



Critical Support

Responding Early Makes the Difference

After a critical incident, employees may experience emotional, cognitive, or physical stress reactions. These responses are normal; however, when distress goes unaddressed, it can interfere with focus, communication, teamwork, and overall productivity. Early support plays a key role in promoting recovery and maintaining a healthy work environment.

Why Early Support Helps

- **Prevents Long-Term Impact:** Prompt attention to emotional needs can reduce the risk of burnout, anxiety, or depression.
- **Builds Team Resilience:** When teams are encouraged to process their experiences together, they tend to recover more quickly and return to effective functioning.
- **Enhances Communication:** Early, open dialogue keeps managements and employees aligned and reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings.

Recognizing When to Act

Leaders and peers should remain attentive to early signs of stress, including:

- **Difficulty concentrating or completing tasks**
- **Withdrawal from coworkers or usual activities**
- **Irritability, fatigue, or increased conflict**
- **Unusual absenteeism or changes in work habits**

If these signs appear following a stressful event, don't wait. Taking timely action shows care, builds trust, and demonstrates a commitment to employee well-being.

Early Steps for Leaders

- **Acknowledge the incident.** Recognize that employees may react differently and validate that their responses are normal.
- **Provide reassurance.** Remind employees that confidential support is available to them.
- **Request assistance.** Contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for immediate consultation or to request a Critical Incident Response (CIR) by calling **800-327-4968**.

For additional guidance on navigating Critical Incidents, reach out to the EAP or visit [EAP4YOU.com](https://eap4you.com)