What to do After a Mental Crisis is Averted
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Last month I discussed how to respond to someone having a mental crisis; let’s discuss this matter a little further. How should you respond to a fellow employee once the crisis has been addressed? The same way you would if he or she had passed out and medical personnel were required. In both instances, the employee’s care and well being is the primary concern along with their personal privacy.

It is critical that the employee is treated in the same manner as if they had a physical incident. This might include things such as financial and non-financial support until the employee can return to work; and flexibility in work schedule or light duty upon the employee’s return to work. Remember that with physical ailments, the issue is visible; this is not the case with mental ailments.

You may have heard the saying that we may forget what someone says or does, but we will never forget how someone makes us feel. I have a prime example of that regarding a workplace injury I incurred in the early 1970’s. At the time, I was teaching painting and decorating at a vocational school when I had lacquer splashed in my left eye. I couldn’t see clearly out of my left eye for a few days. When I returned to work, the school Superintendent took the time to visit with me and find out how I was doing. While I don’t remember what exactly he said, I will never forget how he made me feel. To the Superintendent, I was more than just an employee. He genuinely cared about my well-being.

In today’s high tech world, it is easy to forget that we all yearn for that personal contact. This is especially true after a mental health incident. As with any safety and health incident, there shouldn’t be any judgement. The priority is to restore the employee to full health and well being.

Author’s Note/Request
It is hard to believe, but this is the 12th blog since this venture began last September. Now I have some questions for you. What have you found most helpful so far? What other mental health topics would you like discussed? How have you used this information, and how can this blog be more beneficial for you? Your input and comments are welcome and will be helpful in writing future blogs, and they can be sent to rswanson@finishingcontractors.org.

About the Author - Bob Swanson
Bob Swanson is the past president of Swanson & Youngdale and the first Chairman of FCA International. He tragically lost his son Michael to suicide on March 13, 2009 at the age of 33. Bob now focuses his efforts on creating awareness of the impact of mental health and suicide in the construction industry.