

# **JAMES SMITH CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM**

**During working hours call James Smith Health Clinic (306) 864-2454**

**After hours & weekends, In the event of a traumatic situation call**

**PHONE # (306) 864-7499 if volunteer is unable to receive your call Please call 911**

**7 days a week**

If you are interested in becoming a Crisis Response Team Member please feel free to contact the Director of Health Mike Marion @ 864-2454.

**What is a traumatic event or a critical incident:** (Any event that causes unusually strong emotional reactions that have the potential to interfere with the ability to function daily? The event may be over or happened a long time ago, people may experience emotional physical reactions this is very common, in fact quite normal for people to experience emotional aftershocks.

**See Attachment** for symptoms related to experiencing a traumatic event or critical incident.

**What constitutes as a traumatic event:**

Murder/ Murder Suicide/Suicide/Fatal Vehicle Accident/Child Abduction

Evacuations/Pandemics/Extended Power Outages

Tornado/Floods, etc.

**For More Information look us up on the James Smith Health Clinic Website.**  
**(Under the News & Events Link)**

**And the James Smith Cree Nation Bernard Constant Community School Website**  
**(Under the Crisis Response Team Link)**

**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE THIS PUBLIC NOTICE**

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## RESOURCES: CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS INFORMATION HANDOUT

When individuals experience a traumatic event, or critical incident, it can cause unusually strong reactions that have the potential for interfering with their ability to function normally. Although the event may be over, it is not uncommon for people to experience some of the following critical incident stress reactions within hours, days, weeks and in some cases months after the incident. It's important to remember that these reactions are quite normal and can differ from one person to the next. Reactions should never be considered a sign of weakness. Anyone is subject to critical incident stress reactions if the traumatic event is significant enough for them.

These reactions may last for a few days, weeks, or sometimes longer depending on the severity of the reaction to the traumatic event. First it's important to recognize the symptoms, then to understand there are steps that can be taken to promote recovery. Occasionally a traumatic experience is greater than our capacity to cope and professional services may be necessary to support the recovery process. Critical incident stress management teams are here to support those recovery efforts.

The following are common signs and signals of a stress reaction:

Physical*	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioural
chills	confusion	fear	withdrawal
thirst	nightmares	guilt	antisocial behaviour
fatigue	uncertainty	grief	inability to rest
nausea	hypervigilance	panic	intensified pacing
fainting	suspicion	denial	erratic movements
twitching	intrusive images	anxiety	change in social activity
vomiting	blaming	agitation	change in speech patterns
dizziness	poor problem solving	irritability	change in appetite
weakness	poor abstract thinking	depression	appetite
30-60 ← chest pain	poor attention/ decisions	intense anger	hyper-alert to environment
minutes headaches	poor memory/ concentration	apprehension	numbing out on alcohol/ other substances
elevated BP	disorientation of time, place or person	emotional shock	change in usual interactions/ communications
rapid pulse	difficulty identifying objects or people	emotional outbursts	etc....
muscle tremors		feeling overwhelmed	
shock		inappropriate emotional responses	
grinding teeth etc...		uncontrolled emotional responses	
visual difficulties		etc.	
profuse sweating			
difficulty breathing			

### Spiritual

Spiritual signs of distress may be subject to the culture of the individual or group who have shared the traumatic experience. Each individual is unique in their beliefs and how they practice their faith. Commonly reported signs of spiritual distress include:

anger at the Creator/God	questioning spiritual beliefs
withdrawal from place of worship	crisis of faith
faith practices and rituals seem empty	uncharacteristic religious involvement
obsession or delusions/hallucinations	loss of sense of self
inner strength and self efficacy or purpose	uncertainty of the meaning of life
beliefs about the individual's own spirit	inability to see beyond this traumatic experience

*Physical symptoms may indicate the need for medical evaluation. Whenever you are in doubt, please contact a physician.*



## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOURSELF...

*The following suggestions may differ according to the culture (working, religious, ethnic, community or otherwise) of the group affected by the traumatic event.*

### It's OK to...

- Remember it's common to have reactions after a critical incident. It's also normal not to be affected by a trauma. Each individual is unique in how they perceive the event and the reactions they have afterward.
- Allow yourself the time now to experience the reactions and be open to the support of others as you recover.
- Unwanted, intrusive thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are common too. They should decrease over time.

### Stay in touch with others...

- Don't isolate yourself
- Surround yourself with a good support network. Talk it out with people you trust. Putting words to your experience is helpful in the healing process.
- Don't wait to ask for help if you have questions or feel you need to speak with someone.
- Family and friends can be great support. Tell them what you need most right now.
- Eat well balanced nutritious meals and snacks to refuel your body
- Drink lots of water and avoid alcohol or other high caffeine substances over the next few days/weeks. They can slow recovery from critical incident stress reactions.
- Exercise each day for at least 30 minutes a day over the next couple of weeks. It helps the body shed the chemical by products of the stress reaction.
- If you have strong religious beliefs, you may find it helpful to seek the support of clergy or spiritual leader at this time.
- Get plenty of rest...sleep disturbances are common but pass with time.
- Delay making any major life decisions until your stress levels decrease significantly
- Do healthy activities that you have enjoyed in the past
- Don't fight recurring dreams or flashbacks, they are normal and decrease with time.
- Allow yourself the time to recover now. Delaying or ignoring the process can have a cumulative affect.
- If you're having a bad day, ask for the support of others, if your day is going well, maybe it's your turn to help those around you who shared the experience.

## WHAT OTHERS CAN DO FOR YOU...

- **Listen...**Be sensitive to individual circumstances and differing points of view
- **Acknowledge** that feelings are common for anyone who has experienced an event like this
- **Spend time** with the traumatized individual
- **Reassure** him/her that they are safe now
- **Help** with everyday tasks...cleaning, cooking, family care, minding children
- **Respect** private time as well. Some people find it helpful to be alone occasionally to process this experience
- Don't suggest things that aren't helpful... "You're lucky it could have been worse" is not encouraging. Instead listen to them, tell them you're sorry they had this experience and you want to help.
- **Support** the person or group in the choices necessary to promote positive change and healing from the experience.
- **Be patient...**All of this takes time. Everyone heals at their own rate, in their own way. Be a beneficial presence in their lives as they make their way through this process.

*Please remember these are guidelines in promoting healthy choices and good coping skills to reinforce resiliency in those who are experiencing signs of distress. There may be other ways of promoting recovery as well. Whenever you're in doubt it would be advisable to consult with trained team members or mental health therapists for further advice and direction.*