

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS INFORMATION SHEET

You have experienced a **CRITICAL INCIDENT**. You may be experiencing unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with your ability to function now or some time in the future. Even though the event may be over you may experience strong emotional or physical reactions now or some time in the future. It is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have participated in a traumatic event. **THESE ARE NORMAL REACTIONS TO AN ABNORMAL EVENT!!** Sometimes these emotional aftershocks (Stress Reactions) appear immediately. In some cases they are delayed a few hours or days, and sometimes they are postponed for weeks or months.

The signs and symptoms of stress may last a few days, a few weeks, or a few months. Occasionally the symptoms remain for longer periods depending upon the severity of the traumatic event. With understanding and support from loved ones, friends, and/or colleagues these reactions usually pass more quickly. Sometimes the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a trained counselor is necessary. This in no way implies weakness or mental illness. It simply indicates that this particular event was too powerful for the individual to manage by themselves.

Listed below are some of the more common signs and symptoms of **STRESS**.

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	BEHAVIORAL	SPIRITUAL
fatigue	blaming someone	anxiety	change activity	Anger at God
nausea	confusion	guilt	change in speech patterns	Feeling distant from God
muscle tremors	poor attention	grief	withdrawal	Withdraw from place of worship
twitches	poor decisions	denial	emotional outbursts	Uncharacteristic religious involvement
chest pain*	raised/lowered alertness	emotional shock	suspiciousness	Sudden turn toward God
difficulty breathing*	poor concentration	fear	change in usual communications	Familiar faith practices seem empty (prayer, scriptures, hymns)
elevated BP*	memory problems	uncertainty	restlessness	Religious rituals seem empty (worship, communion)
thirst	hypervigilance	emotion control problems	alcohol use increase	Belief that God is powerless
headaches	difficulty ID-ing familiar	depression	loss/increase in appetite	loss of meaning and purpose

	objects			
visual problems	more awareness of surroundings	inappropriate emotions	acting out (antisocial behavior)	Sense of isolation (from God, religious community)
vomiting	less awareness of surroundings	apprehension	nonspecific body complaints	Questioning of one's basic beliefs
grinding teeth / (bruxism)	poor problem solving ability	feeling overwhelmed	hyperalert to environment	Anger at clergy
weakness	poor abstract thinking	intense anger	intensified startle reflex	Believing God is not in control
dizziness	loss of orientation	irritability	pacing	Believing God doesn't care
profuse sweating	impaired thinking	agitation	erratic movements	Belief that we have failed God
chills and/or sweating, etc.	nightmares	severe panic (rare)	increase/decrease in sexual drive	
shock symptoms*	flashbacks / intrusive images			

*Indicates need for medical evaluation