

## PSYCHOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES

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**Hysteria** - psychological emergency that causes violent fits of laughing and/or crying, imaged illnesses and a general lack of self control.

**Signs & symptoms**

- Loss of control of behavior that may show as shouting, rolling on the ground, and beating the chest. Behavior is often made worse by the presence of an audience
- Hyperventilation that may be severe, causing muscle spasms, especially in the wrists and hands
- Obvious tremors or casualty is unable to move

**First aid for hysteria**

1. ESM, scene survey
2. Lead the casualty to a quiet place, away from onlookers to help them calm down and regain self control
3. Be firm and positive. Do not over sympathize. Listen calmly as the casualty talks. Do not question or contradict the casualty
4. May help to give them permission to start feeling better
5. Stay with casualty until medical help arrives

**Anxiety (*panic*) attack****Signs & symptoms**

- Fear or a sense that something terrible will happen
- I can feel my heart pounding
- Trembling and sweating
- Hyperventilation, tingling hands and feet
- Nausea or vomiting

**First aid**

- Give the same first aid as for hysteria
- If the casualty is hyperventilation, give first aid for hyperventilation (see previous sections)
- Give first aid for any signs and symptoms
- Get medical help and stay with the casualty until help arrives

Physical and sexual assault □ choking, gagging, nausea, vomiting, hyperventilation, casualty seems dazed, seizures or loss of consciousness

**First aid for assault**

1. ESM, scene survey. If suspect an assault, do not disturb evidence by removing, washing or disposing of clothing.
2. Primary survey, give first aid for life-threatening injuries.
3. General first aid for psychological emergencies as mentioned above. Tell casualty not to wash or use toilet until they seek medical help.
4. Continue care until medical help arrives.