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Description

Plane crash survivors -- like the 24 people who survived the Atlantic Southeast Airlines Flight 529 crash in August 1995 -- may never be the same again, due in part to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Keywords

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, Trauma, Traumatic, Stress, Stressful, Life-Threatening, Events, Coping, Airplane, Plane, Crashes, Disorders, Terror, Flashbacks, Survivors, Psychological, Impact, Health, David Ginsberg, New York University, NYU, Residual, Symptoms, Atlantic Southeast Airlines, Flight 7529, Therapy, Disorders, Psychology

Citation

MLA
The Psychological Impact of Surviving a Plane Crash.

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
That flight attendant, Robin Fech, was released from the hospital today. The first thing she did was to go back to the scene of the crash. She didn't speak to reporters while there. In fact, the local sheriff said she didn't say much at all. She just walked around and looked at it.
And as NBC science correspondent Robert Bazell tells us tonight, she and the other 24 survivors may never be the same again.

ROBERT BAZELL reporting:
Is it possible for somebody to walk away from nine minutes of thinking they're going to die and be OK?

Dr. DAVID GINSBERG (New York University Medical Center): It is possible.
BAZELL: Possible, but fraught with dangers about future psychological health.

Dr. GINSBERG: They may all have nightmares or dreams about it. Sometimes people may even re-experience the terror of what it was like on the airplane during that time over and again. In--in a severe case, it may even involve hallucinations or flashbacks.

BAZELL: Dr. David Ginsberg, a psychiatrist at New York University Medical Center, treats people for post-traumatic stress disorder, the reaction of people who have faced death or severe injury.

Dr. GINSBERG: We know that about a third of people who experience this kind of event will recover completely. Another third, on average, may have some mild residual symptoms. And another, the last group, may have more moderate symptoms.

BAZELL: Despite what the survivors may have endured, only a few will suffer severe emotional problems for life. What should be done for people who have been through this sort of life-threatening disorder?

Dr. GINSBERG: Studies have shown that people who have family members and friends who are there for them and can help them cope with this tend to do better. What you want to do is, is get the person to
discuss what happened, recognize that this was an extremely challenging and stressful event for them so that they can integrate it and go on with their life.