

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Providing care and support to people can be an enriching and meaningful professional experience, but it can also be physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting. It is normal to experience different emotions and reactions after a deployment, activation, or other response.

COMMON REACTIONS

- **Feeling a sense of emptiness.** Resuming your life after long days or weeks away from home can make some people feel different about their regular life. Some people experience a reduced sense of purpose or urgency in their lives. You may have had long, busy and at times, chaotic days whereas your day-to-day routines may be more structured and predictable. Allow yourself time to readjust emotionally to your normal routine.
 - **Wondering if you did enough.** It is common for people to feel like their contributions did not make an impact. Some may look back and think about what they could have done differently. Focus on where you made positive contributions, no matter the scale. Remind yourself that you did the best you could within your roles and abilities. Being present and listening may be all that was needed.
 - **Temporary changes to sleep.** You may notice changes in your sleep, including difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping more than before. Following good sleep hygiene can help re-establish your sleep routine.
 - **Other physical and emotional changes.** Feelings of exhaustion, headaches, stomach aches, irritability, anxiety and sadness in the first week or two after a deployment are not uncommon. If this persists for more than two weeks, you may wish to connect with your healthcare provider.
- All these experiences are normal and usually temporary. It is encouraged to monitor how you are doing over the next few weeks and reach out for support when needed.**



SELF CARE PRACTICES YOU MAY FIND HELPFUL

- Practice self compassion. It is understandable to feel different mental, emotional, and physical reactions after a response. Remind yourself that you've been under stressful conditions for days, even weeks. Think about what you might say to a friend or colleague if they shared similar responses to you.
- Re-establish your routines and the activities you enjoy.
- Consider establishing a ritual that allows you to leave your work at the doorstep when you return home. Develop a good balance between personal time and emergency work.
- Practice physical wellness. Try breathing exercises, stretching, going for walks or any positive activity that helps to relieve stress.
- Be mindful of your consumption of alcohol and other substances.
- Allow for quiet time but be mindful to not isolate yourself.
- Connect with a friend or colleague to talk about how you are doing. This can be helpful in understanding and making meaning of your experiences.
- Explain to family and friends that it is not unusual for them to notice some temporary changes in you as you return to your normal routines after an emergency response.
- You may be interested in completing the Professional Quality of Life Scale, a validated measure to see where you fall on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.
- For more information, you may find the following links helpful:
 - [A Post Deployment Guide for Emergency and Disaster Response Workers](#)
 - [A Post Deployment Guide for Families of Emergency and Disaster Response Workers](#)



WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

- **BC Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789**
(no area code needed)
- **KUU-US Crisis Line Society: 1-800-588-8717**