

## Our Vision

To reduce the impact of road trauma

## Our Mission

We are a community based organisation providing specialist counselling support for those affected by road trauma. We seek to change driver attitudes and behaviour through targeted education programs delivered, in part, by volunteers who share their personal stories of road trauma.

## Our Values

### Caring

We are committed to serving our clients with empathy and compassion

### Integrity

We display integrity, respect and dignity in all our dealings with clients, stakeholders and members of our workforce

### Quality

Our focus is on the people we serve and we strive for excellence in service delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement

### Accountability

We are accountable for our actions in working to deliver our services and our mission

Road Trauma Support Services Victoria (RTSSV) is a not-for-profit organisation contributing to the safety and wellbeing of Victorian road users. We provide counselling and support to people affected by road trauma, and address attitudes and behaviours of road users through education.

As the only organisation of its kind in Victoria, we provide the following services across the state:

- Free, professional face-to-face and telephone counselling
- Support and training
- Education programs

For more information about what we do, please call us or visit our website.

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**Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.**

# Drivers involved in a fatality

[www.rtssv.org.au](http://www.rtssv.org.au)

If you, as a driver, have been involved in a fatal collision, it is important for you to acknowledge that you did not have any intention of being involved in a collision which has resulted in the death or serious injury of a person or persons.

We hope the following information will be helpful to you.

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

You might experience some of the following trauma reactions – flashbacks, sleep difficulties, anxiety, confusion, guilt, anger, disbelief, irritability, wanting to withdraw from others, avoiding reminders of the collision (eg the site of the crash), shaking, low attention span and lack of concentration.

You might be preoccupied with what happened in the crash and the events following it.

You might be fearful of driving again.

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

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

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

You might find that although you were not responsible for the collision, you are being judged as if that were true.

You might believe that your feelings are being ignored by others and that your welfare is thought to be secondary to others.

You may be worrying that you will be charged with a driving offence. As a police investigation 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 driver involved in a fatal 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 crash. This can lead to feelings of isolation.

### What can help?

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 too isolated from other people.

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

### Who can help?

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

Ongoing support and information is also made available to drivers who have been involved in fatal collisions by qualified counsellors and trained volunteer peer supporters at the Road Trauma Support Services Victoria.

- 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

### Counsellors

Qualified counsellors at the Road Trauma Support Services Victoria can provide you with information about how to cope with the trauma, and with the thoughts, feelings and behaviours you are experiencing. You do not have to be concerned about the effect parts of your 'story' will have on a professional counsellor.

### Volunteer peer supporters

Volunteer peer supporters are people who have, themselves, been involved in a fatal collision and who wish to support other drivers who have been involved in a similar road trauma. Volunteer peer supporters 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 another driver who has been involved in a fatality.

**To make an appointment call 1300 367 797**