

A critical incident is any event that is outside the range of usual human experience. It is an emotional shock and it is not always easy to come to terms with what has happened. This resource aims to highlight some of the expected emotional responses to such an experience.

It's normal to experience all kinds of unpleasant feelings, emotions and body sensations

**Common feelings and emotions include:**

Loss / Disappointment  
Shame / Hope  
Fear / Sadness  
Longing / Regret  
Guilt

**How our mind may respond:**

- Memories/flashbacks to the incident are common
- Dreams/nightmares about the incident
- Reminders about the incident may trigger anxiety/stress
- Difficulties with concentration or memory
- A preoccupation with the incident - can't get it out of your mind

**How our bodies may respond:**

Difficulty sleeping  
Loss of appetite / Fatigue  
Feeling on edge - due to high adrenaline / cortisone levels

**REMEMBER:**

If you are feeling unwell visit your GP or tell someone you trust.

Everyone's response to a critical incident is personal and may vary in intensity according to the circumstances.

**DON'T**

- Bottle up your feelings. Crying can bring relief!
- Avoid talking about what happened
- Expect the memories to go away straight away
- Isolate yourself. These sensations are natural human reactions

**DO**

- Express your emotions
- Encourage everyone to share in the grief
- Take time to sleep, rest, reflect
- Spend time with those important to you
- Express your needs clearly and honestly

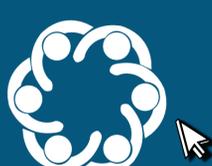
If you feel you would benefit from talking to someone please call the GAA's official mental health partner's 24-7 All-Ireland helpline.

**SAMARITANS**

**FREEPHONE: 116 123**

OR TO ACCESS ANY OF THE ADDITIONAL SERVICES BELOW CLICK ON THE LOGO

**REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**



Contact details for HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention

**NORTHERN IRELAND**



Improve Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

