

Your loved one has been involved in a critical incident, an emotionally charged, unusual event that goes beyond his/her usual coping skills. They need your help. He/she may be experiencing normal stress reactions to a critical incident. No one who experiences such an event is immune to critical incident stress. Here are some important things you can do to hasten up their healthy recovery:

- ✧ Listen with interest, encourage them to tell you about their experience.
- ✧ Spend time with them.
- ✧ Reassure them that they are safe.
- ✧ Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, or caring for their family.
- ✧ Allow them some private time.
- ✧ Accept that life goes on and try to maintain a normal routine.
- ✧ Ask “What can I do that would be helpful?”
- ✧ Try to accept their anger or other negative responses with understanding. Do not take their actions personally.
- ✧ Explain that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you wish to help them.
- ✧ Explain that drinking, abusing drugs and overeating are just ways of medicating your feelings. These types of coping will only add to the situation and aggravate the problem.

This is not the time to argue or be critical. Avoid saying how lucky they are it wasn't worse. These symptoms should subside and disappear in time without much effort. Do not focus upon these symptoms and point them out for your advantage or your loved ones information.

They will be vulnerable and hurt for a period of time. If these signs of stress do not begin to lessen within a few weeks, or if they intensify, seek professional help. You may not understand what they are going through, but offer your support and love. Remember, others are experiencing these common reactions and your loved one is not alone.

If stress, anxiety, depression, or physical problems continue, please get help.

**Putnam County Crisis Hotline (toll-free)
1.800.468.4357**