



# OCDE Crisis Response Network

## Critical Incident Stress Information Sheets

You have experienced a traumatic event or a critical incident (any event that causes unusually strong emotional reactions that have the potential to interfere with the ability to function normally.) Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing or many experience later, some strong emotional or physical reactions. It is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have passes through a horrible event.

Sometimes the emotional aftershocks (or stress reactions) appear immediately after the traumatic event. Sometimes they may appear a few hours or a few days later. And, in some cases, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions appear.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks, a few months, or longer, depending on the severity of the traumatic event. The understanding and the support of loved ones usually cause the stress reactions to pass more quickly. Occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance may be necessary. This does not imply craziness or weakness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful for the person to manage by himself.

Here are some common signs and signals of a stress reaction:

<b>Physical*</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>Emotional</b>	<b>Behavioral</b>
chills	confusion	fear	withdrawal
thirst	nightmares	guilt	antisocial acts
fatigue	uncertainty	grief	inability to rest
nausea	hypervigilance	panic	intensified pacing
fainting	suspiciousness	denial	erratic movements
twitches	intrusive images	anxiety	change in social activity
vomiting	blaming someone	agitation	change in speech patterns
vomiting	poor problem solving	irritability	loss or increase of appetite
dizziness	poor abstract thinking	depression	hyperalert to environment
weakness	poor attention/decisions	intense anger	increased alcohol
chest pain	poor concentration/memory	apprehension	consumption
headaches	disorientation of time, place or person	emotional shock	change in usual communications
elevated bp	difficulty identifying objects of people	emotional outbursts	etc...
rapid heart rate	heightened or lowered alertness	feeling overwhelmed	
muscle tremors	increased or decreased awareness of surroundings	loss of emotional control	
shock symptoms	etc...	inappropriate emotional response	
grinding of teeth		etc...	
visual difficulties			
profuse sweating			
difficulty breathing			
etc...			

***\*Any of these symptoms may indicate the need for medical evaluation.  
When in doubt, contact a physician.***