

# CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS INFORMATION

## PHYSICAL

1. Chest Pain (See a Doctor)
2. Chills
3. Irritable Bowel Syndrome
4. Dizziness
5. Fatigue
6. Feeling uncoordinated
7. Headaches
8. Increased blood pressure
9. Muscle aches
10. Nausea
11. Profuse sweating
12. Rapid breathing
13. Rapid heart beat
14. Sleep disturbances
15. Tremors (lips, hands)
16. Upset stomach
17. Onset of illness
18. Kinetic sensations

The signs and symptoms of a stress response may last a few days, weeks, or months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event.

## THINKING

1. Confusion
2. Difficulty Concentrating
3. Difficulty forming words- Verbal acuity
4. Difficulty making decisions
5. Difficulty problem solving
6. Difficulty naming common objects
7. Disorientation to place and time
8. Feeling numb
9. Flashbacks
10. Memory problems
11. Poor attention span
12. Problem with number calculations
13. Seeing the event over and over again
14. Slowed thinking
15. Difficulty learning
16. Difficulty putting thoughts on paper
17. Reoccurring thoughts
18. Sights, sounds, smells

## EMOTIONAL

1. Anger
2. Anxiety
3. Depression
4. Fear
5. Feeling abandoned
6. Feeling isolated
7. Feeling lost
8. Distressing dreams
9. Grief
10. Guilt
11. Irritability
12. Sadness
13. Shocked
14. Startled
15. Wanting to hide
16. Repressed anger/ sadness
17. Withdrawal
18. Dissociation

With understanding and support of loved ones, the stress responses usually pass more quickly. Occasionally the event is so painful to manage alone that assistance from a counselor may be necessary.

Traumatic Stress refers to the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological experiences of individuals who are exposed to, or who witness, events that overwhelm their coping and problem solving abilities.

Lerner and Shelton

## STRESS RESPONSES

### 1. Acute Stress -

An immediate stress response whether physical, cognitive, and/or emotional.

### 2. Delayed Stress-

Stress responses may appear days, weeks, or months after an incident.

### 3. Cumulative Stress -

An individual may have had several losses or experienced several critical incidents within the past month or year.



## Helpful Hints

### For the Traumatized

#### Encourage:

- ✓ Rest
- ✓ Eating vegetables and protein.
- ✓ Drinking lots of water.
- ✓ The importance of getting back to a regular schedule ASAP.
- ✓ DO NOT fight reoccurring thoughts, dreams, and flashbacks. These are NORMAL.
- ✓ Express your feelings as they arise.
- ✓ Exercise (walk, lift weights, swim etc.).
- ✓ Cognitive Restructuring
- ✓ Talk to people you trust.
- ✓ When the time presents itself and only when it is appropriate, expose them to something fun that will promote laughter.



Arizona School Counselors Association, Inc.

# Critical Incident Stress Information



Developed by

Cynthia D. Thomae M.S  
&  
Richard Montañó M. Ed.

Incident Command System  
A Reference Guide For Arizona  
Schools

A Partnership of  
Northwest Fire and  
Arizona School  
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