



PRESS RELEASE

SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT AT A TIME OF NATIONAL GRIEF

The Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists shares the grief of individuals and communities in the aftermath of the incomprehensible and senseless attacks on Easter Sunday. We have already started psychologically supporting those affected. The initial approach in disasters is termed Psychological First-Aid.

Psychological First-Aid

Psychological first-aid is considered as a humane, supportive response, in a time of crisis, to a fellow human being who is suffering and requires support. This help includes providing effective care and support including safety. Assessing individual needs and concerns and listening to the traumatized individuals without pressuring them to divulge sensitive information are components of psychological first-aid. It is also essential to comfort people and help them to feel calm and protect people from further harm. It is important that the survivor's privacy and autonomy is always respected in this approach.

As a nation we have lived through many disasters. We have adapted to specific ways of coping after a loss event. The facilitation of culturally sensitive mourning in the context of social and spiritual rituals is a necessity.

Psychiatric Support

Despite these measures, considering the magnitude of the loss some persons have suffered, there may be those who may need more intense support and guidance by psychiatric professionals. In these circumstances, one should not hesitate to approach psychiatric professionals such as psychiatrists. At present, there are psychiatrists in all the major government hospitals in Sri Lanka. Their teams are ready and willing to support everyone who will approach them. The National Hospital in Sri Lanka (NHSL) and the District General Hospital Negombo have a psychological support desk in the emergency department. Furthermore, the 24-hour hotline 1926 at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is always open for anyone to contact and receive appropriate help and guidance.