

# Life Challenges: A Self-Help Guide

Critical incidents impact everyone differently. These steps can support your recovery.

## STEP 1: AWARENESS

Take a look at these common reactions. Identify the ones that relate to your experience.

Physical	Emotional	Mental	Social	Spiritual
Fatigue Headaches or body pain Trouble sleeping Change in appetite Tense muscles Shallow breathing	Shock Sadness Grief Fear Anxiety Anger Guilt	Forgetfulness Poor decision-making Distracted easily Nightmares Reliving the event Losing track of time	Feeling alone Keeping to yourself Clinginess to others Problems with others Overprotective Hard to trust people	Questioning beliefs Feeling abandoned Loss of hope Life feels pointless Struggling with your faith or spiritual practices

## Resilient Responses

Alertness and focus on the present	Appreciation for loved ones	Desire to help others
Working to meet challenges	Determination, courage, creativity	Realistic optimism and hope
Trusting spiritual beliefs	Connecting with others	Caring for yourself and loved ones

## STEP 2: COPING

Look at the coping strategies below. Which ones do you use now? Which strategies might help you?

Physical	Emotional	Mental	Social	Spiritual
Drink water and eat healthy Get enough sleep Exercise and move your body Take prescribed medications Keep a daily routine Maintain good hygiene Show affection when welcomed Get regular medical care	Notice what you are thankful for Write down your thoughts, feelings, and experiences Talk about how you feel Practice deep breathing, relaxation, and positive thinking Let yourself cry Look for things that are funny and make you laugh	Seek accurate information from reliable sources Take time away from news and social media Make a list of what matters most to you Set short-term goals and plans Create art, stories, poems, or music Study a new topic Work on puzzles	Spend time with family and friends Do uplifting activities and games Connect with people you trust Find ways to help and serve others Volunteer in your community Share a meal with someone in need Be with pets and enjoy nature	Be open to inspiration Pray, ponder, meditate Identify what is meaningful to you Focus on what is most important Read or listen to uplifting books or music Attend religious or spiritual services Talk to spiritual leaders you trust

Be careful not to cope in ways that might hurt you later. Try to avoid things like isolating yourself, overeating, oversleeping, self-harm, misusing tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, spending too much time on screens, or contention with others. If you're having a tough time, reach out to someone you trust. You can also find additional information and helpful resources at [criticalincidentcare/self-help.com](https://criticalincidentcare.com/self-help)

## STEP 3: SHARING

Have a conversation with someone you trust about how you are responding and ways you are coping. Explore how you can help and support each other.

