



# The Psychological Services Group

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*Dedicated Service to Those Who Serve*

When processing our way through the aftermath of a critical incident it may seem simplistic or overly optimistic to believe that small things can make a difference in such an overwhelming impact but, as with so many things in life slow and steady often marks the quickest path to recovery and resumption of the lives we value. With that in mind, it can be helpful to set some modest goals so we offer some Common Sense Steps for Stress Management:

- Maintain a normal schedule
- Pursue a regular program of daily physical exercise
- Reach out to family, friends and trusted associates
- Get enough sleep (6-8 continuous hours)
- Avoid consuming alcohol to mask or control your symptoms
- Take one thing, one day at a time
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten for a while
- Return to your routine as soon as possible to regain control
- Eat well-balanced and healthy meals (even if you aren't hungry)
- Keep a journal; write your way through those sleepless hours
- Recognize the early warning signs of traumatic stress; get help
- Increase your intake of healthy fluids; hydrate
- Concentrate on what you can control; leave the rest alone
- Be patient with yourself, not critical
- Get out in nature, enjoy the out of doors, engage your senses
- Get up, shower, do your chores, walk the dog, do something
- Identify and accept emotional needs, communicate them
- Establish, or reestablish, priorities in your life
- Remember, the people around you are stressed too

Remember, you are a normal person experiencing a normal reaction to a grossly abnormal event. Give yourself some time to recover without the additional burden of unrealistic expectations of immediate recovery. It has been estimated that the average first responder encounters more trauma in 3 years of employment than the average 70 year old does in a lifetime. Be kind to yourself.