

## 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 may 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 passed 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:

<i>Physical*</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Behavioral</i>
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
dizziness	poor problem solving	irritability	loss or increase of appetite
weakness	poor abstract thinking	depression	hyperalert to environment
chest pain	poor attention/ decisions	intense anger	increased alcohol consumption
headaches	poor concentration/memory	apprehension	change in usual communications
elevated BP	disorientation of time, place or person	emotional shock	etc...
rapid heart rate	difficulty identifying objects or people	emotional outbursts	
muscle tremors	heightened or lowered alertness	feeling overwhelmed	
shock symptoms	increased or decreased awareness of surroundings	loss of emotional control	
grinding of teeth		inappropriate emotional response	
visual difficulties		etc...	
profuse sweating			
difficulty breathing			
etc...			

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

## THINGS TO TRY:

- WITHIN THE FIRST 24 - 48 HOURS periods of appropriate physical exercise, alternated with relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions.
- Structure your time; keep busy.
- You're normal and having normal reactions; don't label yourself crazy.
- Talk to people; talk is the most healing medicine.
- Be aware of *numbing* the pain with overuse of drugs or alcohol, you don't need to complicate this with a substance abuse problem.
- Reach out; people do care.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- Spend time with others.
- Help your co-workers as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others.
- Keep a journal; write your way through those sleepless hours.
- Do things that feel good to you.
- Realize those around you are under stress.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Do make as many daily decisions as possible that will give you a feeling of control over your life, i.e., if someone asks you what you want to eat, answer him even if you're not sure.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Don't try to fight reoccurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks - they are normal and will decrease over time and become less painful.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it).

## FOR FAMILY MEMBERS & FRIENDS

- Listen carefully.
- Spend time with the traumatized person.
- Offer your assistance and a listening ear if (s)he has not asked for help.
- Reassure him that he is safe.
- Help him with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, minding children.
- Give him some private time.
- Don't take his anger or other feelings personally.
- Don't tell him that he is "lucky it wasn't worse;" a traumatized person is not consoled by those statements. Instead, tell him that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist him.

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## TWENTY SIGNALS THAT SAY, "I'M STUCK!"

Some people, particularly those who avoid dealing with their emotional reactions, may find themselves increasingly re-living their trauma. It may seem to them that little is resolved in the first weeks following the incident. An individual should seek professional consultation if the following reactions persist longer than a month and interfere with his or her ability to function:

### TWENTY SIGNALS

1. Intrusive images: distressing memories, thoughts, nightmares, and flashbacks.
2. Distress at exposure to events that resemble or symbolize the event.
3. Avoids thoughts and emotions connected with the incident, or activities or situations that arouse memories of the trauma.
4. Numbing or restricted range of emotional responsiveness.
5. Excessive stress reactions.
6. Hyper vigilance
7. Overreaction \ under-reaction \ risk taking.
8. Increased irritability, anger or rage.
9. Obsession with the incident. Thoughts of the incident are easily triggered—one seems stuck in the past and has difficulty looking toward the future.
10. Feelings associated with past events. The combined emotional impact of old and new situations may seem so overwhelming that one's ability to deal effectively with any incident seems to suffer.
11. Self-doubt, guilt, second-guessing of oneself, feelings of inadequacy, obsession with perceived mistakes
12. A growing sense of isolation "No one understands what I'm experiencing...I feel lost, abandoned, and different than others."
13. Intense or sustained feelings of depression, grief, loss of control.
14. Mental confusion: Increased distractibility, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, poor judgement.
15. Development of suspiciousness in dealing with others.
16. Relationship problems. Withdrawal from others, increasing difficulty with peer/supervisory/family relationships.
17. Decline in work performance. Increased absenteeism, burnout, and decline in productivity and quality of work.
18. One may have little or no noticeable initial reaction to the incident, but reactions are triggered months later.
19. Self-destructive behavior: Substance abuse, poor judgement and inappropriate decisions.
20. In rare cases, suicidal thinking may result from feelings of depression, guilt, despair, and anger with oneself.

*When a person experiences a traumatic stress reaction, current behavior may change substantially from previous normal behavior.*

*If the person continues demonstrating effects of traumatic stress, consulting with a mental health professional can help in working through the emotional reactions.*

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**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - EAP**

# When life's a little much, reach out and get in touch.

Let's be real: life can be tough. When your responsibilities start to feel overwhelming and showing up each day with a smile on your face seems difficult, it's important to reach out for help. You can lean on your free and confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for support.

