

## **ADVICE FOR THOSE EFFECTED BY A TERRORIST ATTACK OR DISASTER**

Janet Haddington is a qualified Social Worker and Psychotherapist with experience in dealing with major incidents, such as the 7th July bombings. Here she answers some of the most common questions following the London attacks.

### **Q: Who is this website for?**

A: This website is for anyone affected by the London bombings and other terrorist incidents or disasters.

Maybe you are a survivor or have lost someone close to you.

Perhaps you were close to an incident or have been distressed generally by the events. Perhaps this event has revived difficult memories of another event in your life.

### **Q: I wasn't near the attacks on the day, but cannot get back to normal, am I OK?**

A: It is not unusual to feel shock and disbelief that anyone could carry out such an act. For a while you may feel insecure and unsafe. Only if these feelings persist and prevent you carrying out your daily tasks should you consider whether you need to seek additional help. If possible, try talking to your family or friends and explain and share your concerns.

### **Q: I can't sleep, is this normal?**

A: There are all kinds of reasons why you may be experiencing difficulty sleeping. The London bombings and other incidents have affected many people in a number of different ways and this should be a temporary effect. Try having a relaxing bath before you go to bed and read in bed or listen to soothing music. If after a month or so you are still experiencing difficulties seek the advice of your GP.

### **Q: I wasn't physically injured but cannot get back to normal, what's wrong?**

A: It is very difficult to comprehend the enormity of the bombings. You may be preoccupied with thoughts such as, 'what if', or 'I could have been on that tube or bus.' You may be thankful you are safe but feel great sorrow for those innocent victims. Only if you continue to experience difficulties should you seek professional help. You need time to come to terms with what has happened and you are trying to respond normally to a very abnormal event.

### **Q: I am too scared to use the tube or take a bus, am I normal?**

*INFORMATION & ADVICE - for those affected by a terrorist attack or disaster*

A: You are responding normally. If you travel to work on public transport your sense of security will have been shaken and it is not inappropriate to be fearful for your own personal safety. It may take you several weeks to get back to normal. Try taking short journeys outside of busy times with the help of a friend or family member and if you continue to feel scared consider a visit to your GP.

**Q: I'm worried about a friend or relative and want to get in touch, can you help?**

A: It is possible to gather information regarding the affects felt by those experiencing the effects of an incident to pass on to a friend or relative, however it is important that the person affected feels -they wish to talk to someone and makes contact themselves directly with the appropriate support agency.