DOs & DON’Ts AFTER A CRITICAL INCIDENT

People who experience a traumatic event often show changes in behavior. Usually, these changes pass within a reasonable amount of time as a person recovers. Here are some basic suggestions that may help prevent the development of long-term stress reactions.

Don’t drink alcohol or use caffeine excessively…
   Do get enough rest.

Don’t use substances to numb yourself from unpleasant emotions about the event…
   Do maintain a healthy diet and exercise routine.

Don’t withdraw from others…
   Do surround yourself with supportive people.

Don’t stifle your feelings…
   Do find time to talk with someone you trust about the incident.

Don’t reduce leisure activities…
   Do make a deliberate effort to engage in hobbies and activities that you enjoy.

Don’t stay away from work or spiritual practices…
   Do keep familiar routines.

Don’t have unrealistic expectations for recovery…
   Do attend meetings that provide information about the realities and resources of the event.

Don’t look for easy answers…
   Do allow yourself time to process the event and pursue hope, not explanations.

Don’t take on a lot of big projects…
   Do take things one at a time.

Don’t make any major changes or decisions that you don’t have to…
   Do give yourself time to regain normal focus and concentration.

Don’t be hard on yourself or your emotions…
   Do be patient with your feelings and affirming of your resiliency.

Don’t pretend that everything is okay if it isn’t…
   Do expect the incident to bother you.

Don’t try to handle things on your own…
   Do seek professional help if your symptoms persist.

If you would like to speak with one of our counselors about a traumatic event that is challenging you, call 1-800-899-8174 or 757-363-6777.

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