

*Other people having trouble with this call.*

*Names of people who might give me support.*

*As impossible as it may seem right now, what good could come from this?*

*What can I do for myself right now?*

*Things that I enjoy doing, that are practical to do, and that I will do within the next few days.*

## Notes to Myself

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**WHEN YOU HAVE  
A BAD CALL**

**A HOW-TO GUIDE  
TO BEGIN  
PULLING YOURSELF  
BACK TOGETHER  
AGAIN**



**SANDOVAL COUNTY  
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Every emergency responder will work a number of calls that are overwhelming.. Even the most hardened, tough, professional experienced, respected, veteran firefighter, EMT, paramedic, police officer, or dispatcher — anyone who responds to emergencies and helps people, will say “This one got to me!” more than once.

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It’s normal, natural, and unavoidable.

**You have had a Critical Incident.**

**How this may effect you is predictable:**

- Anger**
  - Loss of appetite**
  - Diarrhea**
  - Inability to sleep**
  - Irritability**
  - Shakes/Chills**
  - Confusion**
  - Crying spells**
  - Hyperactivity**
  - Blaming Others**
  - Self-Criticism**
  - Dreams/Flashbacks**
  - Withdrawal from people**
  - Sick to stomach**
  - Getting quiet or talking to everyone**
  - Identifying victims with your loved ones**
- ...And more!

Here are some ideas to help minimize these normal reactions to abnormal circumstances.

- Do something you like
- Be where people are
- Write it down
- Keep busy
- Exercise
- Breathe
- Pray

Talk with others involved in your critical incident. We now know that holding it in will lead to a slower recovery and possible problems at a later time. The greatest cure for critical incident stress is talking it out with others involved in the incident with you. You need to know that you are not alone in your grief and your reactions.

It is important to avoid substances that will make your stress worse. Tobacco, sugar, caffeine, and alcohol all increase stress reactions in your body. These substances will make you feel better at first and then you will feel worse later.

Sometimes the after-shock or stress reactions appear immediately after the event, but can appear hours or days later. Occasionally, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions occur. With the strong support network of co-workers, family and friends, these reactions will usually pass quickly.

How we “cope” is a matter of what we say to ourselves; having negative thoughts keep us hurting longer. Positive thoughts bring relief. What you choose to think is totally under your control.

Some Helpful Thoughts to Think:

- I will get over this
- I am having normal reactions
- I can take back some control to feel better
- This happens to everyone in this business
- I am capable and I do a good job
- I care about people; that’s why I hurt
- My faith will help me now
- Other people want to help me; they care
- It’s okay to feel this way
- I am not afraid to ask for help
- I am a good person

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If you are not feeling better after a few days or would like to visit with a chaplain about an event that is on your mind please contact the Sandoval County Fire Department Chaplain 24 hour cell phone at 505-414-2644. Chaplain services are confidential and you do not need to notify your supervisor unless you want to.