



HELPING EACH OTHER

The Houston Fire Department C.I.S.M. Team is comprised of your brother and sister fire fighters. It was formed to provide incident related psychological and emotional support.

The team members are available to respond to the needs of the department members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

All discussions that take place are confidential.

The team is trained to help the members of the Houston Fire Department cope with the extraordinary stresses we encounter on a daily basis.

If you or, another member, need assistance, contact the O.E.C. to have a C.I.S.M. Team member contact you. Confidentially.

**Call The O.E.C.:
713-884-3143
to contact an
On-Call CISM
Team Member
for information**

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT



Critical Incident Stress Management

24 hours a day / **7** days a week

CONFIDENTIAL

Supporting Those Who Serve

Critical Incident Stress Reactions and what you need to know.



OVER THE NEXT MONTH YOU MAY EXPERIENCE SOME NORMAL REACTIONS TO THE TYPE OF STRESS YOU HAVE HAD. THESE REACTIONS ARE LISTED BELOW.

PHYSICAL REACTIONS:

Fatigue, nightmares, hyperactivity, insomnia, startle reactions, a change in appetite, headaches, under-activity, nausea, vomiting, grinding teeth, weakness, tremors, increased blood pressure, Chest pains need evaluation NOW!

COGNITIVE REACTIONS:

Difficulty in concentration, flash-backs, difficulty making decisions, isolation, difficulty in problem solving, recurrent thoughts about the incident, blaming self or others, loss of orientation.

EMOTIONAL REACTIONS:

Fear, guilt, emotional numbing, anger, anxiety, depression, helplessness, violent fantasies, irritability.

BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS:

Sudden or radical changes in: behavior, speech or activities, loss of emotional control, inappropriate emotional responses, obsessive compulsions or actions.

Critical Incident Stress Information

You have experienced a traumatic event or a Critical Incident. This is ANY event or incident which causes an emergency services worker to have an unusually strong emotional response as a result. These reactions have the potential to interfere with an individual's ability to function at the scene or later. Although the incident may be over, you may be having or may have some strong emotional or physical symptoms.

This is NORMAL

Sometimes the after-shock or stress reactions appear immediately after the event, but can appear hours or days later. Occasionally, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions appear.

These signs and symptoms of stress may last a variable length of time, which is proportionate to the severity of the incident. With a strong support network of co-workers, family and friends, these reactions will usually pass quickly. However, there are events that are so severe or painful that professional assistance is required. This does not imply weakness or craziness; it just means this incident was very overwhelming.

THINGS TO DO:

- **WITHIN THE FIRST 24 TO 48 HOURS:** Periods of strenuous exercise alternated with relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions
- Structure your time- KEEP BUSY
- Talk with co-workers and family members; don't close yourself up
- Reach out to others
- Keep your life as normal as you can
- Give yourself permission to feel bad... Its ok; its normal
- **DO NOT ISOLATE YOURSELF**
- Eat a good, nourishing meal, supplementing with Vitamins C, B6, B12, Calcium, and Magnesium. These vitamins help your body to "normalize"

The Houston Fire Department
Critical Incident Stress Management
Call Dispatch: 713-884-3143