

COPING SKILLS

1. Expect the incident to bother you – but also expect that recovery will occur more easily with these guidelines.
 2. Realize that you are not “crazy”. Stress reactions to abnormal situations are not the same as “being crazy”.
 3. Spend time with friends, family, and coworkers.
 4. Maintain a good diet and exercise. Vigorous exercises in the first 24 hours may help reduce stress-related chemicals in the bloodstream, but use caution; you are already taxed physically and emotionally.
 5. Take time for leisure activities.
 6. Remind yourself that post-traumatic stress symptoms are normal.
 7. Learn as much as possible about critical incident stress.
 8. Take a vitamin supplement, refrain from drinking alcohol excessively, or using illegal substances to numb post-traumatic stress.
 9. Realize that this is not a good time to make any major life decisions.
 10. Talk to others who are good listeners and others who were involved, but be careful to not “judge” others or yourself.
 11. Structure your life. Continue to go to work, and remain active. Try to keep a normal schedule.
 12. Try to eat small amounts of healthy food if your appetite is disturbed.
 13. Keep a journal and try not to look for easy answers to explain the reasons for the incident, or have unrealistic expectations for recovery.
 14. Call EMPAC at 265-9922 if you need assistance.
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FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

Moving Toward Acceptance

The first stage of grief is **denial**. It’s hard for our minds to accept that such a loss has taken place.

Anger is the second stage. We probably had no control over the loss, so we react to our vulnerability with anger. We lash out at others or blame ourselves for the loss. We may also react with anger to situations unrelated to the tragedy, or find we have not tolerance for frustration

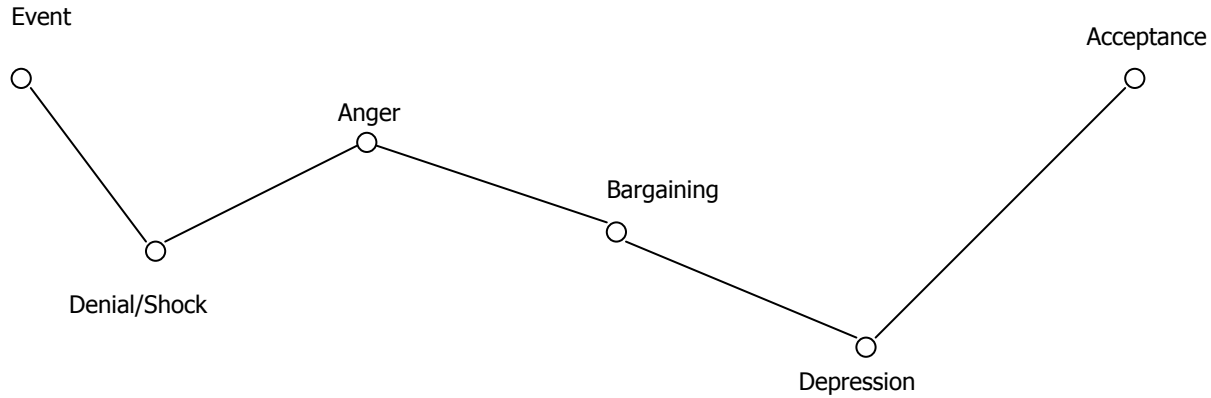
The third stage is **bargaining**. We want to trade something we *can* do for the reversal of the loss, saying things like, “I’d do anything if only this hadn’t happened.”

Depression is the fourth stage. A feeling of hopelessness about the situation takes over.

The fifth and final stage is **acceptance**. We accept the reality of the situation and are able to move on in our lives.

How much time it takes to move through these stages depends on the nature of the loss, the individual who is grieving, and the overall circumstances of the individual’s life. The important thing to remember is that grieving happens in stages. Being stuck in one stage and dwelling on the loss for too long may require the intervention of a professional counselor.

STAGES OF TRAUMATIC EVENT RESOLUTION



SOME NORMAL REACTIONS

Not everyone one experiences the same reactions to a loss. Some of the things you may be feeling include:

Phsyical

Headaches
Stomachaches
Muscle twitches
Jitters/Shaky hands
Insomnia
Low energy level
Shortness of breath
Weight loss or gain
Fatigue
Startle responses

Mental/Emotional

Forgetfulness
Apathy
Paranoia
Mental fatigue
Reduced creativity
Inability to solve problems
Hopelessness/helplessness
Fear
Anger
Short temper
Nightmares
Guilt
Anxiety

The staff of EMPAC is here to help. Feel free to contact us at 316-265-9922 or 800-234-0630 if you need assistance or even if you just want to talk. We have counselors available 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

