



MANITOBA EMERGENCY SERVICES **CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING TEAM**

CRITICAL INCIDENT INFORMATION FOR FAMILY MEMBERS & FRIENDS

Your loved one has been involved in an emotion-charged event, often known as a critical incident. He/She may be having normal stress responses to such an event (critical incident stress). Critical incident stress may affect people who have been exposed to a critical incident. Most, but not all, people have critical incident stress reactions.

Important things to remember about critical incident stress:

- Critical incident stress can affect physical health, thinking, feelings, and actions. Your loved one has received a handout listing these signs. Please ask him/her to share it with you.
- Critical incident stress response can occur while they are at the scene, within hours, within days, or even within weeks.
- Your loved one may show a variety of reactions and signs of a stress response, or he/she may not feel any of the signs until later.
- Having reactions due to critical incident stress is normal. Your loved one is not the only one experiencing these reactions; other people were at the scene and are probably having similar reactions.
- The reactions will normally fade and disappear in time if you and your loved one do not dwell upon them.
- What affects one part of our lives can affect other parts of our lives; personal, work, home, family, etc. The impact of critical incident stress can be increased, changed or fade because of your reactions and the support of your family and friends.
- Encourage, but do NOT pressure, your loved one to talk about the incident and his/her reaction to it. Talk is the best medicine. Your primary "job" is to listen and reassure. Remember that if an event is upsetting to you and your loved one, your children may be affected, also. They may need to talk too.
- You may not understand what your loved one is going through at this time, but offer your love and support. Don't be afraid to ask what you can do that he/she would consider helpful.
- Accept the fact that life will go on - his/hers, yours, and your children, etc. Keep, or get back to a normal routine as soon as possible.
- If signs of stress your loved one is experiencing do not begin to fade within a few weeks, or if they get worse, think about getting more help. The Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team can help you and your loved one find a someone who understands critical incident stress so you all may be better able to cope with the situation.

[Click here for information on Manitoba Health's 24 Hour Crisis Line and Crisis Services by Region for Manitoba.](#)

CISM team 24-hour emergency hotline at 1-888-389-3473