



# Surviving Trauma in the Mountains

## Creating Connection: The Journey to Healing

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**Background:** British Columbia is seeing a significant increase in the number of Search and Rescue calls for incidence in the backcountry. Surviving an incident in the mountains can have a serious impact on a person's health and wellbeing. Yet there is a lack of support and resources specific to this population.

**Methodology:** A literature review was conducted on the lived experience of people who have survived trauma in the mountains and the health outcomes associated with these events. Literature was accessed utilizing numerous academic databases. Grey literature on survivors' experience was also included to deepen our understanding. The collected data was then categorized into themes and used to perform a need assessment on what type of resources are needed for this population.

**Results:** There are serious health sequelae resulting from these types of events. PTSD, anxiety, sleep disturbances, depression and loss of identity are all common for people who have survived this type of trauma. Additionally, survivors often experience significant shame and guilt related to their experience. Connection, social support, and education on the effects of trauma are shown to decrease the long term health effects following trauma in the mountains.



**Outcomes:** The Mountain Trauma Support Network, a not-for-profit association, was created to provide education and support to people who have been affected by this type of trauma. Through collaboration with local health care providers we plan on reducing barriers in accessing counselling services and support. Additionally, we plan shifting the discourse regarding these events and advocating for a trauma-informed care approach to be taken when working with people who have survived trauma in the mountains.

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**Know you are not alone.** If you or someone you love needs help, please phone Crisis Services Canada at 1-833-456-4566.