


# STRESS ENCOUNTERS IN THE LIFE OF A TELECOMMUNICATOR

Rachel Oberhauser

Homeland Security Solutions, Inc.

Project Manager, Training and Certification

# Course Objectives

- Define a traumatic event
  - Responses to abnormal situations
  - Stress Indicators
  - Ways to handle traumatic events
  - Importance of handling stress and traumatic events properly
  - Resources available
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths and orientations, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

IF STRESS BURNED  
CALORIES,  
I'D BE  
A SUPER  
MODEL.




Fb.com/MinionQuote

DespicableMeMinions.org

## HOW CAN THIS COURSE HELP?

Education and early intervention assist in preventing long-term problems

# STRESS INOCULATION THEORY

- By preparing in advance to handle stressful events, individuals can become resistant to the effects of the stressors.
    - Initial conceptualization
    - Skills acquisition and rehearsal
    - Application and follow through
- 



## IDENTIFYING THOUGHTS/COGNITIONS

Perception, sensation, notion or intuition that is a result of an event or experience.

# WHAT IS A TRAUMATIC EVENT?

- Any event outside the usual realm of human experience that is markedly distressing. Usually involves a perceived threat to one's physical integrity or to the physical integrity of someone in close proximity. On Combat, 2008
- Any event that causes unusually strong emotional reactions that have the potential to interfere with the ability to function normally. CISM, 2006



## TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Hearing/Listening to someone experience a traumatic event

Exposure to personal injuries and/or death

Threatened or actual physical assault

Threatened or actual sexual violence

Being kidnapped or taken hostage, terrorist attack, torture, prisoner of war

Natural or man-made disasters

Accidents – i.e. vehicular, shooting, drowning

# NORMAL REACTIONS TO AN ABNORMAL SITUATION


- ❑ Physiological
  - ❑ Relating to the way in which a living organism or body part functions.
- ❑ Psychological
  - ❑ Having a mental rather than physical cause



# AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM


Structure	Sympathetic System	Parasympathetic System
Iris (Eye muscle)	Pupil dilation	Pupil constriction
Salivary Glands	Saliva production reduced	Saliva production increased
Oral/Nasal Mucosa	Mucus production reduced	Mucus production increased
Heart	Heart rate and force increased	Heart rate and force decreased
Lung	Bronchial muscle relaxed	Bronchial muscle contracted
Stomach	Peristalsis reduced	Gastric juices secreted; motility increased
Small Intestine	Motility reduced	Digestion increased
Large Intestine	Motility reduced	Secretions and motility increased
Liver	Increase conversion of glycogen to glucose	
Kidney	Decreased urine secretion	Increased urine secretion
Adrenal medulla	Norepinephrine and epinephrine secreted	
Bladder	Wall relaxed	Wall contracted

# PHYSICAL REACTIONS AND RESPONSES – WHEN THEY OCCUR

- During the event
  - Within 24-72 hours following the event
  - Weeks, months, years after the event
- 

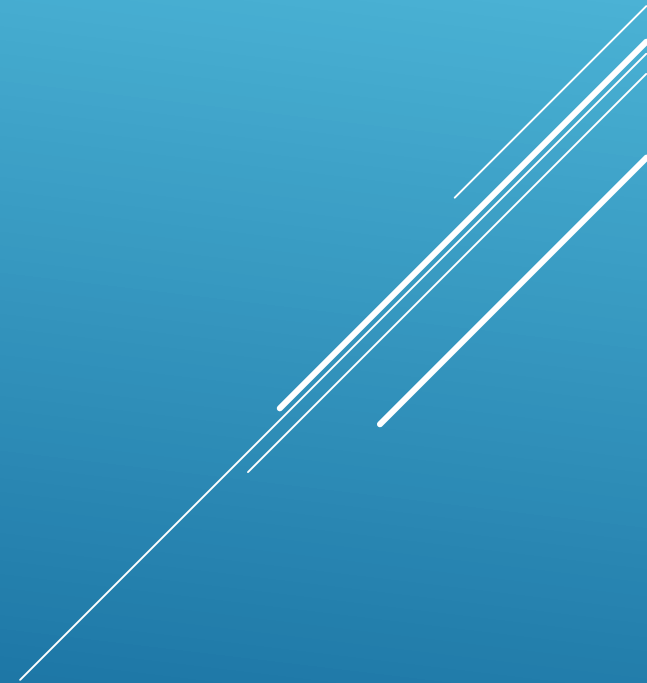
# DURING THE EVENT

## Activation of Sympathetic Nervous System


- Dilation of pupils
  - Digestive system is inhibited – diarrhea
  - Dry mouth
  - Sweating
  - Increased blood pressure
  - Increased heart rate
  - Auditory Inhibition
- 

# PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSES DURING THE EVENT

- ❑ Feelings that everything is happening in slow motion
- ❑ Emotional numbness



# PHYSICAL RESPONSES

- Nausea
  - Upset stomach
  - Tremors in lips and/or hands
  - Feeling uncoordinated
  - Profuse sweating
  - Chills
  - Diarrhea
  - Dizziness
  - Chest pain
  - Rapid heart rate
  - Increased blood pressure
  - Headache
  - Muscle aches
- 

# PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSES


## Cognitive:

- Slowed thinking
- Difficulty making decisions
- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Difficulty calculating
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory problems
- Poor attention span
- Seeing the event over and over again


## Emotional:

- Anxiety
- Fear
- Guilt
- Sadness
- Anger
- Disbelief
- Feeling lost
- Feeling abandoned
- Feeling isolated
- Worried about others
- Wanting to hide
- Wanting to avoid people
- Irritability
- Feeling numb
- Startled

# 24 – 72 HOURS FOLLOWING – PHYSICAL REACTIONS


- Restlessness
  - Irritability
  - Psychomotor retardation
  - Sympathetic activity
  - Startled reactions
  - Nausea
  - Vomiting
  - Aggressive and hostile behaviors
  - Paranoid reactions
  - Confusion
  - Abdominal pain
  - Nightmares
- 

# 24-72 HOURS FOLLOWING – PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS

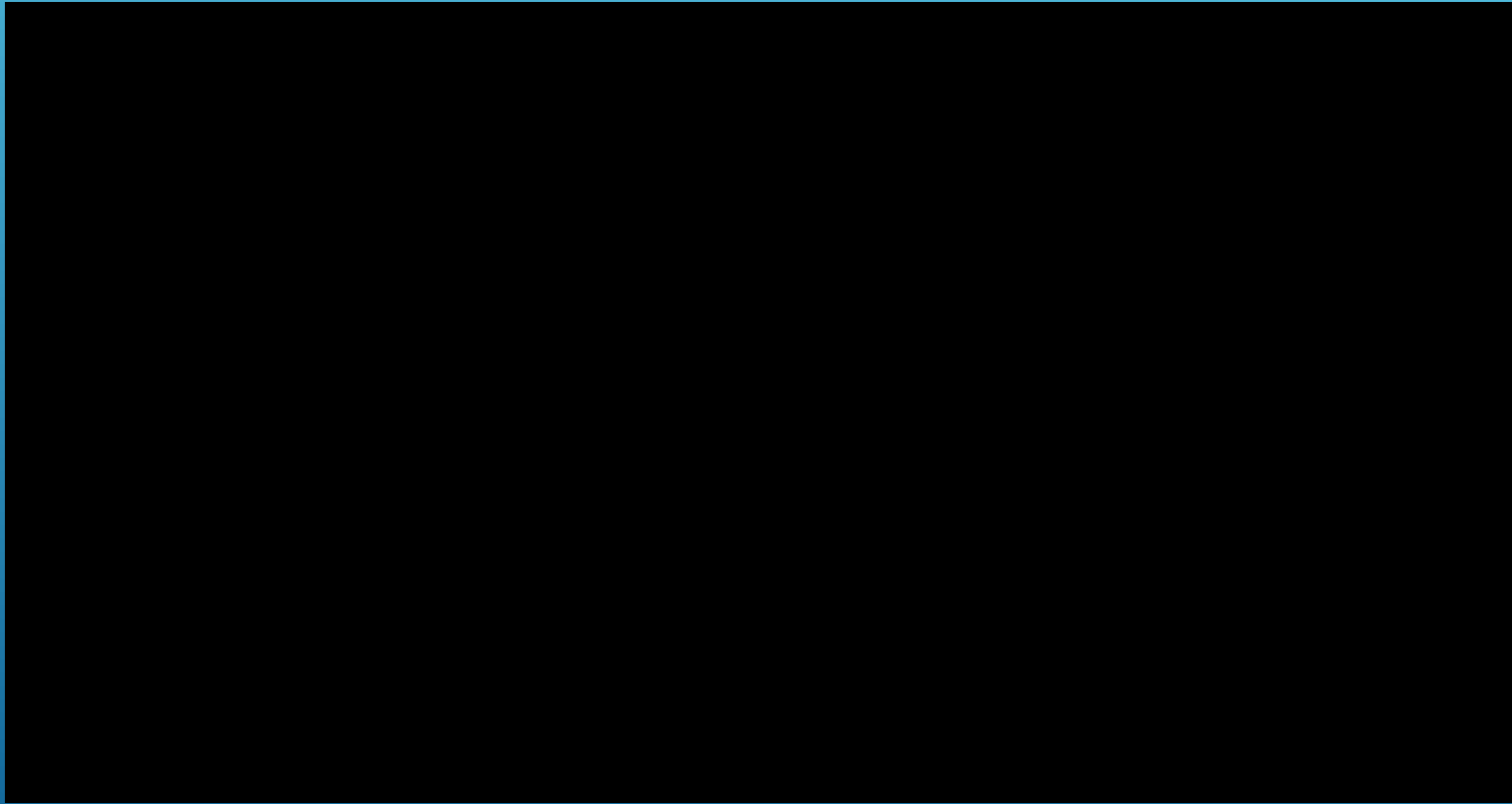
- Disbelief
  - Second guessing
  - Anger
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Withdrawal
  - Constriction of Affect
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths and orientations, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.



