

Handling Crisis and Trauma



The Medical Social Services department helps patients cope with social, psychological, financial and medical needs through counselling, care assessment and arrangement and information and referral services. Our team of dedicated and professional Medical Social Workers possess degrees in social work, while some have postgraduate training in counselling.

What is a crisis or trauma?

Do you have recurring thoughts on...

- Being physically assaulted
- Witnessing multiple casualties in a severe traffic accident



Have you witnessed...

- The sudden death of a loved one
- A patient or someone you care for fall

Are you constantly uneasy, anxious or fearful of...

- Being in close contact with someone with infectious disease?
- Being threatened?

If these symptoms sound familiar, you may be suffering from critical incident stress.

What is critical incident stress?

Critical incident stress refers to your reaction when you experience a sudden or shocking event outside of your daily experience. A critical incident can occur anywhere and trigger post-traumatic stress disorder.

Symptoms of critical incident stress

Cognitive

- Confusion
- Hyper-vigilance
- Intrusive thoughts, images, or nightmares about the critical incident
- Memory disturbances
- Preoccupation with the critical incident

Emotional

- Grief
- Guilt
- Helplessness
- Increased tension and inability to relax
- Irritability or angry outbursts
- Persistent worry and fear
- Unable to feel joy or happiness

Behavioural

- Increased intake of alcohol or substances
- Restlessness
- Sleep disturbances
- Social withdrawal

Coping strategies

- Give yourself time to work through the critical incident.
- Accept that your feelings are normal and not everyone experiences the same stress as you. Deal with your feelings one at a time. You do not have to feel everything at once.
- Keep to a regular routine as much as possible. Familiar routines are a source of comfort.
- Do something you enjoy.
- Engage in physical activity and sports to take your mind off things.
- Find someone to talk to. He/she should be someone you are comfortable with and able to listen to what you are going through.
- Go out with friends. It is important to maintain relationships with others, especially in times of crisis.
- Handle major decisions and life changes after you have recovered from the incident. You make better decisions when you have more energy and a clearer judgement.
- Avoid ineffective ways of dealing with negative emotions, such as turning to drugs or alcohol. Such numbing effects are short term.
- Jot down your thoughts and feelings by keeping a journal, drawing or playing a musical instrument. They can help you work through your emotions better.



Avoid

- **Drugs and alcohol**

They are ineffective ways of coping with critical incidents and may cause health problems in the long run.

- **Caffeine**

Caffeine is a stimulant that increases feelings of anxiety. Avoid drinks like tea, coffee and caffeinated drinks when you can.

- **Self-medications**

These provide temporary relief and it is best you consult a doctor if symptoms persist.

- **Major decisions and life changes**

Put these on hold until you recover from the critical incident. You will be able to think clearer and have more energy to make better judgments and important decisions.

- **Bottling up your feelings**

Talk to someone about your emotions. It will make you feel better.

- **Putting a timeline for recovery**

Memories do not just go away, but our Medical Social Workers can help you work through your emotions and difficult feelings to get back on your feet.



When to seek professional help

- You continue to feel disassociated from people or events one month after the critical incident.
- You have no one to share your feelings with but need to do so.
- You start to smoke, drink heavily, or turn to drugs for relief.
- Your work performance suffers even a few weeks after the critical incident.
- You are worried that those around you are particularly vulnerable or not healing satisfactorily.
- You experience chronic exhaustion as a caregiver.
- You start to have more accidents.
- Your relationships suffer and/or sexual problems develop.

Please contact us for an appointment.

For more information

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

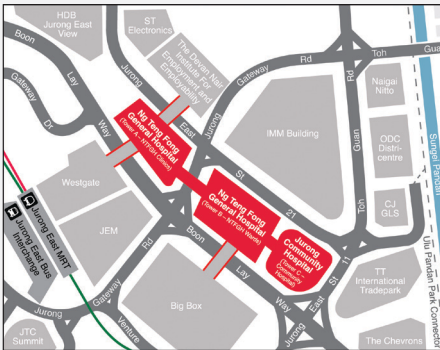
1 Jurong East St 21,
Singapore 609606
General enquiries: 6716 2000 Fax: 6716 5500
www.juronghealth.com.sg

Clinical and appointment line hours (closed on Sundays and public holidays)

For appointments, please call 6716 2222
Monday - Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm,
Saturday 8.00am - 12.30pm

For dental appointments, please call 6716 2233
Monday - Thursday 8.00am - 5.30pm,
Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm

Getting there



By train

Jurong East MRT Station

By bus

From Jurong East Bus Interchange

SBS 51, 52, 66, 78, 79, 97, 97e, 98,
98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 183, 197,
333, 334, 335, 506

Along Boon Lay Way

SBS 99, Private bus service 625

Jurong Medical Centre

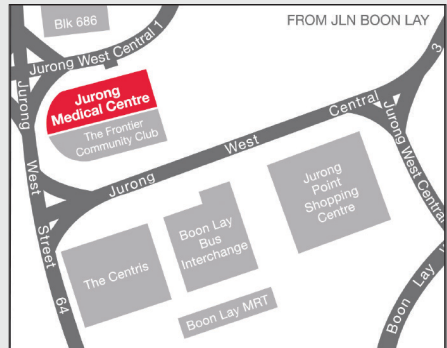
60 Jurong West Central 3,
Singapore 648346
General enquiries: 6716 2000 Fax: 6551 7999
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Getting there



By train

Boon Lay MRT Station

By bus

SBS 30, 79, 154, 157, 174, 179, 181,
182, 192, 193, 194, 198, 199, 240, 241,
242, 243 W/G, 246, 249, 251, 252, 254,
255, 257, 405
SMRT 172, 178, 180, 187

Disclaimer:

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.