

SURVIVING THE EMERGENCY STAGE

The important thing to remember is that the emergency stage is a natural part of the healing process and will come to an end. The nature of crisis is that it overwhelms you, while you are in it; it is all you can see. But there will be a time when you will not think, eat, and dream sexual abuse twenty-four hours a day. And if you are in the emergency stage, that time will not come a moment too soon.

- **Don't hurt or try to kill yourself.** You deserve to live. If you start feeling suicidal or self-destructive, reach out
- **Know that you're not going crazy.** What you're going through is a recognised part of the healing process.
- **Find people you can talk to.** Don't try to bear it alone.
- **Get skilled professional support.**
- **Get support from other survivors.** It's unlikely that anyone other than another survivor can listen as much as you'll need to talk.
- **Allow yourself to obsess.** Don't make things worse by hating yourself for being where you are.
- **Do as many nice things for yourself as possible.**
- **Drop what isn't essential in your life.** Release the pressure any way you can. This means dropping unsupportive people, quitting activities, lightening your work load, getting extra child care.
- **Create a safe area in your home.** You need at least one place where you feel safe.
- **Watch your intake of drugs and alcohol.** Repeatedly numbing your feelings will only prolong the crisis.
- **Get out of abusive situations.** If you're currently in a situation where you're being abused, get out of it.
- **Sit tight and ride out the storm.** Your decision-making capability is limited right now. Except for getting out of abusive situations, the emergency stage is usually not a good time for making major life changes.
- **Remind yourself that you're brave.** This is challenging scary, difficult period. You don't have to do anything but live through it.
- **Remember to breathe.** Stay connected to your body as you can.