Critical incidents are unexpected, unusual events perceived by an individual as threatening or traumatic. They are often sudden, outside our normal frame of reference and a challenge to our ability to cope. If you experience a critical incident, you can have a wide range of reactions. It is important to remember:

- Your reaction is your reaction
- You might react differently to different situations at different times
- There is no right way to react

Common reactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
<th>Spiritual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disbelief</td>
<td>Difficulty concentrating or loss of focus</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Social withdrawal or isolation</td>
<td>Seeking meaning of life and purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger or irritability</td>
<td>Intrusive flashbacks, memories of event</td>
<td>Physical Exhaustion</td>
<td>Dreams or nightmares</td>
<td>Spiritual confusion and possibly estrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief/sadness</td>
<td>Decreased trust</td>
<td>Lack of energy</td>
<td>Seeking closeness with loved ones</td>
<td>Strengthened or renewed spirituality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Memory challenges</td>
<td>Changes to appetite or weight</td>
<td>Returning to old coping patterns</td>
<td>Feeling abandoned by spiritual connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbness</td>
<td>Searching for blame or responsibility</td>
<td>Changes in sleep patterns</td>
<td>Pacing/body agitation or restlessness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings of helplessness</td>
<td>Ruminating on choices made</td>
<td>Digestive upset</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilt and/or feelings of shame</td>
<td>Taking responsibility for things that weren't known or within one's control</td>
<td>Feeling dizzy or lightheaded</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Searching for meaning</td>
<td>Headache</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yearning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Heart palpitations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aches and pains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional supports are needed when:

- Your reactions are feeling particularly strong and persisting over time
- Your reactions are increasing in intensity, rather than decreasing over time
- You feel out of control, or your activities of daily living are being negatively affected
- Your own coping and support resources aren't helping you to find a resolution

What you can do to help others:

- Listen with an open mind, acknowledge their thoughts and feelings
- Accept that they may need time and space
- Offer to lend a hand with everyday tasks
- Point out there are resources and supports available to help
- Respect their privacy, and only reach out on their behalf with their consent, or if you are concerned about imminent safety

RESOURCES »
On-campus resources

Staff Wellness
Staff Wellness leads a number of programs, resources and services, to help promote, support, and sustain the health and wellness of faculty, staff and post-doctoral scholars.
403.220.2918 | staffwellness@ucalgary.ca
| ucalgary.ca/staffwellness

Campus Security
For all imminent life-threatening situations, call 911. For all other safety and security concerns, call Campus Security.
403.220.5333 | ucalgary.ca/security

Sexual Violence Support Advocate
The Sexual Violence Support Advocate offers confidential support and information regarding sexual violence to all members of the university community.
403.220.2208 | ucalgary.ca/sexualviolencesupport

Office of Diversity, Equity and Protected Disclosure
The Protected Disclosure serves as a confidential resource for individuals seeking information and advice on sensitive and diverse matters.
403.220.4086 | ucalgary.ca/odepd

Student Wellness Services
Faculty and staff can contact Student Wellness Services for information about assisting students or visit for walk-in medical appointments, chiropractic treatments, massage therapy and nutrition services.
403.210.9355 | ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre

Off-campus resources

Employee and Family Assistance Plan (Homewood Health)
Homewood Health provides in-person, online, telephone, and email support at no cost to faculty and staff.
1.800.663.1142 | homeweb.ca

211 Alberta
211 Alberta connects users to the right community and social services.
Dial 211 | ab.211.ca

Access Mental Health
Access Mental Health provides information, telephone consultation and referral over the phone to help you understand and connect with helpful supports.
403.943.1500 | 1.844.943.1500

Distress Centre Calgary
Connect to professional counsellors at the Distress Centre Calgary through their 24-hour crisis line, email, or online chat. Face-to-face counselling is also available.
403.266.HELP (4357) | distresscentre.com

Reference:
Student Wellness Services. Understanding Grief: SJW Wellness Centre, University of Calgary