



Dear POLMED Members,

POLMED is here to offer you the support you need so that you do not have to carry the burden of post-traumatic stress alone. Post-traumatic stress can be a result of incidences that you may experience in the line of duty or in your personal life. These experiences can negatively affect your personal and working environments if not managed timeously.



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Psychological debriefing is a formal version of providing emotional and psychological support immediately following a traumatic event; psychological debriefing aims to prevent the development of post-traumatic stress disorder and other negative effects. Psychological debriefing is a type of therapy used for crisis intervention to support people who have experienced trauma. It is generally delivered in group sessions, but therapists also use this approach with individual clients to help prevent the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It includes multiple components to address every phase of a traumatic event. While it can take several forms, the most common type used within psychology is critical incident stress debriefing, which addresses stressful experiences emergency workers deal with in their jobs. Psychological debriefing employs a structured process, typically within 24 and 72 hours following a traumatic event, to address and help make sense of the participants' thoughts and emotions surrounding what happened.



The psychological debriefing process involves therapeutic interviews to allow people to confront what happened and express their feelings about the traumatic experience. Therapists might ask participants to provide information about the traumatic experience and help them walk through aspects of their experience based on the situation's context. Debriefing encourages reflection and communication so the participants can explore and express their emotions and enhance learning about the situation. Participants are encouraged to actively engage in the discussion so that each receives input from several sources about what they have experienced.

POLMED members employed under the SAPS Act have access to psycho-social debriefing sessions, which are available to assist with post-trauma debriefing sessions. Our supportive and professional therapists will help you so that it's easier to cope with work and personal issues, equip you with coping strategies when dealing with emotions and crises that arise, and enable you to achieve emotional balance and wellbeing.

- Members can access four sessions; these are paid from Risk and do not affect your day-to-day benefit.
- Members can access a psychologist or social worker on the POLMED Psychosocial Network who will assist with trauma debriefing.
- The sessions are confidential between the member and the Psychologist or Social Worker.
- The sessions and participation are voluntary; members are encouraged to participate



If a member requires additional sessions, the member can be registered on the Mental Health Programme. This programme assists with the continuation of sessions, medication (if needed), and hospitalisation if necessary.

Key benefits of counselling include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Improved communication and interpersonal skills.
- Improved self-acceptance and self-esteem.
- Capability to change self-defeating behaviours and habits.
- More suitable expression and management of emotions.
- Relief from depression, anxiety, or other mental health conditions.
- Greater confidence and decision-making skills.
- Ability to manage stress more effectively.
- Improved capabilities for problem-solving and conflict resolution.

How to find the closest network psychologist or social worker:

- Access the list of providers on the SAPS Intranet
- Contact POLMED Client Services Call Centre on **0860 765 633**
- Go to the POLMED website at www.polmed.co.za and search for a network provider from the drop-down list.

Your Health is your Wealth,
POLMED

