

# Information for families and friends of missing persons



NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS COORDINATION CENTRE

FACT SHEET

## INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF A MISSING PERSON

This publication describes feelings - physical, emotional and mental - that are common to someone with a relative or friend missing.

It suggests ways to help you and lists services that are available to support you. There are a range of feelings and reactions that someone can experience when a loved one is missing. However, not everyone reacts in the same way, at the same time.

If you feel any or all of the following effects it is important to realise that you are responding in a normal way. Some effects you may experience:

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Slowed thinking
- Confusion
- Disorientated
- Memory problems
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Poor attention span
- Difficulty in:
  - making decisions
  - problem solving
  - concentrating
- Loss of control
- The “what if’s”

### EMOTIONAL

- Fear
- Anger
- Frustration
- Guilt
- Blame

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sadness
- Irritability
- Numbness
- Wanting to withdraw or hide
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness

### PHYSICAL

- Nausea
- Tremors
- Chills
- Sweating
- Lack of coordination
- Palpitations
- Chest pains
- High blood pressure
- Headaches
- Sleep disturbance
- Diarrhoea
- Dizziness
- Changes in appetite
- Startled responses

### The list below contains some ideas that may help you ...

- Talk about how you feel and what you are going through.
- Allow yourself to feel the pain and be upset or angry.
- Keep a journal.
- Spend time with others but allow some time for yourself.
- Get plenty of sleep and eat regular



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nutritious meals.

- Re-establish your normal daily schedule as soon as possible.
- Make daily decisions to give you back a feeling of being in control of your life.
- Exercise lightly and alternate with periods of relaxation.
- Undertake daily tasks with care. Accidents are more likely to happen when you are stressed, angry or upset.

## Things to avoid ...

- Don't blame yourself.
- Be careful of using drugs or alcohol to alleviate pain.
- Make normal daily decisions, but be careful not to make life changing decision as your judgement may be impaired.
- Don't bottle up your emotions. Express them through activities or by talking.

## If you require support, the following organisations may be able to assist you ...

### ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA

A confidential support service for individuals, families and friends affected by dementia.

Freecall 1800 100 500

### GRIEF SUPPORT INC

A 24-hour confidential telephone support service.

Phone 02 9489 6644

### KIDS HELP LINE

Trained counsellors provide a 24-hour, confidential, anonymous, national telephone counselling service for young Australians aged five to 18 years of age

Freecall 1800 551 800



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### LIFELINE

A national 24-hour telephone counselling and referral service. For the cost of a local call you will be connected to your nearest centre.

Phone 13 11 14

### SALVO CARE LINE

A telephone counselling and referral service for parents

Phone.....02 9311 2000

Freecall (Brisbane Only) 1300 363 622

### For further assistance

National Missing Persons Coordination Centre

Freecall 1800 000 634

Email: [missing@afp.gov.au](mailto:missing@afp.gov.au)

Website: [www.missingpersons.gov.au](http://www.missingpersons.gov.au)

The Attorney General's Department of NSW, Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit (FFMPU), is the original owner of this information. The Australian Federal Police, National Missing Persons Coordination Centre, has worked with the FFMPU to reproduce this information for the benefit of families and friends of missing persons living outside of NSW.



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