

Things to Try:

- ◆ Spend time with family members and friends.
- ◆ Identify a few trusted people with whom you can talk comfortably
- ◆ Keep your life as normal as possible
- ◆ Write about what you've been through and how you're feeling; no need to show it to anyone.
- ◆ Continue daily routines, especially for children in the family
- ◆ Monitor your caffeine intake especially if sleep is a problem.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

A critical incident is defined as exposure to a life-threatening event, or witnessing someone else in a life-threatening event.

Law enforcement personnel come in contact with some of the worst experiences in life and consequently are vulnerable to the severe stress reactions that may follow a critical incident.

- ◆ Minimize the use of alcohol
- ◆ Drink plenty of water
- ◆ Eat healthy
- ◆ Exercise
- ◆ If you can't sleep, try putting the thoughts running through your mind down on paper.
- ◆ Give yourself permission to feel rotten.
- ◆ Check on those around you. Everyone is under added stress

Support personnel and family members can also experience secondary stress reactions.

Timely interventions provided to persons involved with a critical incident have proven to be an effective tool to combat the aversive reactions caused by traumatic events.

The goal of the Texas Department of Public Safety Critical Incident Response Team is to minimize the effects of any professional or personal critical incident exposure. This is done by working with the affected personnel directly as well as with all support personnel and family members.

The Critical Incident Response Team has members stationed across Texas available to provide peer support to any employee and

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS REACTIONS

family members when needed. The Team also includes mental health professionals, chaplains, and spouses. Designated team members, known as Regional Contacts, will activate the team when notified that a critical incident has occurred and a response is needed.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS REACTIONS

Physical

- ◆ Fatigue/Exhaustion
- ◆ Insomnia
- ◆ Sleep Disturbances
- ◆ Nightmares
- ◆ Change in Appetite
- ◆ Digestive Problems
- ◆ Physical Problems
- ◆ Headaches
- ◆ Nausea

Cognitive

- ◆ Lack of Concentration
- ◆ Flashbacks
- ◆ Difficulty with Decisions
- ◆ Memory Disturbance
- ◆ Amnesia
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Poor Problem Solving
- ◆ Disturbed Thinking
- ◆ Poor Abstract Thinking

- ◆ Change in Alertness

Emotional

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

Behavioral

- ◆ Change in Activity
- ◆ Change in Communication
- ◆ Withdrawal
- ◆ Suspiciousness
- ◆ Hyper Alertness
- ◆ Startle Reaction
- ◆ Change in Sexual Behavior
- ◆ Emotional Outbursts
- ◆ Pacing