



The 10 Stages of Acute Traumatic Stress Management (ATSM): A Brief Summary

Reprinted from *Comprehensive Acute Traumatic Stress Management™*
by Mark D. Lerner, Ph.D. and Raymond D. Shelton, Ph.D.
© The American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, Inc.

- 1. Assess for Danger/Safety for Self and Others**
 - Are there factors that can compromise your safety or the safety of others?
- 2. Consider the Mechanism of Injury**
 - How did the event physically and perceptually impact upon the individual?
- 3. Evaluate the Level of Responsiveness**
 - Is individual alert and responsive? Under the influence of a substance?
- 4. Address Medical Needs**
 - For those who are specifically trained to manage acute medical conditions
- 5. Observe & Identify**
 - Who has been exposed to the event and who is evidencing signs of traumatic stress?
- 6. Connect with the Individual**
 - Introduce yourself, state your title and/or position. Once he is medically evaluated, move the individual away from the stressor. Begin to develop rapport.
- 7. Ground the Individual**
 - Discuss the facts, assure safety if he is, have him "Tell his story." Discuss behavioral and physiological responses.
- 8. Provide Support**
 - Be empathic. Communicate a desire to understand the feelings that lie behind his words.
- 9. Normalize the Response**
 - Normalize, validate and educate.... "Normal person trying to cope with an *abnormal* event."
- 10. Prepare for the Future**
 - Review the event, bring the person to the present, describe events in the future and provide referrals.