

Stress Management Principles and Tips

Physical	Cognitive/social	Emotional
Avoid alcohol or other depressants	Avoid over-identifying with others' grief or trauma	Avoid changes in your daily routine (maintain a normal schedule)
Eat a balanced diet with fresh fruit and vegetables	Be aware of "compassion fatigue"	Avoid making life-altering decisions for some time after a crisis response
Get plenty of exercise: periods of activity alternated with relaxation	Create a team system with coworkers (check in, share feelings, tell each other when stress signs show)	Develop a regular schedule for sleep and other relaxing activities
Keep rested	During down time, mentally disconnect from the crisis scene as much as possible	If stress symptoms don't begin dissipating by 2 weeks after crisis response, consider additional assistance
Moderate caffeine intake	Do not label yourself as "crazy" or "weak"	Make as many daily decisions that give you a feeling of control (ex. if someone asks what you want to eat, answer them)
Listen to music timed to breathing	Keep a journal to write down thoughts	Structure your time and keep busy
Practice healthy sleep behaviors: get into sleep pattern	Recognize and know your personal stress signs	Try to find time to do something you enjoy
Read	Talk to a support source	



*Thank
you for
your
Service*

Information Sources

International Critical Stress Foundation

<https://icisf.org>

Missouri Institute of Mental Health Training

<https://mimhtraining.com>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<https://store.samhsa.gov>



information for police officers

Preventing and Managing Stress After a Crisis Response

General Things To Know

Critical incident stress responses can occur right at the scene, within hours, within days, or even within weeks. During this time, you may experience an immediate stress or grief response or may not feel any of these reactions. The effect of critical incident stress is a completely normal response to an abnormal event.

Common Signs and Symptoms of a Stress Reaction

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioral
chest pain	blaming	agitation	antisocial
chills	confusion	anxiety	appetite change
difficulty breathing	difficulty identifying things	apprehension	change in communication
dizziness	disorientation	denial	change in social activity
elevated BP	change in alertness	depression	change in speech
fainting	hypervigilance	discouragement	conflicts with family
fatigue	change in awareness	emotional outbursts	erratic movement
grinding of teeth	intrusive images	emotional shock	hyperalert
headache	nightmares	fear	inability to sit still
muscle tremors	poor abstract thinking	feeling overwhelmed	increased alcohol use
nausea	poor attention	grief	pacing

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioral
profuse sweating	poor concentration	guilt	waking up to early
rapid heart rate	poor problem solving	inappropriate emotion	withdrawal /isolation
shock symptoms	recurring memories	intense anger	
thirst	suspiciousness	irritability	
twitches	uncertainty	loss of emotional control	
visual difficulties		panic	
vomiting			
weakness			

Note: most of these signs will disappear within 3 weeks, but if they worsen or do not begin to dissipate after 2 weeks, additional intervention is recommended

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion Fatigue: a combination of physical and emotional depletion associated with caring for people in significant emotional pain or physical distress. It is made up of 2 main components: burnout and secondary traumatic stress.

Ways to deal with Compassion Fatigue:

- Communicate with friends and family as best you can
- Engage with fellow workers to celebrate successes and mourn sorrows as a group
- Focus on the four core components of resilience: adequate sleep, good nutrition, regular physical activity, and active relaxation
- Take time away from the work when possible
- Try to find things to look forward to
- Use general stress management techniques
- Wash your hands and face after leaving work, thinking of it as a symbolic “washing away” of the hardness of the day

Signs of Compassion Fatigue

Burnout

Burnout: causes one to feel exhausted and overwhelmed, like nothing they do will help make the situation better.

Signs and symptoms:

1. Cynicism
2. Feeling as though you are not doing your job well
3. Feeling disconnected from others
4. Feeling "numb" or indifferent
5. Frustration

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary traumatic stress: when the negative effects of work make responders feel as if the trauma of the people they are helping is happening to them or the people they love.

Signs and symptoms:

1. Being easily startled, feeling “jumpy” or “on guard” all the time
2. Being wary of every situation or expecting a traumatic outcome
3. Excessive worry that something bad will happen to you, your loved ones, or colleagues
4. Fear in situations that others would not think were frightening
5. Feeling that others' trauma is yours
6. Physical signs: racing heart, shortness of breath, increased tension headaches.
7. Sense of being haunted by the troubles you see and hear from others

When feelings of secondary traumatic stress go on for a long time, a person can develop **vicarious trauma**, a type of trauma that can change the way a person views the world for the worse.