



Caring for Yourself and Others after a Critical Incident



Suggestions for Self-Care:

- **Exercise & Relaxation:** Periods of appropriate physical exercise, alternated with relaxation, will alleviate some of the physical reactions.
- **Silence is Okay:** Be willing to say nothing at times. Taking the needed time for yourself or simply being there for others is often the most supportive thing you can do.
- **Your Feelings are Valid:** You're normal and having normal reactions – realize all your feelings are valid.
- **Talk it Out: Talk to people** – talk is the most healing medicine.
- **Avoid Numbing:** Be aware of numbing the pain with overuse of drugs or alcohol.
- **Reach Out:** People do care.
- **Stick to Routine:** Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- **Stay Connected:** Spend time with others.
- **Support Co-Workers:** Help your co-workers as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- **Journal Your Thoughts:** Keep a journal; write your way through those sleepless hours.
- **Do What Feels Good:** Do things that feel good to you.
- **Recognize Shared Stress:** Realize those around you are also under stress.
- **Avoid Big Changes:** Don't make any big life changes.
- **Get Rest:** Get plenty of rest.
- **Intrusive Thoughts are Normal:** Recurring thoughts, dreams, or flashbacks are normal. Don't try to fight them – they'll decrease over time and become less painful.
- **Eat Well:** Eat well-balanced and regular meals.

Caring for Family and Friends:

- **Listen Carefully:** Give them your full attention.
- **Be Present:** Spend time with the traumatized person.
- **Offer Help:** Offer your assistance and a listening ear if they have not asked for help.
- **Reassure Their Safety:** Let them know they are safe.
- **Help with Daily Tasks:** Assist with cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, and minding children.
- **Respect Privacy:** Give them some private time.
- **Don't Take It Personally:** Their anger or other emotions are not directed at you.
- **Avoid Minimizing:** Don't tell them they are "lucky it wasn't worse."
- **Show Empathy:** Instead, express that you are sorry such an event has occurred and that you want to understand and assist them.

Bree Health provides free and confidential support, offering resources to help you and your eligible family members navigate emotional challenges.