

Adverse Events & Workplace Trauma

Leaders guide to Adverse Events & Workplace Trauma

As a leader, you may notice changes in your team's behaviors immediately following a crisis or traumatic event. For many caregivers these changes diminish over time. If the changes do not fade, or become more intense over time, the caregiver may need additional help. It can be helpful to know what kind of reactions you might expect from caregivers, and what you can do to be helpful for them.

Common reactions

- › Difficulty communicating and listening during team huddles or meetings
- › Difficulty concentrating or remembering work tasks
- › Intrusive thoughts of the incident; cannot turn thoughts off
- › Withdrawing from the team and isolation
- › Absence from work
- › Avoidance of similar cases
- › Irritability or anger at family or coworkers
- › Numb reactions to emergencies
- › Over reactions to small provocations
- › Startling easily and appearing jumpy
- › Forced happiness
- › Increased paranoia
- › Physical reactions
- › Changes in level of activity - may be fidgety and moving around more than usual, or lethargic.
- › Physical complaints - such as headache, upset stomach, muscle tension, difficulties eating and/or sleeping.

Tips for supporting employees

- › Connect with them individually; ask them how they are doing.
- › Adopt a non-anxious presence; be calm and confident
- › Remind them that these symptoms are common and not signs of weakness.
- › Listen whole heartedly and express compassion, "This is hard."
- › Support activities that will help them refresh and recharge. Make sure they are taking breaks, lunches and scheduled days off.
- › Maintain routines whenever possible and be thoughtful when workflow necessitates changes that will impact the caregiver.
- › Increase the frequency of check-ins with the caregiver to ensure they have the support they need.
- › Make sure they are aware of the availability of resources like the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Consider calling EAP from your office while meeting with the caregiver to get them connected to services.
- › Connect them with other professional resources including chaplaincy if applicable.

Resources

- › Employee Assistance Program: 800-832-7733
- › Emotional Health Relief Hotline: 833-442-2211
- › Chaplain Services*: 801-357-8781
- › National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255

*Phone services are not available at facilities where chaplains remain available in person: Primary Children's, Utah Valley, St. George, and McKay-Dee hospitals.