Second victims feel and experience a wide range of emotions. Second victims may:

- Feel personally responsible for a stressful event.
- Feel as though they have failed the patient.
- Second-guess their clinical skills and knowledge base.
- Experience a wide variety of symptoms related to stress.
- Feel numbness or an absence of response.
- Not want to discuss the case for fear of breaking confidentiality requirements.
- Become less tolerant of normal interactions that occur outside of work.

Common reactions a second victim may experience include:

- Sleep and/or eating disturbances
- Difficulty concentrating and/or a poor attention span
- Headache, fatigue and/or muscle tension
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid heart rate and/or breathing
- Weight loss or gain
- Isolation
- Frustration, anger and irritability
- Fear
- Grief and remorse
- Being uncomfortable returning to work
- Depression and/or extreme sadness
- Self-doubt
- Flashbacks

Contact the forYOU team by calling (573) 884-2373.
To learn more, please visit MUHEALTH.ORG/FORYOU.
Recognizing that family members and friends may also be affected by what happens to a loved one at work, this brochure is designed to help you understand what second victim is and how you can provide support to loved ones who may be experiencing this phenomenon.

**What is a second victim?**

Second victims are health care providers who are involved in an unanticipated adverse patient event, medical error and/or a patient related injury and become victimized in the sense that the provider is traumatized by the event.

The second victim phenomenon can affect any health care provider, in any organization, this includes hospitals and medical offices as well as health care workers in pharmacies and training facilities.

**Second victims often:**

- Feel personally responsible for the unexpected patient outcomes.
- Feel as though they have failed the patient Second-guess their clinical skills.
- Second-guess their knowledge base.

**Who is helping my loved one?**

The forYOU team is a group of University of Missouri Health volunteers that have been selected and trained in crisis support and stress management. The team includes physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, social workers and chaplains.

Members of the forYOU team are available to help MU Health employees who need support while experiencing a normal reaction to a stressful event or outcome.

**How can family members help loved ones who have experienced a traumatic event a work?**

- Listen carefully; this can be more meaningful than talking.
- Do not say things like “everything will be okay” or “this is fate” or “just quit.”
- Do not take their anger or frustration personally.
- Give them time to work through their feelings.
- Understand their reaction is normal.
- Encourage plenty of rest and a well-balanced diet.
- Offer your sincere sorrow.
- Give them space and time to be alone.
- Understand that their stress reaction may last days or weeks.
- Become more familiar with their symptoms (refer to the back of this brochure).
- Help with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking and caring for the family.
- Consider encouraging your loved one to speak with a professional counselor if his/her symptoms do not lessen within a few weeks.

**Contact the forYOU team at (573) 884-2373 if you feel a loved one is not coping well following an event. We are here to help!**