# WEEKS, MONTHS, YEARS AFTER THE EVENT

- Symptoms from a traumatic event will subside within one week for the majority of individuals
  - Triggers
    - Anniversary dates
    - Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch
  - For some individuals, the symptoms may persist and worsen resulting in PTSD
- 

# PTSD “BEYOND THE CALL”



# GENERAL ADAPTION SYNDROME SELVE, 1956

- Alarm Reaction
  - Resistance
  - Exhaustion
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.


# WHAT TO DO FOLLOWING A TRAUMATIC EVENT



- Safety
- Diet
- Hydration
- Exercise
- Rest
- Social support
- Catharsis



# THE DO'S AND THE DON'TS

- ❑ DO engage in calming techniques
  - ❑ DON'T watch media regarding the event
  - ❑ DO structure your time – keep busy
  - ❑ DON'T label yourself crazy – you are normal having normal reactions to an abnormal situation
  - ❑ DO talk to people
  - ❑ DON'T isolate
  - ❑ DO exercise
- 

# EXPERIENTIAL PRACTICES

- Breathing exercises
    - Tactical Breathing
    - Four Square Breathing
  - Mindfulness activities
    - Progressive relaxation
    - Guided Imagery
    - Yoga
  - Planning to survive
    - Practice
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

# BREATHING EXERCISES

Tactical Breathing

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.



# FOUR SQUARE BREATHING







**YOGA**

## PTSD: National Center for PTSD

PTSD

PTSD Home

For the Public

Public Section Home

PTSD Overview

Types of Trauma

Is it PTSD?

Treatment and Coping

Other Common Problems

Family and Friends

PTSD and Communities

Paginas en Espanol

Apps, Videos and More

Mobile Apps

Videos

Web Links

PTSD Site Search

**PUBLIC** *This section is for Veterans, General Public, Family & Friends*

### Mobile App: Mindfulness Coach

Practicing mindfulness means grounding yourself in the present moment. Mindfulness has been shown to be helpful for reducing stress and coping with unpleasant thoughts and emotions. Mindfulness Coach will help you practice mindfulness meditation. Features include:

- Education about the benefits of mindfulness
- Mindfulness exercises to practice on your own or with guidance
- Strategies to help overcome challenges to mindfulness practice
- Log of mindfulness exercises to track your progress
- Reminders to support your mindfulness practice



#### Download the mobile app

 **Free Mindfulness Coach** download from:  
iTunes (iOS) [↗](#)

Share this page



#### SEARCH PTSD SITE

1 Choose Section

Public

2 Enter Term and Search

**SEARCH**

Advanced Search

#### WHERE TO GET HELP

#### PTSD COACH ONLINE

Tools to help you manage stress.

# RESOURCE

# www.ptsd.va.gov



## PLANNING TO SURVIVE

- Practice
- Practice
- Practice
- Be healthy



## THOSE OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN A TRAUMATIC EVENT


- Spouses & significant others
- Co-workers
- Children
- Friends & family

# WHAT CAN I DO FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS EXPERIENCED A TRAUMATIC EVENT?

- Listen carefully, without passing judgement
- Be patient
- Spend time with the individual
- Offer your assistance and listening ear if they have not asked for help
- Reassure them they are safe\*
- Offer to assist with everyday tasks
- Give them some private time
- Tell them you want to understand and assist them
- If symptoms do not improve in a few weeks or worsen – seek professional help



# DON'T...


- take their anger or other feelings personally
  - tell them that they are lucky it wasn't worse
  - tell them you know how they feel – you don't even if you went through a similar situation
  - bombard them with questions.
- 



EVERY DAY THE WORST DAY - HUMOR



# WHERE TO FIND ADDITIONAL HELP?

- Primary care physician
  - Workplace EAP or CISM teams
  - National Center for PTSD
- 



# FINAL THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS



Thank you for your time and attention!

# IN CLOSING...

Special thanks to my sister, Dr. Amy White. Without her, I wouldn't be able to do what I do.

My contact information:

Rachel Oberhauser

Email: [Rachel.Oberhauser@gmail.com](mailto:Rachel.Oberhauser@gmail.com)

Phone: (910)581-2896

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue gradient background.