

Post-Call Decompression Checklist

Fire · EMS · Law Enforcement · Dispatch · Nursing

Tape it in the rig, locker, or dispatch console. Not every box every time — just do what you can.

Right after the call (on scene / on the unit)

- ☐ **Breathe:** Box breathing — in 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4. Four rounds.
- ☐ **Ground:** 5 things you see · 4 you feel · 3 you hear · 2 you smell · 1 you taste.
- ☐ **Water + a snack** if you can.
- ☐ **Quick crew check:** "Everybody good?" Look people in the eye.
- ☐ Tell your supervisor or a peer if the call hit you hard. (That's normal, not weakness.)

Before you leave work

- ☐ Finish the paperwork — then **close the book on it**.
- ☐ Say one sentence to a coworker: *"That one stuck with me."*
- ☐ Change out of uniform if you can, or at least take a minute before the drive.

On the way home

- ☐ Don't drive drowsy — pull over, nap, or get a ride.
- ☐ Music/podcast over replaying the call.

At home (10–15 minutes)

- ☐ **Pause at the door:** 60 seconds, 4 slow breaths.
- ☐ **Shed the shift:** shower / wash up / change clothes. "Shift is off."
- ☐ **Eat + hydrate.** Skip alcohol as a "switch."
- ☐ **Name it** (30 sec): *Hardest part? What went okay? One thing I'm leaving at work.*
- ☐ **Move:** 5–10 minutes walk or stretch.
- ☐ **Connect:** text a peer/partner/friend — even "long shift. I'm good."
- ☐ **Wind down:** dim lights, screens off 30 min before bed if possible.

Rough call? Add these

- ☐ Talk to a **trusted peer the same day**.
- ☐ Ask if your department/employer has **peer support or EAP**.
- ☐ Notice symptoms over the next days: sleep trouble, replaying the call, irritability, numbness.

Reach out for help if...

Symptoms last **more than 2 weeks**, get worse, or you're using alcohol/pills to cope, feel hopeless, or think of harming yourself.

Safe Call Now (206) 459-3020 · Call/text 988 · Text HOME to 741741 · Law enforcement: COPLINE 1-800-267-5463 · Emergency: 911