



Ask to Come Home. Ask for Caldwell Hospice.



Critical Incidents@Work

Sudden, random occurrences—whether accidental or violent in nature—will severely disrupt your workplace and can cause a range of reactions in your employees. Ashewood Grief and Counseling Services can assist businesses in our community in fostering healing after a traumatic event and help organizations become healthy, productive work environments again.

Recognizing Responses to Traumatic Incidents

Responses to traumatic events vary from person to person. Most people initially experience feelings of shock, numbness or horror. Other common reactions include:

- Fear
- Helplessness
- Anger
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Anxiety
- Crying
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Difficulty breathing
- Irritability
- Lack of focus
- Forgetfulness
- Withdrawal
- Tightness in chest
- Loss of appetite
- Sleep problems

These reactions are natural and a part of the healing process after a critical incident. They can be sudden and upsetting or slow to surface. Each person reacts uniquely to stress, just as we each react uniquely to grief.

Supporting Employees

- Encourage employees to utilize the support of their family, friends, and church, as they grieve.
- Be available: employees will need to talk about the event.
- Prepare for a change in energy level and/or morale from staff after the event.
- Help employees regain a sense of control by returning to routines.
- Hold a meeting to let employees discuss issues brought up by the incident.
- Encourage employees to continue a healthy lifestyle with proper diet, exercise, and rest.
- Contact Ashewood to assess the need within your organization for a support group or session.

Warning Signs of Traumatic Stress

- Recurring thoughts or nightmares about the event
- Being on edge, being easily startled or becoming overly alert
- Experiencing memory problems, including difficulty in remembering the trauma
- Feeling extremely protective of, or fearful for, the safety of loved ones
- Being unable to face certain aspects of the trauma, and avoiding activities, places, or even people who are reminders of the event

(Sources: NHPCO's *It's About How You Live At Work* series, American Psychological Association)

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