Looking after yourself after trauma

Sleep, food, routine, people and pacing in the weeks and months after trauma.

Recovering from trauma takes energy. Looking after the ordinary things gives your mind and body the best conditions to heal.

Body

- **Sleep.** Keep regular bed and wake times, even if sleep is poor. Rest still counts.
- **Food.** Eat regularly. A body low on fuel feels more anxious.
- **Movement.** Walking, stretching, swimming. Gentle, regular movement helps discharge stress.
- **Go easy on alcohol, caffeine and other substances.** They give short relief and make sleep, mood and anxiety worse.

Routine

- Keep some structure to the day: get up, get dressed, eat at mealtimes.
- Do small, manageable tasks. Finishing something restores a sense of control.
- Build in things that are pleasant or calming, even if you do not feel like it.

People

- Spend time with those who feel safe. You do not have to talk about what happened.
- Let people know what helps: company, practical help, or space.
- It is fine to say, "I do not want to talk about it today."

Pace

- Lower your expectations for a while. Concentration and energy will come back.
- Put off big decisions if you can.
- Limit news and social media about the event.
- Expect ups and downs. A hard day is not a step backwards.

> **A small daily check**
> Have I eaten? Have I moved? Have I spoken to someone? Have I done one thing that was just for me?

What I am already doing that helps

One thing I will add this week

© 2026 Patrick O'Hare Therapy · patrickoharetherapy.com
This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.