



After a Traumatic Event

Common Responses and Coping Strategies

It is very common and normal for people to have reactions after they have experienced a traumatic event, have witnessed a traumatic event, or are close to someone who has been the victim of a traumatic event. Traumatic events affect each person differently. Even though the event is over, you may be experiencing or may experience later, some strong emotional and physical reactions.

Sometimes reactions appear immediately after the event. Sometimes they appear a few hours or a few days later. In some cases, weeks or months may pass before reactions appear. Critical incident stress symptoms can last days, weeks, months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event.

Occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance may be helpful. This does not imply weakness but simply indicates that this particular event was too powerful to manage alone. You are welcome to contact CCA@YourService at **800-833-8707**.

CCA@YourService is a confidential counseling service, provided at no cost to employees and their family members.

Here is a list of some common signs of a critical incident stress reaction. **Remember - these are normal responses to an abnormal event:**

Cognitive Reactions:	Physical Reactions:
Confusion/Difficulty Concentrating Difficulty Making Decisions Decreased Alertness/Memory Lapses Intrusive Images/Thoughts Nightmares Replaying the Event Disbelief Search for Meaning	Fatigue Insomnia Headaches Nausea/Gastrointestinal Problems Hunger or Loss of Appetite Rapid Breathing Chest Pain* Dizziness*
Emotional Reactions:	Behavioral Reactions:
Anxiety Self-Blame Loss of Emotional Control Depression Emotional Numbness Helplessness Apathy/Boredom Anger	Withdrawal from Others Suspiciousness Substance Abuse Easily Startled Changes in Normal Activities Hypervigilance Diminished Sexual Drive Restlessness

* If you experience these symptoms, see a physician.



Practical Tips to Help You Cope with the Aftermath of a Traumatic Event

Find someone you trust. Don't carry this burden alone. Find supportive people (family members, friends, coworkers) and talk with them about your experience.

Give yourself permission to feel what you are feeling. Acknowledge your feelings as they arise. Remember you are having normal reactions, and it takes time to heal.

Take care of yourself. Get enough rest and eat regularly. Keep up your exercise routine if you have one. Don't abuse drugs or alcohol - they can hinder and delay recovery. Make your environment as pleasant as possible.

Tune in to How Your Child is Doing. Be supportive and compassionate. If you notice a change in your son or daughter's usual activities, behaviors, or moods, discuss them.

Take a Media Break. Minimize your exposure to all types of media. While getting the news informs you, being overexposed can augment your distress.

Know your limits. Avoid stressful situations for a while.

Practice relaxation. Meditate if you know how, if not, visualize a quiet scene. You can't always get away, but you can hold a vision in your mind - a quiet country scene for example, will temporarily take you out of the turmoil of a stressful situation.

Manage Anxiety. Ask yourself what specific worries are troubling you most and then seek information to address them. Having that information eliminates the fears created by anxiety.

Maintain as normal a schedule as possible. Make as many daily decisions as possible. This will give you a feeling of control over your life. However, delay making major life decisions until your symptoms decrease significantly.

Take one thing at a time. For people under tension, an ordinary workload may suddenly seem overwhelming. This is a temporary condition, and you can work through it, taking it one step at a time. Allow time for a task. Do each job more deliberately and thoughtfully.

Avoid hazardous activities. There is an increased likelihood of accidents.

YOU CAN ALWAYS SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP. You don't have to go through this experience alone. CCA@YourService is available for you and your family 24 hours a day.