourself?
4. What brings you joy lately? Is there anything completely unrelated to work/college? Is there anything you do that's just for yourself, and no one else? What would that look like?

Should I seek professional support?

It is very common and appropriate to experience some or all of the reactions and responses to vicarious trauma outlined in this leaflet, along with others not mentioned. These feelings usually dissipate in intensity over time. However, if this is not your experience, please do not hesitate to reach out for professional support.

Reach out to S2S

www.tcd.ie/Student2Student
student2student@tcd.ie
01 896 2658

other resources:

TCD Student Counselling

student-counselling@tcd.ie
01 896 1407

NiteLine

niteline.ie
1800 793 793

Campus Security (24hr)

01 896 1999


Emergency Services

112

Minding Yourself

While Minding Others





When you take on a caring role and help others, you may find yourself in distressing situations where someone shares something traumatic and/or displays intense emotions. Following a distressing event, it's very common to experience strong emotional or physical reactions yourself, even if you were indirectly involved.

Common reactions include...

- Shock and disbelief
- Numbness
- Feelings of helplessness and vulnerability
- Sadness
- Guilt - believing you could have done more to help
- Anger at those responsible
- Relief that it's over
- Relief that it's not you
- Nightmares
- Intrusive images/flashbacks
- Poor concentration
- Racing thoughts
- Shaking
- Lump in throat
- Nausea

There is no right or wrong way to feel, and it's vital to be aware of your own needs while caring for others. Even if you don't feel immediately affected, some reactions can appear days or even months afterwards.

Recovery

It's important to take care of yourself and show yourself the same kindness you show others, especially after a distressing event. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Acknowledge your feelings

The way you feel matters because you matter. Ignoring your feelings can slow down recovery, and even though it may be uncomfortable, it's important to allow yourself to experience your emotions. Changes or disturbances in sleep, appetite, focus, or a tendency to withdraw or avoid being alone can be strong indicators that you feel overwhelmed. Try not to invalidate your feelings by telling yourself you "shouldn't" feel upset - this is a common response, but often something we would never say to anyone but ourselves.

Remember everyone is different

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to respond to a distressing event. Listen to your own needs, whether that means taking a day to yourself to watch Netflix or going on a walk with a friend and getting things off your chest.

Reach out for support

Friends, family, S2S staff, and student support services can help you process your feelings. Try not to isolate yourself from others. Remember that you deserve support just as much as anyone else. You're never a "burden", and people are here to help.

Get plenty of rest

It's okay to take time to rest and recover from your experience. Give yourself time and compassion.

Do things for yourself

Whether it's writing in a journal, watching a comfort show, spending time in nature, or going to the cinema...try to engage in activities that bring you joy and comfort.

