

## POST-CRITICAL INCIDENT SELF-CARE

### *Best Practices for Caring for Yourself Following a Critical Incident*

- ✓ Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- ✓ Be open to receiving support from those you trust.
- ✓ Reach out to trusted family, friends, and co-workers who support you.
- ✓ As much as possible, maintain a normal and active routine.
- ✓ Exercise regularly.
- ✓ Get plenty of sleep and rest.
- ✓ Maintain a nourishing diet comprised of regularly scheduled healthy meals.
- ✓ Consider writing down your thoughts and emotions to help organize your internal experience (it is recommended that you shred the writing if you wish to ensure your privacy).
- ✓ Avoid major life decisions that you may later regret (e.g., deciding whether or not to get married or buy a new house).
- ✓ Make many inconsequential decisions (e.g., selecting what to eat for lunch or what time to go for a run) to help reestablish a sense of control.
- ✓ Understand that having strong feelings (including anxiety, anger, worry and fear) following a traumatic event is normal, and the "normal" range of personal responses following a traumatic incident varies widely from person to person.
- ✓ Focus on what you can influence while letting go of what you cannot control.
- ✓ Give yourself permission to feel however it is that you feel, while not imposing upon yourself any sense of obligation to maintain or preserve negative emotions.
- ✓ Understand that emotional states are temporary and most people "bounce back" sooner or later following a traumatic event.
- ✓ Keep in mind that you are only human, we are all prone to error, and even people who are the best in the world at what they do routinely make mistakes.
- ✓ Be aware of "red flags" that signal you need help (e.g., frequent crying, excessive worry, anxiety, fearfulness, sadness, confusion, anger, sleep disturbance, thoughts of suicide, or increased use of alcohol or other substances), and seek out support.
- ✓ Consider reaching out to others who may be having difficulties; reassuring and helping others can be one of the most effective ways to recover as a team.
- ✓ Communicate your needs to others in a clear and unambiguous manner.
- ✓ Be patient and compassionate with yourself and others who may also be experiencing stress.

