

After a Disaster: Stress Reactions in the Work Environment

After an event, such as a disaster, people will have a variety of reactions. It is important to remember that some people may react more intensely than others.

Some common reactions, which you may notice in yourself or in coworkers, may include some of the following:

1. Being afraid to return to the work place or being concerned about physical safety in the work environment.
2. Changing regular work routines to avoid physical reminders of the traumatic event.
3. Experiencing flashbacks of trauma, which can be triggered by sights, sounds and smells in the environment.
4. Decreasing time spent at work through sick leave, vacations and unexplained absences.
5. Questioning whether or not to remain at the present job or even the present profession.
6. Being distracted from the task at hand (which can lead to accidents or errors).
7. Deteriorating work performance and customer relations.
8. Wondering whether they are competent to perform their job
9. Questioning when things will get back to normal.
10. Feeling isolated, as if others do not appear to be as affected as they are by the incident.
11. Feeling angry about the behavior of coworkers.
12. Breakdown in the sense of professionalism on the job.
13. Loss of a sense of humor.
14. Withdrawing from a previous relationship with colleagues.

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