## We've got your back.

A free benefit from your workplace, the EAP can help you or anyone in your household:

- Be more present and productive at work
- Receive support when you don't feel like yourself
- Get help with responsibilities that are distracting or stressful
- Grow personal and career skills
- Be a caring, loving friend or family member
- Receive care after a traumatic event or diagnosis
- Make healthy lifestyle choices
- Improve and inspire daily life

## We're here for you, always.

Life happens, regardless of the day or time. That's why we make ourselves available 24/7, even on holidays. So whenever you need to reach out, we're here for you.



**Support Line**  
Call anytime  
800-624-5544



**Mobile app**  
Search for New  
Directions EAP



**Web**  
Visit [ndbh.com](http://ndbh.com)  
for resources

## SERVICES

- ☑ **Counseling**
  - In-person
  - Telephone
  - Text messaging
  - In-the-moment
- ☑ **Consultation on**
  - Finances
  - Legal needs
  - Managing employees
  - Life
- ☑ **Crisis support**
- ☑ **Coaching**
- ☑ **Adult and child care resources**
- ☑ **Personal and professional training**
- ☑ **Digital behavioral health tools**

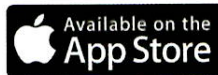
**ndbh.com**  
**800-624-5544**

**Services are free and your employer will not know you reached out.**  
Flip this sheet over to see some common reasons people use EAP.

**“The EAP has been beneficial in so many ways I don’t know how I would have gotten through without it.”**

### Check out our app.

Search for **New Directions EAP** in your app store.



## Whatever life throws your way, we’re here to help.

Stress, relationships, work and money. These are the most common reasons people reach out to the EAP every year. But no matter what issues you’re facing, the EAP is the perfect first step for you or your family members to:

### Reduce stress

Some stress can be a good thing, but too much can be debilitating and unhealthy. Counseling, assessments, coaching, apps, meditation practices, online tools and more can help you improve areas that need work.

### Handle a life curve ball

Divorce, adoption, losing a loved one, career changes and moving can all interrupt one’s daily life. Counseling, thousands of online tools, coaching and consultations can help you adjust.

### Cope after crisis

Mentally processing and coping after a traumatic event generally takes time and expert care. Counseling, education sheets and communication can help when a crisis occurs.

### Support and improve relationships

Raising kids, living with others or improving friendships can take guidance and investment. Counseling, videos, tip sheets and advice make this easier. Referrals to credible daycares, assisted living facilities, dog walkers, physicians, etc. can also help.

### Focus at work

We all experience feeling a lack of productivity and engagement at work sometimes. Trainings, advice and custom behavioral strategies can help you become more focused.

### Lead others

If you supervise people at work, it’s likely you handle difficult things like performance issues, troubled employees, HR law and hard conversations. Dedicated consultants can provide guidance so you can do your job and have less stress.

### Navigate the legal system

Handling a landlord, large purchase, estate or even an infraction can be easier with the help of a legal expert and thousands of online templates to put into action.

### Reduce debt

Money worries can be minimized with custom action plans developed with a financial expert to save, reduce debt or afford a life desired.

### Live a healthy life

Changing behaviors to quit smoking, lose weight, manage a disease or exercise more can be more manageable when broken into baby steps. Coaching, videos, counseling and digital tools can help you start living healthy.

