



Critical Incident: *“Any situation faced by any person that causes them to experience unusually strong reactions which have the potential to interfere with their lives.”* Jeffrey T. Mitchell, Ph.D.

Common Signs & Symptoms of Critical Incident Stress:

- High level of anxiety
- Irritability
- Increased absenteeism
- Depression
- Feeling of apathy
- Guilt
- Sleep disturbances
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Poor appetite
- Excessive sweating
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling of isolation
- Poor communication skills
- Poor concentration
- Indecisiveness
- Confused thinking
- Anger
- Increase of alcohol use
- Fatigue
- Increased relational conflict
- Spiritual disconnection
- Decreased libido
- Grief or sadness
- Memory impairment
- Hyperstartle response
- Flashbacks

Things to Try:

- Periods of physical exercise alternated with relaxation. This can alleviate some of the physical reactions.
- Structure your time — keep busy.
- You are normal and having normal reactions — don't label yourself crazy.
- Talk to people — talk is the best 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.
- Meditate, pray, read spiritual literature.
- Help your co-workers, family, or others who experienced the incident by sharing your feelings and checking out how they're doing.
- Keep a journal — write away those sleepless nights.
- Do things that feel good to you.
- Realize that those around you are under stress too.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Do make as many decisions as possible which will give you a feeling of control over your life. (i.e. if someone asks you what you want to eat, answer them even if you are not sure.)
- Get plenty of rest.
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are common — don't try to fight them. They'll likely decrease over time and become less painful.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it).

For Family Members and Friends:

- Listen carefully. Being there matters.
- Spend time with the traumatized person.
- Offer your assistance and listening ear even 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 the children.
- Give them some private time.
- Don't take their anger or other negative feelings personally.
- Don't tell them that they are “lucky it wasn't worse” or “everything will be okay” or “don't worry.” Traumatized people are not consoled by those statements. Instead tell them you are sorry that such an event happened and that you want to understand and assist them.

***If you need the team call: 888-760-3332
www.traumaministry.org***