



Critical Incident Stress Information Sheet

You have experienced a traumatic event or a Critical Incident (any incident that causes emergency service personnel to experience unusually strong emotional reactions.) 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 and quite normal for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have passed through a horrible event. If you are honestly handling the experience and not denying your feelings, this can be normal also.

Sometime the emotional after shocks (or stress reactions) appear immediately after the traumatic event. They may appear a few hours or a few later. In some cases, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions appear. The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last days, weeks, months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event.

With understanding and support for your co-workers and your loved ones, the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally the traumatic event is so painful that professional help from a counselor may necessary. This does not mean that your are crazy or weak. It may indicate that the particular event or an accumulation of events led to a strong emotional response, which is often helped by talking with a professional counselor.

Here are some very common signs of stress reaction.

Physical	Thoughts	Feelings	Responses
Tired Upset stomach Appetite Loss Shakiness Twitches Rapid Heart Rate Thirst Headaches Blurred Vision Vomiting Teeth Grinding Weakness Dizziness Profuse Sweating Chills Fainting Chest Pain * Difficulty Breathing * Elevated B/P * Shock Symptoms *	Blaming Someone Confusion "I'm I Crazy" Poor Attention Poor Decisions Heightened Or Lowered Alertness Poor Concentration Memory Problems Altered Time Perception Increase or Decrease Awareness of Surroundings Poor Problem Solving Nightmares Flash Backs Disturbed Thinking	Anxious/Nervous Guilt Intense Anger Grief Denial Severe Panic (rare) Fear Uncertainty Uncontrolled Emotions Depression Inappropriate Emotional Responses Apprehension Overwhelmed Irritability Loneliness Agitation Helplessness Hopelessness	Activity changes Sexual Activity Changes Speech Pattern Changes Withdrawal Emotional Outbursts Suspiciousness Communications Changes Increased Alcohol Consumption Sleep Disturbances Antisocial Acts Intensified Startle Reflex Pacing <u>Erratic Movements</u>

* A define indicator for medical evaluation