






Psych & Stress Problems With Death in SAR

-  **Multiple death situations are unfamiliar, distasteful, and not easily resolved.**
-  **SAR personnel should ask for support and assistance, breaks, a change, and avenues of tension release.**
-  **The pain of witnessing other's pain may become intolerable as in the case of extreme grief over finding a small child dead.**
-  **SAR workers should be aware that witnessing certain events can generate emotions that could be difficult to handle if it brings back or renews past grief reactions.**
-  **Personnel can become so overwhelmed by the quantity and nature of death that the person's psycho-social ability to cope with reality breaks down.**

Four Categories of Symptoms

-- as indicators of adverse psych reactions --

1. Ability to Think

- mental confusion, slowness of thought, inability to make decisions.

2. Psychological Moods

- depression, irritability, anxiety etc..

3. Somatic or Physical Characteristics

- physical exhaustion, loss of energy, excessive rage etc..

4. Behavioral

- hyperactivity, inability to express verbally.

Post Traumatic Stress


-- significant emotional trauma (a Critical Incident) such as exposure to a death, or causing someone to die or suffer.

Examples:

- * **Post Vietnam Syndrome**
- * **The Death of a Fellow Search Worker**
- * **Post Shooting Trauma**
- * **Kansas City Hyatt Regency Collapse**
- * **San Diego PSA Crash**
- * **Loss of Life After a Long Successful Rescue**
- * **Death of a Child or Other Relative**
- * **A Long Grueling Mission: Heavy Emotion & Physical Strain**

People In a Crisis State

Crisis is a state of being. . . It is different for everyone.



- ✓ *People are very susceptible to direction or persuasion - being led.*
- ✓ *Limited numbers of people have all defenses destroyed.*

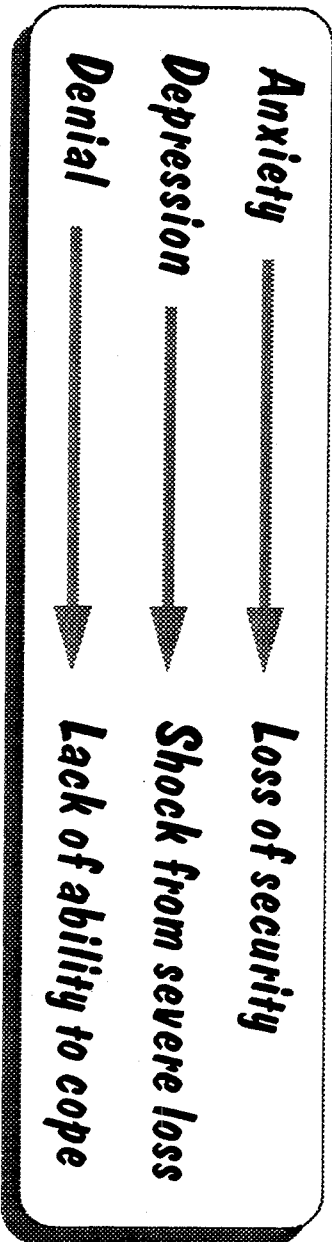
Examples :

"I can't take it anymore!" "Why him? He didn't do anything!" "This isn't fair!"
"I'm Okay!" "I'm Okay!" "I know its important, but I can't do anything now !"

Provide Specific Alternatives

Important Points About Crisis States

- ✓ **A crisis is different for each person**
- ✓ **Searchers need to relate.**
- ✓ **The second experience is easier.**
- ✓ **Crisis is self limiting.**
- ✓ **Reactions mean something...**



Helping Family Members

with Grief Reactions

- ★ Provide privacy & make comfortable.
- ★ Provide concrete info & support ventilation of feelings.
- ★ Provide professional or paraprofessional help (i.e. clergy, counselor etc.)
- ★ In fatalities, avoid family or friends viewing subject in the field.