

## SOME DO'S & DON'TS

- DO** express your emotions
- DO** talk about what is happening as often as you can
- DO** find opportunities to review the experience
- DO** discuss what happened with your 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 when they can get appropriate help
- DO** try to keep your life as normal as possible
- DO** keep daily routines
- DO** drive more carefully
- DO** be more carefully 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

## WHEN TO FIND HELP

- 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 relationship seems 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 use other drugs
- If your work performance suffers
- If you are tired all the time
- If things get on top of you all the time
- If you take it out on your family
- If your health deteriorates

## WHERE TO FIND HELP

- Consult your G.P.
- Contact a RED CROSS Peer Support Worker or Stress Awareness Trainer
- Contact your Team Leader or Team Medical Officer

## CONCLUSION

EARLY RECOGNITION  
EARLY INTERVENTION  
RETURN TO NOMALITY



**Irish Red Cross**  
**Crois Dhearg na hÉireann**



**Irish Red Cross**  
**CISD**

**STRESS & POST Traumatic Stress**  
**Awareness Program**

**16 Merrion Square, Dublin 2**

*A Guide for Red Cross Personnel*

*How to recognise stress in yourself  
And colleagues*

**How to seek HELP**

C.I.S.M TEAM  
TRAINING COMMITTEE  
2009

## WHAT IS STRESS?

- Stress is the mental and physical response resulting from exposure to and demand of pressure
- The greater the demand the more intense the stress reaction
- Prolonged or excessive stress causes distress

## WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIGNS OF EXCESSIVE STRESS?

### These can include:

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Loss of motivation
- Dreading going to work
- Becoming withdrawn
- Racing thoughts
- Confusion
- Difficult making decisions
- Poor concentration
- Poor memory
- Anger

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Racing heart, breathless and rapid breathing
- Feeling hot and flushed, excessive sweating
- Dry mouth, churning stomach
- Diarrhoea and digestion problems
- Frequent desire to use the toilet
- Muscle tension
- Restless, tiredness, sleep difficulties, headaches
- Increased drinking or smoking
- Over eating, loss of appetite
- Loss of interest in sex
- Self-neglect

## SOME STRESS RELATED DISEASES

### Chronic stress can be associated with:

- Coronary heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Strokes
- Migraines
- Ulcers

## POST TRAUMATIC DISORDER

Following a single traumatic event or regular exposure to such an event, as is found in the rescue services, post traumatic stress may occur. All the symptoms of stress may occur and in addition the following feelings can be experienced.

### ANGER:

- At the injustice and senselessness of it all
- At the shame and indignities
- At how things have turned around

### SADNESS & DEPRESSION:

- Caused by an awareness of how little can be done for the severely injured and dying, sense of foreshortened future, poor concentration, inability to recall things as well as before.

### GUILT:

- Through believing that you should have been able to do more, or that you could have acted differently.

### FEAR:

- Of “breaking down” or “losing control”
- Of not having done all you could have done
- Of being blamed for something
- Of a similar event happening to you or your loved ones

### AVOIDANCE:

- Of the scene of the trauma or of anything that reminds you of it.

### INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS:

- Memories or flashbacks which intrude and cause distress and the same emotions which.

### HYPERAROUSAL:

- Irritability, outburst of anger, easily startled, constantly on guard for threats.

### NUMBING:

- Loss of your normal range of feelings e.g. inability to show affection, detachment, and estrangement from others.