

Caring for the Care Provider

General Reactions to Emergencies or Critical Incidents in Adults:

First Reactions May Include:

- Numbness, shock, difficulty believing what has occurred or is in the process of occurring
- Physical and mental reactions may be very slow or confused
- Difficulty in decision making; uncertainty about things; it may be difficult to choose a course of action or to make even small judgment calls

Ongoing Reactions May Include:

- Loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, loss of interest or pleasure in everyday activities
- Desire to get away from everyone - even family/friends
- Emotional lability; becoming irritable or upset more quickly than usual
- Feelings of fatigue, hopelessness, helplessness
- Digestive problems; headaches or backaches
- Difficulty accepting that the emergency has had an impact or difficulty accepting support from friends and the community

Some Things That Can Be Helpful:

- Take time to relax and do things you find pleasant; getting away for a few hours with close friends can be helpful
- Stick with your regular routine for a while; avoid making changes, even if it appears to be a positive change
- Get regular exercise or participate in a regular sport; activity soothes anxiety and helps you relax
- Keep your days as simple as possible; avoid taking on any additional responsibilities or new projects
- Tap sources of assistance with your workload - have students, instructional assistants, or volunteers help grade papers, take care of copying, or help with other time-consuming tasks
- If symptoms of stress persist beyond a few weeks or are severe, seek professional help