

The Trans-Help team is available to offer support and advice which can assist following an incident.

It is important that you have knowledge of what you need to do and what to expect. For example: you may be an employer or an employee, you may be in business, have a company, in a partnership or you may be employed casually or permanent. Situations will vary dependent upon your circumstances,

You may have been injured in an incident yourself, or have been fortunate to come away unharmed physically. Either way you may suffer from the incident. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can be a by product of what has happened, which can be brief or long term.

You can reduce the chances of PTSD by obtaining help, but it is you that has to make that choice.

Trans-Help Foundation has assisted many transport people through similar circumstances and many have expressed how fortunate they were to have Trans-Help there when they needed it. Others, who have suffered similarly in the past, comment on how they wish there was something like Trans-Help when they had experienced an incident.

Trans-Help can offer you advice and support to help you through this time.

Trans-Help Foundation is a nonprofit community based organisation dedicated to assisting transport families when in need. Our objectives are to help to reduce the incidence and impact of any traumatic event, especially road trauma, within the road transport industry.

Trans-Help encourages membership as a tangible way of showing support of this valuable asset.

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**

*When you are involved in  
Road Trauma or an Accident.*



*How it can affect you.*

**1300 787 996**

## *How you are coping*

If you, as a transport driver, have been involved in an incident, whether it be minor or serious, it is important for you to acknowledge that you did not have any intention of being involved in a collision which has resulted in a serious injury or death of a person or persons. Whether you were in the wrong or the right, it was an accident.

You are probably experiencing a wide range of thoughts and feelings, and we hope the following information will be helpful for you.

You might experience some of the following reactions – flashbacks, sleep difficulties, anxiety, confusion, guilt, anger, disbelief, irritability, wanting to withdraw from others, avoiding reminders of the collision (i.e. the site of the crash), shaking, low attention span or the lack of concentration. You might be preoccupied with what happened in the crash and the events following it. You may be fearful of getting into the cab and driving again.

You may also be over-critical of yourself and question whether you could have prevented the collision. Guilt feelings may be adding to your distress.

In addition, you may be grieving for the person who has been injured and for their family and friends.

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

You may be worrying that you will be charged with a driving offence. Police investigations can take some time, you might be feeling as if you are being 'left in limbo' until the matter is finalised. It might be difficult to plan ahead and to get on with your life.

As a transport driver involved in a road collision you will suffer from trauma and grief just like the other people who were at the scene, but you might find that your distress is unrecognised. Your fears of being judged by others can also weigh heavily. Because of feelings of being judged, you may be avoiding talking about the incident. This can then lead to a feeling of isolation.

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 isolated from other people.

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

At times like these, supportive family and friends can provide the most help. However, following a road collision or incident, it can also be helpful to speak with someone outside of your network of family and friends. Speaking with your general practitioner or a health professional experienced in trauma and grief can be very useful.

Ongoing support and information is also available to transport people who have been involved in incidences by the Trans-Help Foundation.

- 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.
- 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.

Qualified Counsellors can provide you with information about how to cope with the trauma, and with the thoughts, feelings and behaviors you are experiencing. You do not have to be concerned about the effect parts of your 'story' will have on a professional Counsellor.

The volunteers at Trans-Help are people who have, themselves, been affected by similar incidents, who want to support other people who have been involved in similar situations.

They can offer real understanding and empathy. They know better than most people that, in 'one split second', a person's life can be changed forever. You may find it helpful to speak with one of our staff.

Whilst transport people especially drivers are perceived as the 'tough' guys, the truth is you are human and the reactions you have to the incident is quite normal.

Don't avoid asking for assistance, in the long term you will be thankful you made that initial call.

Relaxation, meditation and yoga are activities that can help to reduce muscle tension and relieve stress.

Physical activities such as digging the garden, mowing the lawn, housework or rhythmic activities like jogging, swimming or walking all help to disperse excess emotional energy.

Keeping a journal or writing down your thoughts and feelings is helpful, as well as becoming a record of their personal journey through the grief suffered.

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