**Take the first step and call today.**

**ndbh.com**  
**800-624-5544**



## Feelings List

<b>Accepting / Open</b>	<b>Angry / Annoyed</b>	<b>Connected / Loving</b>	<b>Disconnected / Numb</b>	<b>Fragile</b>	<b>Stressed / Tense</b>
Calm	Agitated	Accepting	Aloof	Helpless	Anxious
Centered	Aggravated	Affectionate	Bored	Sensitive	Burned out
Content	Bitter	Caring	Confused	<b>Grateful</b>	Cranky
Fulfilled	Contempt	Compassion	Distant	Appreciative	Depleted
Patient	Cynical	Empathy	Empty	Blessed	Edgy
Peaceful	Disdain	Fulfilled	Indifferent	Delighted	Exhausted
Present	Disgruntled	Present	Isolated	Fortunate	Frazzled
Relaxed	Disturbed	Safe	Lethargic	Grace	Overwhelm
Serene	Edgy	Warm	Listless	Humbled	Rattled
Trusting	Exasperated	Worthy	Removed	Lucky	Rejecting
<b>Aliveness / Joy</b>	Frustrated	<b>Curious</b>	Resistant	Moved	Restless
Amazed	Furious	Engaged	Shut Down	Thankful	Shaken
Awe	Grouchy	Exploring	Uneasy	Touched	Tight
Bliss	Hostile	Exploring	Withdrawn	<b>Guilt</b>	Weary
Delighted	Impatient	Fascinated	<b>Embarrassed / Shame</b>	Regret	Worn out
Eager	Irritated	Interested	Ashamed	Remorseful	<b>Unsettled / Doubt</b>
Ecstatic	Irate	Intrigued	Humiliated	Sorry	Apprehensive
Enchanted	Moody	Involved	Inhibited	<b>Hopeful</b>	Concerned
Energized	On edge	Stimulated	Mortified	Encouraged	Dissatisfied
Engaged	Outraged	<b>Despair / Sad</b>	Self-conscious	Expectant	Disturbed
Enthusiastic	Pissed	Anguish	Useless	Optimistic	Grouchy
Excited	Resentful	Depressed	Weak	Trusting	Hesitant
Free	Upset	Despondent	Worthless	<b>Powerless</b>	Inhibited
Happy	Vindictive	Disappointed	<b>Fear</b>	Impotent	Perplexed
Inspired	<b>Courageous / Powerful</b>	Discouraged	Afraid	Incapable	Questioning
Incorporated	Adventurous	Forlorn	Anxious	Resigned	Rejecting
Lively	Brave	Gloomy	Apprehensive	Trapped	Reluctant
Passionate	Capable	Grief	Frightened	Victim	Shocked
Playful	Confident	Heartbroken	Hesitant	<b>Tender</b>	Skeptical
Radiant	Daring	Hopeless	Nervous	Calm	Suspicious
Refreshed	Determined	Lonely	Panic	Caring	Ungrounded
Rejuvenated	Free	Melancholy	Paralyzed	Loving	Unsure
Renewed	Grounded	Sorrow	Scared	Reflective	Worried
Satisfied	Proud	Teary	Terrified	Self-loving	
Thrilled	Strong	Unhappy	Worried	Serene	
Vibrant	Worthy	Upset		Vulnerable	
	Valiant	Weary		Warm	
		Yearning			

## Body Sensations

Achy	Contracted	Gentle	Numb	Shaky	Sweaty
Airy	Dizzy	Hard	Pain	Shivery	Tender
Blocked	Drained	Heavy	Pounding	Slow	Tense
Breathless	Dull	Hollow	Prickly	Smooth	Throbbing
Bruised	Electric	Hot	Pulsing	Soft	Tight
Burning	Empty	Icy	Queasy	Sore	Tingling
Buzzy	Expanded	Itchy	Radiating	Spacey	Trembly
Clammy	Flowing	Jumpy	Relaxed	Spacious	Twitchy
Clenched	Fluid	Knotted	Releasing	Sparkly	Vibrating
Cold	Fluttery	Light	Rigid	Stiff	Warm
Constricted	Frozen	Loose	Sensitive	Still	Wobbly
Contained	Full	Nauseous	Settled	Suffocated	Wooden

# Defusing

## Introduction Phase

- Statement of sorrow and introduce team member
- Give brief description of event and what will take place during the defusing.
  - Usually takes 20-40 minutes (Team will stay after)
  - There will be a question asked, then we will go around the room and give everyone a chance to answer
  - We encourage all of you to share your thoughts and feelings throughout the whole process, as someone else may be helped by what you have to say

## Guidelines for the Defusing

1. Confidentiality
2. No Breaks-team member will follow
3. No talking for others
4. No blame or incrimination
5. No cell phones or pagers
6. Everyone is equal
7. Not therapy
8. Not an investigation
9. Is there anyone here that should not be?
10. Any questions

## Exploration (Combines fact and thought)

- Please introduce yourself and briefly describe what your role was; what happened from your viewpoint; prominent thoughts you had
- Search for significant parts of the event and themes
- Ask clarifying questions

## Information (Combines reaction and teaching)

- Summarize their exploration
- Normalize experiences and/or reactions
- Address how traumatic events can affect us on different levels: physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual
- Talk about signs, symptoms, and coping (What has worked in the past?)
- Use phrases like "Don't be surprised if..."
- Normal reaction of a Normal person to an Abnormal situation

## Re-entry Phase

- 5 T's- Time, Talk, Tears, Touch, & Tolerance (of yourself and others); the 5T's promote resiliency
- It will get better in time, if it doesn't call us
- Lean into each other as a support group
- Information/handouts for other avenues of Help will be available