



Critical Incident Stress Reactions

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

Physical Reactions	Cognitive Reactions	Emotional Reactions	Behavioral Reactions
Fatigue/exhaustion Insomnia Sleep disturbances Over/Under activity Nightmares Change in appetite Digestive problems Physical problems Headaches Nausea	Lack of concentration Flashbacks Difficulty with decisions Memory disturbance Amnesia Confusion Poor problem solving Disturbed thinking Poor abstract thinking Change in alertness	Fear Guilt Emotional numbing Over sensitivity Anxiety Depression Feeling helpless Anger Irritability Frustration	Change in activity Change in communication Withdrawal Suspiciousness Hyperalertness Startle reflex Change in sexual behavior Emotional outbursts Scapegoating Pacing

These reactions are normal and, although painful, are part of the normal healing process. There is not a lot anyone can do to make you not experience these uncomfortable feelings but there are some 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 your physical reactions.
- ◆ Structure your time - keep busy.
- ◆ You're normal and having normal reactions - don't label yourself as crazy.
- ◆ Talk to people - talk is the most healing medicine.
- ◆ Beware of numbing the pain with 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 those around you as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- ◆ Give yourself permission to feel rotten.
- ◆ Keep a journal - write your way through those sleepless hours.
- ◆ Do things that feel good to you.
- ◆ Realize that those around you are under stress.
- ◆ Accept offered help.
- ◆ Eat nutritious, well-balanced meals high in carbohydrates and low in sugar.
- ◆ Avoid excessive use of caffeine.
- ◆ Don't make any big life changes.

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