

## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A TRAUMATIC EVENT OR A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing or may experience later some strong emotional or physical reactions.

It is normal and very common for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have passed through a stressful event. Sometimes they may appear a few hours or a few days later, and in some cases, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions come to light.

With the understanding and support of loved ones, the stress reactions usually pass more quickly.

Occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This does not imply mental instability or weakness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful for the person to manage by themselves.

***Don't be afraid to reach out to someone you trust for help!***

## COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CRITICAL STRESS

### PHYSICAL

Nausea/Vomiting  
Muscle Tremors  
Chest Pain\*\*  
Difficulty Breathing\*\*  
Rapid Heart Rate  
Headaches  
Shock Symptoms\*\*  
Fainting\*\*

### COGNITIVE

Blaming Someone  
Confusion  
Poor Attention  
Poor Decisions  
Concentration  
Problem Solving  
Intrusive images  
Nightmares

**\*\* MAY INDICATE NEED FOR MEDICAL EVALUATION**

### EMOTIONAL

Anxiety  
Guilt  
Denial  
Severe Panic (Rare)  
Emotional Shock  
Fear  
Loss of Control  
Depression  
Intense Anger, Etc.

### SPIRITUAL

Anger at God  
Anger at Clergy  
Withdrawal from the Church  
Crisis of Belief

### BEHAVIORAL

Withdrawal  
Outbursts  
Substance Abuse  
Alcohol and Drugs  
Inability to Rest  
Hyper Awareness

## WHAT CAN I DO TO FEEL BETTER?

- Is there a friend or family member who can be with you right now?
- Talk and express your feelings with the people you trust.
- Eat and drink something healthy.
- Pray or ask someone to pray for you.

## WHAT NOW?

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE?



Presented by the  
Fairfield Fire Department

## UNDERSTANDING THE SCENE OF AN UNEXPECTED DEATH

Steps that occur upon the death of your loved one during the first 24 hours

### THE DEATH INVESTIGATION

Sudden, unexplained, unattended or unexpected deaths may require that a complete investigation be performed to determine the cause of death. Whether it is natural, accidental or criminal in nature, knowing the cause of death is important. By Ohio law, every death must be certified by a physician or county coroner.

### THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

Law enforcement and fire personnel are your advocates in the death of a loved one. They will take charge of a scene in order to do a thorough investigation. They are simply in search of the truth of what caused your loved one to die. The law requires them to adhere to strict guidelines in the entire process. You are welcome to ask them questions about the process.

### THE COUNTY CORONER INVESTIGATOR

This person works together with law enforcement. They represent the Butler County Coroner at the scene of a sudden death. They are trained to examine the victim, conduct interviews, and oversee the official transportation of the body for further investigation or release your loved one to the funeral home of your choosing.

### THE CORONERS INVESTIGATION

The Butler County Coroner is Dr. Lisa Mannix and her office is located in Hamilton Ohio. It generally takes between 24 to 72 hours to complete their investigation depending on call volume, weekends, and holidays. Laboratory results may take substantially longer. For more information search <https://coroner.bcohoio.gov>

### THE NEXT IMPORTANT DECISION

It is necessary to select a funeral home and begin making arrangements for the funeral. Selecting a funeral home at this time can be very difficult but it is a very important decision that should be done as soon as possible. The funeral home you select will be in contact and will arrange to transport the body of your loved one to the funeral home once the investigation is complete. The funeral home you choose will take custody of your loved one from either the county morgue or from the scene of death once released by the coroner's office. Be assured the coroner's investigative techniques will not affect how a person appears at the funeral. Every effort is made to treat your loved one with dignity. No family visits are allowed at the county morgue.

### WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PERSONAL PROPERTY LEFT ON MY LOVED ONE?

Whatever is on the body of your loved one stays on the body until it is released by the County Coroner's Office. All other property is released to the nearest next of kin after the investigation is complete.

## NOW WHAT? What should I do Next?

- 1 Who else in the family needs to be notified? If more calls are needed, ask for help in doing so.
- 2 Call for support - family, clergy, friends. Don't go at it alone.
- 3 Select and call a funeral home. Set up an appointment with their staff.
- 4 Allow people to help you. It will speed your healing and theirs as well.
- 5 Don't hesitate to ask questions. If you don't know who to ask, ask a chaplain. Call non-emergency police dispatch at 513-829-8201 and asked to be connected to a chaplain.

## FOR MORE RESOURCES CONTACT FAIRFIELD FIRE CHAPLAINS

**513-829-8201**