

# REACTIONS TO EXPECT FOLLOWING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

## Washington State Employee Assistance Program

Olympia (360) 753-3260 ■ Seattle (206) 281-6315 ■ Spokane (509) 482-3686

### Immediate Physical Reactions

Confusion  
Crying  
Fatigue  
Nausea  
Muscle tremors  
Shock symptoms (weak pulse, glassy eyes)  
Sweating  
Chills  
Dizziness  
Stomach ache  
Chest pain  
Difficulty breathing  
Blurred vision  
Headaches, vomiting, diarrhea  
Cardiac arrest

### Immediate Mental Reactions

Memory  
Decreased decision-making ability  
Decreased problem-solving ability  
Concentration problems  
Limited attention span  
Calculation problems  
Confusion  
Disorientation  
Amnesia

### Delayed Reactions

Fear  
Chronic fatigue  
Sleep disturbances  
Anxiety  
Depression  
Moodiness  
Difficulties concentrating  
Increased substance abuse  
Suspiciousness  
Apathy  
Work performance suffers  
Frustration  
Flashbacks  
Anger  
Memory problems  
    Intrusive thoughts  
    Isolation  
Suicidal ideation/attempts  
Homicidal ideation/attempts  
Emotional detachment  
Intolerance of others  
Cynicism  
Relationship problems  
Denial  
Resistance to change  
Intellectualization  
Abuse of sick leave  
Guilt  
Self-medication  
Isolation  
Unacceptable behavior