Over the course of the next few weeks, you may experience a number of reactions to the event you have been through, many of which are normal and to be expected:

**Physical Reactions**
- Fatigue/exhaustion
- Sleep disturbance
- Underactivity/overactivity
- Change in appetite
- Digestive problems
- Nightmares
- Muscle tremors/itches
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Muscle aches
- Vomiting

**Cognitive Reactions**
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Difficulty solving problems
- Flashbacks of the event
- Difficulty making decisions
- Memory disturbance
- Isolation/withdrawal
- Preoccupation with the event
- Slowed thinking
- Problems naming familiar objects or people

**Emotional Reactions**
- Guilt
- Feelings of helplessness
- Emotional numbing
- Being overly sensitive
- Amnesia for the event
- Fear and/or anxiety
- Hypervigilance
- Moodiness
- Anger, which may show itself by: scapegoating, irritability, frustration with bureaucracy, violent fantasies

In addition, a period of mild to moderate depression is sometimes experienced following exposure to a stressful event or tragic loss.

**Symptoms of depression include:**
- Poor appetite
- Lethargy/low energy
- Loss of sexual drive
- Persistent sad mood
- Insomnia
- Social withdrawal/isolation
- Difficulty concentrating
- Intrusive thoughts

Again, these are normal reactions and although they are painful, they are part of the process of recovering from a loss, trauma, or the stress of a critical incident. While there is little anyone can do to take away these uncomfortable feelings, there are things you can try:

**Things to Try:**
- Within the FIRST 24 TO 48 HOURS, periods of strenuous physical exercise alternated with relaxation will generally alleviate some of your physical reactions.
- Structure your time, keep busy, and keep your life as normal as possible.
- Remember you’re normal and having normal reactions—don’t label yourself as being crazy.
- Talk to people—talk is the most healing medicine.
- Be aware of and avoid attempts to numb the pain or deal with your stress through the use of drugs or alcohol.
- Reach out to others. Spend time with people you trust.
- Help your peers by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten, and talk about these feelings with others.
- Keep a journal and “write your way through” those sleepless hours. (Remember that the HelpLine is open all night long at 845-2700)
- If you are a currently enrolled Texas A&M student, and would like to talk to someone further about your reaction to a critical incident or traumatic event or loss, come by the Student Counseling Service in Cain Hall (845-4427), or call the HelpLine (845-2700) evenings and weekends.

If any of these symptoms persist, or if you have thoughts of harming yourself or someone else, consult the Student Counseling Service in Cain Hall during business hours or call the HelpLine after business hours or on weekends at 845-2700.