Common Reactions Following a Traumatic Event

Emergency service providers as well as citizens can experience the following symptoms following a crisis event. In a crisis situation, one may experience emotional detachment in order to cope and function. The following reactions may occur hours, days, weeks, or months after an event.

Physical:

- Stomach problems / indigestion
- Headache
- Chest pains
- Difficulty breathing
- Elevated blood pressure
- Hyper alertness / easily startled

Emotional:

- Irritability / anger
- Preoccupation with the event and one’s role in it
- Depression
- Guilt
- Anxiety
- Emotional numbness

Behavioral:

- Impulsiveness
- Excessive risk taking
- Silence
- Withdrawal

Cognitive:

- Sleep disturbances / nightmares
- Poor Concentration
- Difficulty in decision making
- Change in personal or work habits
- Memory problems
- Difficulty with details

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