

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR:

Your reaction is your reaction. It is ok to be ok, and it is ok not to be. Some signs that you *may* need professional assistance include:

- Stress reactions that last more than 30 days.
- You are acting as if nothing is wrong but you are hurting inside.
- You are questioning everything (e.g., marriage, job) and are about to make major life decisions.
- Nothing makes sense or means anything anymore.
- You feel your situation is hopeless.
- You are helpless and you feel worthless.

Occasionally, an incident can be so powerful that professional assistance is necessary. A professional can assist you to learn new ways of coping.

In addition to the supports offered by the Critical Incident Stress Response/Peer Support Teams and Employee & Family Assistance Program, you may have access to other supports through your extended benefit plan, administered by Great West Life. You are encouraged to consult your family physician at any time, to assist you in accessing specialized or longer-term supports that are best suited to your needs.



FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

- Ask the person how you may best help, don't just take over and do things you think would be helpful without checking.
- Offer your support respectfully.
- Reassure them they are safe, if true.
- Listen! Don't judge or offer advice.
- Be patient. Remember that healing from a psychological injury takes patience, care and time - usually more time than we think.
- Don't poke or prod for details if they don't want to talk. Be patient. Be ready to listen.
- Spend time with them, silently if necessary.
- Give them some private time, if they want.
- Don't take their anger personally, but don't be passive either.
- Contact the CISR/PS Team or EFAP for help with issues involving your spouse or dependents

CONTACT US

General program information and a current listing of all CISR/PS Team Members can be found on the OPP Connections webpage. Search for "CISR", or "Wellness Unit" or visit www.opp.ca.

Additional information about the Employee & Family Assistance Program is available through the EFAP Provider.

1-844-880-9142 / www.workhealthlife.com

OPP Coordinator, CISR/PS:
Staff Sergeant Rick Foley (705) 923-1900

Ontario Provincial Police



Wellness Unit

Tips for Coping after a Critical Incident



Critical Incident Stress
Response/Peer Support
Program

CAREER
DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU



CISR/PS PROGRAM:

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) provides support to members through the Critical Incident Stress Response (CISR)/Peer Support (PS) Teams. Teams are trained in individual and group crisis intervention and can respond immediately to a critical incident as well as individual requests for support. Teams are available in every region. Employees including active, retired, resigned, terminated, auxiliary and OPP administered First Nations members and family members who may be in crisis or who need support can contact CISR/PS members at any time during and after exit from the OPP.

EMPLOYEE & FAMILY ASSISTANCE:

Free, confidential professional counselling is always available to you and your family members by contacting the OPP's external Employee and Family Assistance Program provider, Morneau Shepell.

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

A critical incident is any situation faced by employees that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional or physical reactions and has the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later.

- Line of duty death of co-worker
- Injury to an employee or co-worker
- Death or serious injury to a citizen associated with an employee's actions
- Disaster or multi-casualty incident
- Suicide
- Death or serious injury of children
- Any incident deemed critical by members involved.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:

Critical incident stress refers to the emotional, physical and cognitive reactions to a critical incident.

The following *may* occur during the incident:

Thinking

- trouble concentrating
- distractibility/hyper-vigilance
- disorientation/confusion

Physical

- nausea
- headache
- muffled hearing
- racing or pounding heart
- chest pains
- sweating

Physiological Arousal

- disturbed sleeping
- change in appetite
- hyperactivity
- hyper-vigilance
- memory problems
- irritability/anger

Avoidance and Numbing

- avoiding any reminder of incident
- feeling empty or numb inside

Social

- feeling alone
- feeling betrayed/abandoned
- trouble communicating

Emotional

- numbness
- anger or rage
- fear/anxiety/vulnerability
- feeling overwhelmed

Re-experiencing the Incident

- flashbacks
- dreams/nightmares preoccupation with the incident
- feeling sadness/guilt/loss triggers/reminders of the incident

TIPS FOR COPING:

During the incident:

- Be active.
- Make positive self-statements.
- Take deep breaths and take breaks when feasible.

After the incident:

- Exercise within 24 hours, accept reactions as normal and natural.
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal. Don't try to fight them. They are normal and typically decrease over time and become less painful.
- Stick to normal routines as much as possible.
- Healthy sleep, nutrition, exercise and eating habits are essential practices to maintain.
- People who talk about a critical incident generally remain healthier, work better and have fewer disruptions in their lives. The more you talk about your reactions, the easier it will be to put the incident into perspective.
- Attend Critical Incident Stress Defusings, Debriefings and Information Sessions when offered by the Ontario Provincial Police Critical Incident Stress Response/Peer Support Teams.
- Be a positive role model by promoting discussion. Help your coworkers as much as possible. You may have an easier time dealing with certain situations than someone else. If you discuss your reactions, you may make it easier for others to feel comfortable discussing their reactions.