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## Critical Incident Reactions

After being involved in an intense, unusual or abnormal event (a critical event), you may experience reactions that are out of the ordinary for you. This is not an uncommon experience. The event may create a stress response which can result in changes in your usual physical or emotional reactions. These reactions are *normal*. Often they appear immediately after the event, but they may appear hours, weeks or months later. Some of the more common reactions reported by individuals after a critical incident include:

Physical	Emotional	Cognitive	Behavioral
Nausea Intestinal upset Fatigue Rapid heart Chest pain* Difficulty breathing Shock symptoms Muscle cramps Headaches Chills	Anxiety Grief Guilt Denial Fear Depression Panic Apprehension Disturbed thinking	Memory problems Poor attention Nightmares Intrusive images Hyper-alertness Loss of orientation Poor problem solving Poor decisions Sleep disturbance Flashbacks	Withdrawal Restlessness Emotional outbursts Increased alcohol Avoidance Change in speech Change in appetite Increased startle reflex Blaming others

\*Seek medical attention

This is not an inclusive list. Some people exposed to the same event may not suffer any effects at all and this, too, is a normal reaction. While these reactions can be alarming and unsettling, it is important to remember that you are not losing your mind or “falling apart.” These are normal reactions normal people experience after an abnormal event. The intensity and frequency of the reactions usually decrease after one to three weeks.