

# WHAT TO EXPECT FOLLOWING A CRITICAL/TRAUMATIC INCIDENT



**In the moments after the incident, you will most likely not feel anything out of the ordinary**

**When you go home after shift, you may find yourself feeling "buzzed", filled with nervous energy, and feeling antsy**

**Oftentimes, the first night (and possibly several after) you may have difficulty sleeping. You may feel agitated, restless, and have troubled dreams.**

**You might find yourself feeling jumpy, nervous, unable to eat, struggling to sleep, not wanting to engage with others**

**Thinking about the incident repeatedly, wondering what you could have done differently, and how it could have gone better can start to consume your thoughts**

**Being confused about why you are feeling the way you feel.**

**Starting to think you shouldn't be feeling the way you are feeling. If you were good at your job, it wouldn't bother you**

**Your body starts to manifest your anxiety in the form of: headaches, fatigue, stomach issues, chest tightness, feeling shaky**

**You start finding ways to avoid going back to work, working that position, that shift, that time.**

**You begin to withdraw from people because now it just feels too overwhelming to try and talk about it**

**Feeling depressed, ashamed, scared, nervous, hopeless, and out of control, you begin to spiral**



# STEPS TO TAKE FOLLOWING A CRITICAL/TRAUMATIC INCIDENT TO MITIGATE FURTHER STRESS/TRAUMA INJURY



**Recognize the fact that you have experienced a critical/traumatic incident and the way you are feeling is normal**

**Accept that you will not feel exactly like yourself right away. It might take a few days/weeks to rebalance.**

**Give yourself grace to take the time that you need in order to feel more stabilized. Remind yourself that you are doing the best you can.**

**Avoid using numbing strategies such as drugs, alcohol, zoning out on social media or television.**

**Avoid making major life decisions until you are feeling more yourself.**

**Our brains need a beginning, middle, and end to process something significant. Seek out the information you need to find closure.**

**Gradually confront the situation with a safe person(s). Do not compartmentalize or try to block it out. Ignoring it will only keep it manifesting in your brain/body**

**Movement is key to telling your brain you are safe, flooding your body with "happy" chemicals and feeling more at peace**

**Do not be afraid to reach out for help. It is a sign of strength to ask for help, and those that care about you want to help**

**Express your feelings as they come up. Emotions are like waves, they may crash over you but will ebb away, they are not permanent**

