

REACTIONS FOLLOWING A CRITICAL INCIDENT



During the next few days, week or month you may at sometime experience one or more of these normal reactions to trauma. The key to managing stress is to recognize these common reactions:

Physical

Fatigue/Exhaustions
Insomnia
Sleep Disturbances
Over/Under Activity
Nightmares
Change in appetite
Digestive problems
Physical problems
Headaches
Nausea

Cognitive

Lack of Concentration
Flashbacks
Difficulty with Decisions
Memory Disturbance
Forgetfulness
Confusion
Poor Problem Solving
Disturbed Thinking
Change in Alertness

Emotional

Fear
Guilt
Emotional Numbing
Over Sensitivity
Anxiety
Depression
Feeling Helpless
Anger
Irritability
Frustration

Behavioral

Change in Activity
Communication Changes
Withdrawal
Suspiciousness
Hyper-Alertness
Exaggerated Startle Reflex
Change in Sexual Behavior
Emotional Outbursts
Difficulty Sitting Still

Remember that these reactions to trauma are normal. In order to cope with what you have experienced here are some things to try that are known to lessen or alleviate stress:

- Within the first 24-48 hours, periods of physical exercise alternated with relaxation will alleviate some of your physical reactions.
- Structure your time-try to stay on a schedule.
- You are normal and are having normal reactions - do not label yourself as crazy
- Talk to people- talk is the most healing medicine. Accept help from others.
- Beware of numbing the pain with drugs, alcohol or other addictive behaviors
- Spend time with friends or family, don't isolate yourself.
- Help those around you as much as possible by sharing your feelings
- Give yourself permission to feel bad, sad, angry, etc.
- Write it down-writing helps to alleviate stressful thoughts and sleeplessness.
- Eat nutritious, well-balanced meals and avoid excessive use of caffeine
- Don't make any big decisions or life changes while you are in crisis.