

Self Care -

It's vital that you remember to take care of yourself

Stress symptoms are normal under these circumstances. How you are feeling is normal and natural and may be experienced differently by each family member. These are *some possible symptoms** that you, or others, may be feeling. Be mindful of:

Physical	Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chills Thirst Vomiting Nausea Dizziness Headaches Chest pains Elevated Blood Pressure Shock symptoms Tension Insomnia Fatigue Exhaustion Stomach/digestive problems <p><i>Any of these symptoms may need medical attention. Maintain regular contact with your Doctor if any of these symptoms persist.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear Guilt Grief Denial Anxiety Agitation Depression Intense anger Feeling overwhelmed Disconnection Loss of emotional control Inappropriate emotional responses Emotional outbursts
Mental	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion Nightmares Hyper-vigilance Suspiciousness Difficulty problem solving Difficulty making decisions Poor concentration/memory Heightened/lowered alertness Hyper-critical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any change in normal behaviour Withdrawal Irritability Anger Restlessness Irregular sleeping patterns Change in social activity Resorting to old coping habits Loss/increase of appetite Loss/increase of alcohol consumption Increasing anxiety Absenteeism Pacing

This is not a complete list; you may be experiencing other symptoms not included here. Be sure to talk to your doctor if symptoms continue more than a week. Refer to the **Medicine Bear Resource Guide for different resources available to support you, your family and friends.*

Helpful tips...

- Plan regular family meetings to check in with everyone and see how each of you is doing. This will also provide an opportunity to share information and plan together, which will reduce miscommunication.
- Know that you are not alone and that there are always people that want to help you search, people to support you, and people to talk to. Reach out – people do care!
- Talk with someone. Whether it is an Elder, therapist, family member or a friend, you need to be able to speak freely with someone who will listen openly to your feelings. Remember that you can also attend or request a ceremony.
- Make a commitment to do at least one thing for yourself and your well-being each day. This will help you stay balanced and reduce stress so you can continue to manage the situation. Try to
 - Go for a 10-15 minute walk
 - Call a friend to go out for coffee
 - Write in a journal
 - Connect with nature
 - Make time for exercise
 - Light a candle and have 5 minutes of quiet time
 - Take an afternoon nap
 - Talk to an Elder or other spiritual advisor
- Your body needs fuel and sleep to be able to stay healthy. Even though it may be hard, it is vital that you eat a balanced diet with regular meals and get at least 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Find a place with no distractions that you can go to and feel at peace. Even a few minutes will help.
- You may find that the strong emotions you are feeling help drive you in the search for your loved one. Remember that you need to be able to release these emotions in a positive way as they build up – allow yourself time to blow off steam in a safe and healthy way.
- Sometimes it may feel like you should have been there or done something differently in order to prevent this from happening. Be gentle with yourself and others, and know that blaming yourself or others isn't fair to you, or helpful for your loved one.
- Some people find relief in writing, whether it be a letter, scribbles of thoughts, or just writing everything you're feeling, thinking and what is going on around you.

- Depending on their age and maturity, let younger siblings take part in the search if they request it; it may help them avoid a sense of helplessness and make them feel better for contributing.
- Allow your younger ones return to school if they are able but ensure that the school counsellor is there if needed.
- Do not try and go through this alone and be the rock for the whole family; you have every right to have your feelings, they are normal and natural. It's important to acknowledge how you're truly feeling and learn how to use these feelings in a positive way.
- Know that other families have also traveled this journey and have survived. You are not alone.
- Never give up, don't stop looking and smile whenever possible at all the good thoughts that come to mind of your loved one. Never lose hope

Other ideas that may be helpful in maintaining your health and wellness through this challenging journey:

Always remember, you are not alone