

Care Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event: What to Expect in Your Personal, Family, Work, and Financial Life

Things to Remember When Trying to Understand Traumatic Events

- No one who sees a disaster/traumatic event is untouched by it.
- It is normal to feel anxious about you and your family's safety.
- Profound sadness, grief, and anger are all *normal* reactions to an *abnormal* event.
- Acknowledging your feelings can help you recover.
- Focusing on your strengths and abilities will help you to heal.
- Accepting help from community resources and your EAP is healthy.
- Recognize that we each have different needs and different ways of coping.
- It is common to want to find someone to blame and strike out at; however, nothing good is accomplished by angry/vengeful thoughts or actions.

Signs that Adults Need Stress Management Assistance

- Difficulty communicating thoughts
- Difficulty sleeping
- Easily frustrated
- Increased use of drugs/alcohol
- Limited attention span or difficulty concentrating
- Poor work performance
- Headaches/stomach problems or colds and flu-like symptoms
- Tunnel vision/muffled hearing
- Disorientation or confusion
- Reluctance to leave home
- Depression, sadness and feelings of hopelessness
- Mood-swings
- Crying easily
- Overwhelming guilt and self-doubt
- Fear of crowds, strangers, or being alone

Ways to Ease the Stress

- Talk with someone about your feelings—anger, sorrow, and other emotions-- even though it may be difficult.
- Don't blame yourself for the event or be frustrated because you feel that you can't change things.
- Take steps to promote your own physical and emotional healing by staying active in your daily life patterns or by adjusting them. This healthy outlook will help you and your family. (i.e. healthy diet, rest, exercise, etc.)
- Maintain a *normal* household and daily routine, limiting demanding responsibilities until things settle down.
- Spend time with family and friends.
- Participate in memorials, rituals, and use of symbols as a way to express feelings.
- Use existing supports groups of family, friends, and church.

* When to Seek Help: If self help strategies are not helping or you find that you are using drugs/alcohol in order to cope, you may wish to seek outside or professional assistance with your stress symptoms.

Source: http://www.soph.uab.edu/scphp/psychological_first_aid