

Common Signs & Symptoms of Stress

These may last for a few days or a few months depending on the severity of the event.

Physical: chills, thirst, fatigue, nausea, fainting, twitches, vomiting, dizziness, weakness, chest pain, headaches, elevated BP, rapid heart rate, muscle tremors, shock symptoms, grinding of teeth, visual difficulties, profuse sweating, difficulty breathing.

Thinking: confusion, nightmares, uncertainty, hypervigilance, suspiciousness, intrusive images, blaming someone, poor problem solving, poor abstract thinking, poor attention /decisions, poor concentration/memory, disorientation of time, place or person, difficulty identifying objects or people, heightened or lowered alertness, increased or decreased awareness of surroundings.

Emotional: fear, guilt, grief, panic, denial, anxiety, agitation, irritability, depression, intense anger, apprehension, emotional shock, emotional outbursts, feeling overwhelmed, loss of emotional control, inappropriate emotional response.

Behavioral: withdrawal, antisocial acts, inability to rest, intensified pacing, erratic movements, change in social activity, change in speech patterns, loss or increase of appetite, hyperalert to environment, increased alcohol consumption, change in usual communications.

Spiritual: anger at God, questioning of basic beliefs, withdrawal from place of worship, crisis of faith, faith practices and rituals seem empty, loss of meaning and purpose, uncharacteristic religious involvement, sense of isolation from God, anger at clergy, religious obsessions, religious compulsions, religious hallucinations or delusions.

Things to Try When Facing Excessive Stress

Exercise to reduce physical stress.
Talk to people; talk is very healing.
Avoid using alcohol to relax.
Reach out - people do care.
Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
Spend time with others.
Do things you enjoy doing.
Avoid making major life changes/decisions.
Get plenty of rest.
Eat well-balanced and regular meals.
Share this information with others.

Suggestions for Family and Friends

Listen carefully.
Spend time with the person affected.
Offer you attention and listening ear.
Reassure them that they are safe.
Give them opportunity for private time.
Don't take their responses personally.
Familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of stress.

Chaplain: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Case #: _____

Funeral Home: _____

Phone #: _____



Central Oregon Public Safety Chaplaincy

"Serving the Hearts and Minds of Central Oregon's First Responders"

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Critical Incident Stress Management Information

Critical Incident Stress

You have been involved in a significant or critical event. Even though the event may be over, you may 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, or critical incident stress, following such an incident. Critical incident stress may appear immediately after the event, after a few hours, a few days, weeks, or longer.

Critical incident stress is the physical, mental, and emotional reactions that go along with living and working day to day in the midst of pain, chaos, hurt, and loss. This stress, if not dealt with in a healthy way, can and will affect us, no matter how well trained, conditioned, or streetwise we may be.

What is a traumatic event or critical incident? They can be any incident which causes us to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which interfere with our ability to function, either at the time or later.

Incidents or situations do not have to be major disasters to cause stress. Cumulative stress (“Burnout”) is often a mix of home and work stress, building up over time, which eventually erodes our personal resources.

Critical Incident Stress Management

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a comprehensive approach to traumatic stress management. It encompasses a wide range of programs and intervention strategies designed to manage traumatic stress. The core components of CISM are defined below:

Pre-crisis preparation: This includes stress management education and training for individuals, groups, and organizations.

RITS: Rest, Information, Transition Services: for emergency response personnel.

Crisis Management Briefings (CMB): for civilians, schools, and businesses.

Defusings: This is a 3-phase, structured small group discussion provided within hours of a crisis for purpose of assessment, triaging, and acute symptom mitigation.

Critical Incident Stress Management (con't)

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD): This is a 7-phase structured group discussion, usually provided 1 to 10 days post crisis (3 to 4 weeks post disaster). It is designed to allow participants to discuss their thoughts and reactions about a significant or traumatic event in a confidential and structured format.

Individual Crisis Intervention: One-on-one crisis intervention, counseling or psychological support.

Pastoral Crisis Intervention: One on one or group crisis intervention, counseling to provide spiritual, faith-based support.

Other Group Support: Family crisis intervention and/or organizational consultation.

Follow-up and referral: Additional mechanisms for assessment and treatment, as necessary.