

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP AFTER THE DISASTER

Help for you and your family

- Recognize your own feelings.
- Assess your needs.
- Contact local disaster management centers to find available resources.
- Give yourself time to recover: it's very natural that you grieve.
- Minimize use of alcohol and drugs; they will worsen your situation.
- Talk to others about your feelings. This will help relieve your stress and help you realize that your feelings are shared by other victims.
- Accept help from others in the spirit in which it is given. Wouldn't you help them?
- Whenever possible, take time off and do something you enjoy.
- Get enough rest and eat well.
- Get as much physical activity as possible, such as running or walking.

Help for your child

- Talk with your child about his or her feelings and your feelings. You will find that many of your feelings are shared, regardless of your child's age.
- Talk with your child about what happened, providing factual information that she or he can understand.
- Reassure your child that you are both safe. Repeat this assurance as often as necessary.
- Review safety procedures that are now in place, including the role your child can take.
- Reassure your child that what happened is not a result of something he/she has done.
- Encourage them to play and draw pictures, this is a good way for them to express emotions.



- Hold your child. Touching provides extra reassurance that someone is there for her or him.
- Spend extra time with your child, especially at bedtime.
- Praise and recognize responsible behavior.
- Work closely with teachers, and others who may not understand how the disaster has affected your child.
- Provide age appropriate information to your child.

Help for your community

- Listen when you can to those who are having problems.
- Share your own feelings about the disaster.
- Be tolerant of the irritability and short tempers others may show due to stress.
- Share information on assistance being offered and possible resources.
- Work together to identify needs and actively begin to make things better. Even the smallest project done with your community can help all to look toward the future and be active partners in recovery.



COPING WITH CRISIS



NORMAL REACTIONS TO ABNORMAL EVENTS

Every year millions of people suffer as a result of human-caused or natural disasters. Any loss, human or material, results in a natural grieving process. These experiences result in normal responses that are both physical and psychological. These are normal reactions to abnormal events. All of us are affected by traumatic experiences in different ways.

The loss of or forced separation from loved ones, destruction of homes, death of livestock, destruction of property, forced flight, living as a refugee or detainee, and participating in conflict, are some of the experiences that cause trauma. The negative impact on both physical and mental health can be lessened by:

- 1 Understanding what causes stress/ trauma.
- 2 Understanding common and normal responses to disasters/emergencies.
- 3 Learning how to manage your reaction to these experiences.

SOME INITIAL RESPONSES TO DISASTER

- Fear
- Disbelief
- Panic
- Helplessness
- Reluctance to abandon property
- Disorientation and numbness
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Need for information
- Seeking help for yourself and your family
- Helping other disaster victims

SOME LATER RESPONSES TO DISASTER

- Change in appetite and digestive problems
- Difficulty in sleeping and headaches
- Anger and suspicion
- Apathy and depression
- Crying for “no apparent reason”
- Frustration and feelings of powerlessness
- Increased illness
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Moodiness and irritability

- Anxiety about the future
- Disappointment with and rejection of outside help
- Isolating oneself from family, friends, or social activities
- Guilt
- Weakness, fainting or seizures
- Drug/Alcohol abuse
- Reliving the situation
- Difficulty concentrating
- Problems with memory

SPECIAL EFFECTS ON YOUNG CHILDREN

- Return to earlier behavior, such as thumb sucking or bed wetting
- Clinging to parents
- Reluctance to go to bed alone
- Nightmares
- Fantasies that the disaster never happened
- Crying and screaming
- Withdrawal and immobility
- Refusal to attend school
- Problems at school and inability to concentrate

