

After a Critical Incident

The first few days after an incident:

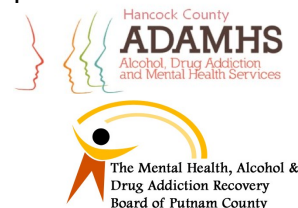
- Periods of strenuous physical exercise, alternated with relaxation may alleviate some of the physical reactions
- Structure your time—keep busy/routine
- You're normal and having common reactions, so don't label yourself crazy
- Talk to people—**talk is the most healing medicine**
- Be aware of numbing the pain with over use of drugs or alcohol, you don't need to complicate this with a substance use 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 how they are doing
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten (or happy) and share your feelings with others
- Keep a journal; write your way through any sleepless hours
- Do healthy things that feel good to you
- Realize those around you are also 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
- Get plenty of rest
- Reoccurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are common—don't try to fight them, they should decrease over time and become less painful
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals

For Family Members & Friends

- Listen carefully and non-judgmentally
- 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
- Avoid phrases like "you are lucky it wasn't worse," as those types of statements do not console traumatized people
- You may consider sharing your sorrow for what has occurred, and that you want to understand and assist them

Suggested reasons to activate the team/request services:

1. Work related death / Line of duty death
2. Serious work injury / Line of duty injury
3. Suicide
4. Multi-casualty incident
5. Use of force ending in injury or death
6. Death or violence to a child
7. Prolonged event with negative outcome
8. Incident with extensive media attention
9. Knowing the victim of the event
10. Incident charged with profound emotion



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 include:

Pre-Incident Stress Education

Individual Peer Support

Crisis Management Briefing

Defusing

Debriefing

Follow-Up

Referral

Family Support

To Request Services/Response:

1-800-567-4673

For Information Contact:

allencountycism@gmail.com

Website: www.cism.care

Critical Incident Stress Informational Sheet

You have experienced a stressful and possibly traumatic event, something we call a critical incident (any event that causes each person or persons to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later). Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing, or may experience later, some strong emotions or physical reaction(s). 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 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 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:

<u>Physical</u>	<u>Cognitive</u>
Fatigue	Confusion
Nausea	Poor attention
Muscle tremors	Poor decisions
Twitches	Heightened/Lowered alertness
Chest pain*	
Difficulty breathing*	Problems w/hyper-vigilance
Elevated B/P*	
Headache	Difficulty recognizing familiar things
Thirst	
Profuse sweating	Poor problem solving
Chills	Poor abstract thinking
Shock symptoms*	Nightmares
Vomiting	Loss of orientation - time, place, person
Weakness	
Grinding teeth	
Visual difficulties	
Dizziness	

* = Seek immediate medical attention

Common Signs of Stress

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

<u>Emotional</u>	<u>Behavioral</u>
Anxiety	Changes in society
Guilt	Changes in speech patterns
Grief	Loss/Increased appetite
Denial	Withdrawal
Severe panic	Startle reflex
Emotional shock	Alcohol consumption
Fear	Inability to rest
Uncertainty	Changes in sexual function
Intense anger	Erratic acts
Apprehension	Antisocial behavior
Loss of emotional control	Non-specific bodily complaints
Depression	Changes in communication skills
Feeling overwhelmed	
Inappropriate emotional response	

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