

After a Critical Incident

The First 24 Hours After an Event:

- Periods of strenuous physical exercise, alternated with relaxation, will alleviate some of the physical reaction.
- Structure your time - keep busy.
- You're normal and having a normal reaction - don't label yourself crazy.
- Talk to people - talk is the most healing medicine.
- Be aware of numbing the pain with overuse of drugs or alcohol, you don't need to complicate this with a substance abuse problem.
- Reach out - people do care.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- Spend time with others.
- Help your co-workers as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others.
- Keep a journal. Write your way through the sleepless hours.
- Do healthy things that feel good to you.
- Realize those around you are under stress.
- **Don't make any big life changes or decisions.**
- Do make as many daily decisions as possible which will give you a feeling of control over your life. If some one asks you what you want to eat-answer them even if you're not sure.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal - don't try to fight them - they'll decrease over time and become less painful.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it). Consider smaller portions and lighter fare.

For Family Members & Friends

- Listen carefully.
- Spend time with the traumatized person.
- Offer your assistance and a listening ear if they have not asked for help.
- Reassure them that they are safe.
- Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, and minding children.
- Give them some private time.
- Don't take their anger or other feelings personally.
- Don't tell them that they are "lucky it wasn't worse"- that statement does not console traumatized people. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred, and you

We recommend that these incidents should be an "AUTOMATIC CALL OUT." This means that the critical incident response team should always be contacted for each of these events.:

1. Work related death/line of duty death
2. Serious line of duty injury
3. Suicide
4. Multi-casualty incident
5. Use of force that ends with injury or death
6. Death or violence to a child
7. A prolonged event, with negative results
8. Incident with extensive media attention
9. Knowing the victim of the event
10. Incident charged with profound



Informational Sheet

A volunteer team of public safety and affiliate professionals serving regional fire, EMS, law enforcement, industry, educational, and other organizations involved in any type of critical incident.

Confidential services provided at no charge:

Pre-Incident Stress Education
Individual Peer Support
Crisis Management Briefing
Defusing
Debriefing
Follow-Up
Referral
Family Support

To Request Service/Response:

Call 1-800-344-5818

For more information, contact:

Jamie McGrew

Mental Health & Recovery Services Board
740-454-8557 or jamiem@mhrs.org

You have experienced a stressful and possibly traumatic event or a critical incident (any incident that causes a person to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function). Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing, or may experience later, some strong emotional or physical reactions. It is very common, in fact quite **normal**, for people to experience emotional after shocks when they have passed through a horrible event.

Sometimes the emotional aftershocks (or stress reactions) appear immediately after the traumatic event. Sometimes they may appear a few hours or a few days later. And, in some cases, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions appear.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks, a few months, or occasionally longer, depending on the severity of the traumatic event. With understanding and the support of loved ones, the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This does not imply craziness or weakness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful for the person to manage by himself or herself .

Common Signs of Stress

Here are some very common signs and signals of a stress reaction:

Physical

Fatigue
Nausea
Muscle tremors
Twitches
Chest pain*
Difficulty breathing*
Elevated B/P
Headache
Thirst
Profuse sweating
Chills
Shock symptoms*
Vomiting
Weakness
Grinding teeth
Visual difficulties
Dizziness

Cognitive

Confusion
Poor attention
Poor decisions
Heightened/Lowered alertness
Problems w/hyper-vigilance
Difficulty recognizing familiar things
Poor problem solving
Poor abstract thinking
Nightmares
Loss of orientation-time, place, person

*=SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION

Common Signs of Stress

Here are some very common signs and signals of a stress reaction:

Emotional

Anxiety
Guilt
Grief
Denial
Severe panic
Emotional shock
Fear
Uncertainty
Intense anger
Apprehension
Loss of emotional control
Depression
Feeling overwhelmed
Inappropriate emotional response

Behavioral

Changes in society
Changes in speech patterns
Loss/Increase appetite
Withdrawal
Startle reflex
Alcohol consumption
Inability to rest
Changes in sexual function
Erratic acts
Antisocial behavior
Non-specific bodily complaints
Changes in communication skills

If symptoms persist for 30 days or more, please seek additional assistance from the team or a professional care provider!