

What are good coping skills?

- Call your Spouse, check in on the Kids
- Call a Chaplain
- Ask for a diffusion by a CISM team
- Tell someone: "I went on a really sad call today."
- Tactical breathing
- Supervisor should take the officer out for coffee or a talk, even for a few minutes
- Exercise off-duty - 30 minutes of cardio



And what shouldn't we do?

- Read media accounts or internet blogs of the incident.
- Drink alcohol for the first few days after the call
- Pretend it did not affect you
- Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda...
- Isolate

HELPFUL RESOURCES

<http://www.wcpr2001.org>

http://www.firstcandle.org/health/health_responders.html

When a Child Dies:

Understanding Emergency Responder's Reactions

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Why is the Death of a Child so Tough?

Because you may:

- Have a child the same age
- Know the victim, the victim's school, or neighborhood
- Be in a similar stage in life, (ie. your wife is 9 months pregnant, and you respond to a SIDS call)



- Have a similar family background to the victim
- Have something in common with someone on the scene
- Have felt this way before
- Have had a similar life experience, (ie. you were involved in a car accident as a child and you respond to a car accident involving a child)

If you usually cope by...

RATIONALIZING

"My kids wear seatbelts, so they will be safe. This won't happen to my family."

Then you may lose an effective coping strategy when you respond to an accident where the child who died was strapped in his seatbelt.

If you usually cope by...

RELYING ON YOUR TRAINING

Then you may feel powerless, if the child was dead before you arrived on scene.

TELLING JOKES



Then you may find it impossible to tell a joke, if the victim is a child.

If you usually cope by...

BLAMING

"Smoking in bed? That guy had it coming to him."

Then you may lose an effective coping strategy, because adults should protect children. Children cannot be blamed for their death.

MAGICAL THINKING



When you can't blame the victim, do you start to blame yourself? Do you find yourself saying, "If only I had..., then the child would be alive today".



This is not rocket science. Add identification with the victim, take away a few good coping strategies, and the stress will go up!