



### **Self Help Support Guide**

It is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have experienced a critical incident. If you are experiencing signs of excessive stress - you may find the following guides helpful in coping with the symptoms

- DO express your emotions
- DO talk about what happened
- DO find opportunities to review the experience
- DO discuss what happened with colleagues
- DO look to friends and colleagues for support
- DO listen sympathetically if a colleague wants to speak with you, unless it is too distressing
- DO advise colleagues who need more support where they can get appropriate help
- DO try to keep your life as normal as possible
- DO try to keep to daily routines
- DO drive more carefully
- DO be more careful around the home
- DON'T use alcohol, nicotine or other drugs to hide your feelings
- DON'T simply stay away from work - seek help and support
- DON'T allow anger and irritability to mask your feelings
- DON'T bottle up feelings

- DON'T be afraid to ask for help
- DON'T think your feelings are signs of weakness

Occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that support or sometimes professional assistance may be necessary. This does not imply weakness or inadequacy. These feelings can be very common and simply indicate that the particular event is just too powerful for the person to manage by themselves (International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, 2001).

### **WHEN TO SEEK SUPPORT**

- If you feel you cannot handle intense feelings or body sensations
- If your stress reactions do not lessen in the weeks following the event
- If you continue to have nightmares and poor sleep
- If you have no-one with whom to share your feelings when you want to do so
- If your relationships seem to be suffering badly, or sexual problems develop
- If you become clumsy or accident prone
- If after the event, you smoke, drink or take more medication, or other drugs
- If your work performance suffers
- If you are tired all the time
- If things get on top of you and you feel like giving up. If you take it out on your family
- If your health deteriorates