

Emotional Responses to Traumatic Situations

A former worker walks into the office, shoots and kills three supervisors and wounds five others. You may have seen horrible headlines like this over the past few years. It seems that this could never happen in your workplace. The truth is that this could become a reality. Warning signs are usually there but go unnoticed. If an event like this does occur, it is important to take care of your staff first.



When people experience traumatic events that are beyond the range of their usual experience, they often suffer very crippling psychological effects. Workplace events of this type include:

- Experiencing an armed robbery
- Witnessing serious injury or death
- Any significant event where the victims are relatives, friends, or co-workers
- Any event that threatens the lives of workers
- Suicide of a co-worker
- Unexpected death of a co-worker or immediate family member of a co-worker

Adults experiencing traumatic situations may have any of the following reactions:

- Inability to sleep soundly or sleeping too much
- Amnesia or increased memory problems
- Depression, anxiety, nervousness
- Increased frustration, sensitivity, irritability
- Withdrawal and isolation
- Sudden, inappropriate crying, anger, rage
- Irrational fears and worries
- Guilt from surviving or not preventing the tragedy
- Nightmares and intrusive thoughts
- Exhaustion and fatigue
- Feelings of helpless and inability to concentrate
- Suppression of emotion
- Hyperactivity

Events like these can have a major impact on workers and the workplace. Providing onsite services can help lessen this impact. You may notice changes in your staff including **increased absenteeism, increased errors, irritability with co-workers, missed deadlines, tearfulness, lowered productivity and isolation from co-workers**. Your workers are your greatest asset and during the time of a traumatic event it is important to take care of them.

The dedicated organizational consultants at First Sun are available to assist you in setting up training for your staff on this and other topics. Just give us a call toll free at **800-968-8143** or in Greater Columbia **803-376-2668**.