

WHAT TO DO AS THE SUPERVISOR AFTER A TRAUMATIC INCIDENT

As a supervisor you are in a special position to help your employees recover from the traumatic incident.

The following are suggested ways to show your support:

- ❑ Know what reactions to expect from your employees following a traumatic incident. The handout we provide, “Coping with the Aftermath of a Traumatic Incident”, will give you the basics.
- ❑ Remember that each person will handle the situation differently; while some will express their distress openly, others are better at “covering” it. If you don’t know how someone is doing, ask him or her directly and privately.
- ❑ Help employees to make the decision about when to return to work. If possible, make this a joint decision taking into account each employees ability to function following the traumatic incident. How quickly an employee can return to their normal level of functioning is directly related to severity of the trauma, their reaction to it, and the support system available to them.
- ❑ Take time to listen. Genuine empathy and concern from you can be very healing.
- ❑ Take practical steps to help employees feel safe, such as:
 - arranging for someone to drive them home following the traumatic event
 - arranging for a relative or friend to be home when they arrive
 - walking them out of the building at night and into the building in the morning
 - providing additional safety measures within the building (extra staff, guards)
- ❑ Acknowledge that you, too, will be affected by the traumatic incident. You may be in the difficult position of not wanting to let your anxiety show or to affect your work. However, your employees will benefit greatly if you are able to “lead by example.” Accepting and not denying your own response to this very disturbing event will hasten your recovery and theirs.

