

Center for Trauma Intervention, LLC

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SELF CARE FORM HOW TRAUMATIC INCIDENTS AFFECT OUR BODY

WHEN WE ARE AFFECTED BY A CRITICAL INCIDENT,
STRESS CHEMICALS ARE RELEASED INTO OUR BODIES.

EFFECTS OF STRESS CHEMICALS ON OUR BODIES:

Vision may be distorted
Hearing may be distorted
Startle reflex may increase
Thyroid speeds up
Breathing – rapid and shallow
Digestion slows
Blood Pressure increases
Muscles Tense
Blood sugar rises

SOME EFFECTS OF CHRONIC STRESS ON THE BODY:

Dehydration
Depression/anxiety
Dull hair/premature graying/hair falling out
Increased immune system susceptibility to disc.-me
Changes in appetite (difficulty eating – overeating)
Changes in Elimination - Constipation, diarrhea, indigestion
Changes in sleep patterns (insomnia - hypersomnia)
Fatigue
Heart Damage
Inability to concentrate
Irritability
Libido changes (increased – decreased)
Respiratory disorders/jaw tension

SELF CARE SUGGESTIONS TO MINIMIZE THE EFFECTS OF STRESS

- Hydrate- Drink enough water to increase urination in order to remove adrenaline from your system. Adrenaline dehydrates the body.
- Exercise – do not exercise more than you normally do. If you do not exercise regularly, gently exercise (walk, bicycle, yoga, tai chi, qigong, or swim) for 30 minutes.
- Increase protein and decrease or eliminate sugars and carbohydrates within the first 24 – 48 hours following a traumatic incident. Increase vegetable and fruit intake. Eat raw broccoli and cauliflower. As these 2 raw vegetables are digested, they absorb adrenaline.
- It is recommended that you do not use alcohol or non-prescription drugs during high stress.
- Talk to friends, family, counselor, or cleric. Do not isolate. Make a list of friends who you care about just because *you* value them as people and who would be available to talk no matter the time, and vice versa. Carry their number so when in need you can call wherever you might be.
- Write in your journal
- Sleep. Healing takes place during sleep. It is important to work on getting a proper amount of sleep. If there is difficulty falling asleep, consider restful and meditative activities that will assist you in getting to sleep. Meditation, herbal teas, showers, hot baths, soothing music etc.
- At times in the healing process, you may find yourself relaxing, smiling, laughing, even enjoying fun activities. Many people feel uncomfortable having any fun following a traumatic incident or death of a loved one. These feelings are normal, however it is equally normal to appropriately laugh and find ways to have fun as a vehicle to heal and cope. Laughter and relaxation are powerful healing elixirs.