

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS REACTIONS

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Over the next month you will experience normal reactions to the kind of experience you've had which may include:

Physical Reactions

Fatigue	Nightmares
Insomnia (which may turn into hypersomnia)	Hyperactivity
Underactivity	Exhaustion
Health problems (such as a change in appetite, headache, digestive problems)	Startle Reactions

Cognitive Reactions

Difficulty with concentration	Difficulty making decisions
Difficulty solving problems	Memory disturbance
Flashbacks	Isolating
Inability to attach importance to anything other than this incident	

Emotional Reactions

Fear	Anxiety
Guilt	Depression
Emotional numbing	Feelings of helplessness
Over-sensitivity	Amnesia for the event
Anger – which may be manifest by: Scapegoating, irritability, frustration with bureaucracy, violent fantasies	

These are normal reactions, and although painful, are part of the healing process. There's not a lot anyone can do to make you not experience these uncomfortable feelings but there are things you can do to feel more whole.

Things to try:

- **Within the first 24-48 hours** periods of strenuous physical exercise alternated with relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions. Structure your time – keep busy.
- You're normal and having normal reactions – don't label yourself crazy.
- Talk to people – talk is the most 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.
- Keep your lives as normal as possible.
- Spend time with others.
- Help your co-workers as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they're doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others.
- Keep a journal; write your way through those sleepless hours.
- Do things that feel good to you.
- Realize those around you are under stress.
- The Nutrition Almanac recommends supplementing your diet with Vitamin C, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B6, Calcium and Magnesium.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Do make as many daily 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're not sure.