

**Physical**

- Thirst
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Fainting
- Twitches
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Chest Pain
- Elevated Blood Pressure
- Chills
- Rapid Heart Rate
- Headaches
- Muscle Tremors
- Shock Symptoms
- Grinding of Teeth
- Visual Difficulties
- Profuse Sweating
- Difficulty Breathing

**Emotional**

- Fear
- Guilt
- Grief
- Panic
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Depression
- Intense Anger
- Apprehension
- Emotional Shock
- Emotional Outbursts
- Feeling Overwhelmed
- Loss of Emotional Control
- Inappropriate Emotional Response

**Cognitive**

- Confusion
- Nightmares
- Uncertainty
- Hyper Vigilant
- Suspiciousness
- Intrusive Memories
- Blaming Someone
- Poor Problem Solving
- Poor Abstract Thinking
- Poor Concentration
- Poor Memory
- Poor Attention
- Poor Decisions
- Disorientated to Time, Place, or Person
- Difficulty Identifying Objects or People
- Heightened or Lowered Alertness
- Change in Awareness of Surroundings

**Behavioural**

- Withdrawal
- Anti-Social Acts
- Intensified Pacing
- Erratic Movements
- Change in Social Activity
- Change in Speech Patterns
- Loss or Increase of Appetite
- Unable to Rest
- Hyper-Alert to Environment
- Increased Substance Use (e.g., alcohol, over-the-counter drugs, recreational drugs)
- Changes in usual communications

**ICISF-CANADA MANDATE**

ICISF-Canada is proud to be the sole Canadian partner to the **International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. (ICISF)** supporting the model of peer support for public safety personnel in Canada. ICISF-Canada supports the development and maintenance of peer support programs for public safety personnel. It empowers organizations in the establishment of such programs using the “peer led, peer driven” approach. From recruitment of effective peers, to providing training and resources to ensure the proper and efficient delivery of peer support. ICISF-Canada supports the independent management of CISM Peer support teams throughout Canada.

**ALBERTA CRITICAL INCIDENT PEER NETWORK (ACIPN)**

The ACIPN is a peer led, peer driven support network of public safety personnel for public safety personnel, whose volunteers are trained in best practices and deliver support in accordance with ICISF standards.

[www.abcism.ca](http://www.abcism.ca)

**Call 1-833-894-2476  
if you require immediate assistance.**

Content taken from Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell's  
Critical Incident Stress Management seminars.

Supported with  
a grant from:



ALBERTA URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

**AFTER A CRISIS**

Practical tips for self-care after a critical incident



Images by DanSun Photo Art

## STRESS MANAGEMENT AFTER A TRAUMATIC EVENT

You have experienced a traumatic event or critical incident (any event that has the potential to overwhelm a person's usual coping strategies and cause significant human distress).

Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing, or may experience later, some strong, but common, stress reactions.

It is very common and quite normal for people to experience common stress reactions when they have passed through a horrible event.

## COMMON STRESS REACTIONS

Sometimes the emotional aftershocks (or stress reactions) appear immediately after, a few hours later or days after a traumatic event. 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, weeks, months, or longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event.

The understanding and support of loved ones usually causes the stress reaction to pass more quickly. Occasionally, the traumatic event is so disruptive that professional assistance may be necessary.

## 6 EFFECTIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Remember to put on your comfy Coping S.W.E.A.T.R. after a crisis.

S.W.E.A.T.R. is an acronym for 6 effective coping strategies that are science-based and anyone can implement after a crisis to either mitigate the stress reactions they may be experiencing or to prevent some of these common stress reactions from occurring.

### S.W.E.A.T.R.

**Sleep** – prioritize balanced sleep.

**Water** – stay hydrated.

**Eat Healthy Meals** – make meal choices that are easy on the gut.

**Activity** – Alternate between rest and Activity.

**Talk to your social supports** - Reach out to your go-to Social Supports.

**Routine** – maintain a routine as best you can.



Image by DanSun Photo Art

## FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Listen Carefully.

Spend time with the traumatized person.

Offer your assistance and listening ear if they have not asked for help.

Reassure them that they are safe.

Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for family and minding children. Give them some private time.

Don't take their anger or other feelings personally.

Don't tell them that they are "lucky it wasn't worse". Such statements do not console a traumatized person. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event occurred and you want to understand and assist them. Avoid talking about operational or traumatic details of what happened. Such discussions are not helpful and may even cause further psychological injury. Instead, focus on talking about how what has happened is impacting the person in crisis. This will help you better understand what your loved one is going through and will be most beneficial for the individual in crisis.