



STRESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

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WHAT IS STRESS MANAGEMENT?

TRAUMATIC EVENTS can often overwhelm the body's ability to cope with stress. Even after the event is over, it is normal to experience emotional and physical symptoms of stress. Regardless of the cause, duration, or type of stress, it is vitally important to understand the body's reaction to stress and learn how to manage it.



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WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

ANYONE who experiences a critical incident or trauma, regardless of how healthy or well-adjusted they are, may have reactions to the event. If you experience any kind of reaction beyond what you believe is normal, it is important to get the appropriate assistance.

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION about reactions to a critical incident is that they convey a personal weakness in the individual. The implication is that a healthy, functioning person will be unaffected by an incident. However, this is not the case.

HOW COULD IT AFFECT ME?

EVERYONE responds to trauma in their own way. Some reactions to critical incidents are perfectly normal, but some reactions may indicate that the individual is having problems coping with the incident. **SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE:**

- PHYSICAL:** Thirst, fatigue, nausea
- COGNITIVE:** Confusion, hypervigilance, poor concentration
- EMOTIONAL:** Fear, guilt, anxiety, irritability, feeling overwhelmed
- BEHAVIORAL:** Withdrawal, inability to rest, increased alcohol use
- SPIRITUAL:** Anger at God, withdrawal from place of worship

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

WHEN FACING EXCESSIVE STRESS, here are some things you can try to reduce the natural reactions you may be experiencing:

- Exercise
- Avoid excessive alcohol intake
- Reach out to others
- Maintain a normal schedule
- Do things you enjoy
- Avoid major life changes
- Get plenty of rest
- Eat balanced, regular meals

WHAT SHOULD MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS DO?

CONSIDER SHARING the following suggestions with those close to you as it may help them support you during these times:

- Listen carefully
- Spend time with the affected person
- Offer attention
- Reassure them they are safe
- Do not take their responses personally
- Familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of stress

IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER that the symptoms of stress discussed are perfectly normal to experience after going through a traumatic event. However, if the suggestions for reducing stress are not effective, it may be time to reach out.



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