

Momentum

Responding to critical incidents



Go Online to Access More Information!

Common stages of emotion after a crisis

- ☑ No two people have the same reaction experience after a trauma. Some don't feel the full impact until months later.
- ☑ Initial emotions include shock, disbelief, and denial; people may temporarily feel numb and disconnected from life.
- ☑ The cascade of ensuing emotions can include fear, confusion, sadness, anger, guilt, shame, frustration and grief.
- ☑ In time, once emotions subside, people usually develop a sense of equilibrium based on the new post-trauma reality.

Workplace critical incidents and their effects on employees

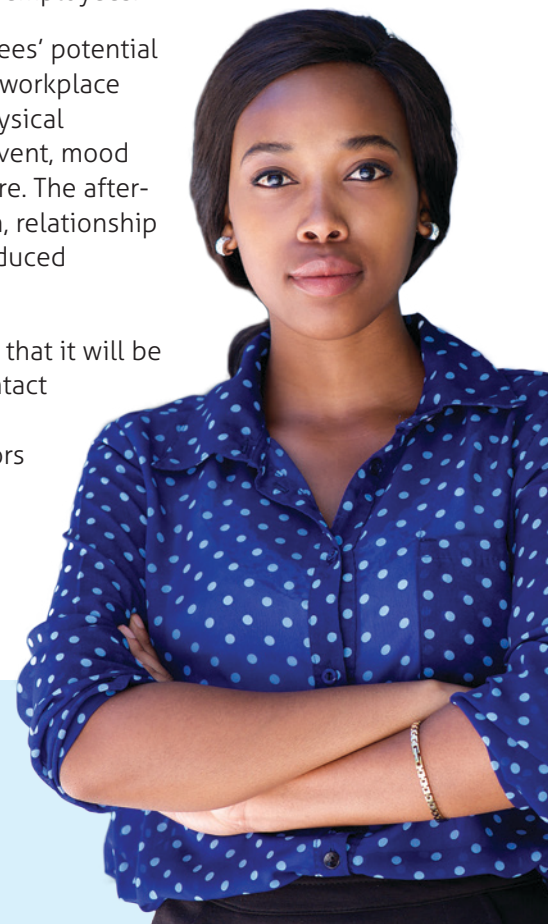
An angry ex-employee returns to the office with a gun. An accident claims the life of an employee in a production facility. Such incidents are rare, but when they occur they often have a profound effect on witnesses and others impacted by the event. Leaders play an important role in the organization's recovery.

Sudden, unexpected critical incidents compel leaders to respond very quickly. It's therefore necessary to have crisis response plans in place to preserve the safety and well-being of employees.

Managers should be aware of employees' potential reactions after exposure to abnormal workplace incidents. The distress can include physical shock, recurring thoughts about the event, mood changes, restlessness, fatigue and more. The after-effects sometimes cause absenteeism, relationship problems, drug or alcohol use, and reduced productivity.

If a critical incident occurs, remember that it will be beneficial to you and your staff to contact your employee assistance program, whose licensed professional counselors can help the group cope with trauma effects. Encourage your employees to utilize the program—not as a reflection of weakness, but as a way of preserving their well-being.

If a traumatic workplace incident occurs, encourage your staff to talk about what happened. Assure them that distressing emotions are normal. Arrange for mental health resources to help employees move forward.



Log on to MagellanHealth.com/member today!

Magellan
HEALTHCARESM

Steps to take after a critical incident

When a crisis occurs in your workplace, there are a number of steps you can take as a leader to help staff deal with and recover from the trauma.

- Quickly move all employees from the vicinity of the incident to a safe location.
- Activate your organization's established plan for communicating during emergencies.
- Conduct an informal "defusing" meeting to help bring closure to the incident; allow employees to express any immediate concerns.
- Inform employees about the actions you and the organization are taking, and what the employees need to do.
- Be prepared for employees to exhibit emotions such as shock, disbelief, denial and depression over the event. Assure them that overwhelming distress is common after a critical incident.
- Access the professional counselors at your program. They are available 24/7 to provide group debriefings and individual counseling to help prevent severe post-traumatic stress reactions.
- Take care of yourself. It is important that you look after your own mental and physical health.

Supporting employees



Encourage group sharing

Give employees a chance to discuss their feelings and experiences with co-workers; this can help during difficult times. Consider providing additional break times and make conference rooms available where employees can meet. Give advice on what employees should do next and how they should take care of themselves post-crisis.



Connect them with resources

Remind employees that EAP counselors are available to help them. You can contact your EAP in advance so they are aware of what your employees have experienced. Since there can be delayed reactions and work problems on the part of some team members, encourage them to seek continued counseling as needed.



Promote employee wellness

Remind employees to look after their daily needs—such as eating regular meals, resting, and spending time with loved ones—rather than dwelling only on the incident. Allow flexibility with employees' schedules and time off. Provide them with information about coping with stress or dealing with grief.



Webinar—On June 8, 2016, please join us online for this month's enlightening webinar on the topic of Trauma and PTSD. Register [here](#).