

DISASTERS

CAN OCCUR AT ANY TIME AND KNOW NO BOUNDS

Disasters impact people in many ways. Emotional effects from loss of home, family pets, displacement from neighbors, friends, church, and school may cause unusual stress as people begin to reconstruct their lives.

All people are vulnerable to the overwhelming nature of disasters.

Disasters affect individuals emotionally, change relationships, disrupt work, and cause financial worry. Additional stressors include paperwork, insurance issues, and home repair or reconstruction.



Initial adult responses to disaster can include fear, disbelief, reluctance to leave one's property, and feeling overwhelmed. These are **NORMAL REACTIONS** and are time-limited. Sometimes talking with a behavioral health professional is helpful.

Children may demonstrate worry and increased "acting out" behavior. Adults can help by listening and providing information about the disaster, giving physical comfort and reassurance, providing extra time and attention at bedtime, and reinforcing normal routines, play, meals, and sleep.



Older adults may become withdrawn, agitated, disoriented, and confused. When working with older adults, provide consistent verbal reassurance, assist them in recovering their physical possessions, pay special attention to returning them to familiar surroundings with friends and acquaintances, ensure medical and financial assistance, help establish familiar networks, and re-establish and monitor nutritional and medication needs.



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF



INCREASE YOUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Within the first 24-48 hours, periods of physical activity, alternated with relaxation, will alleviate some physical stress.



SHARE YOUR STRESS

Sometimes just talking with a friend, co-worker, or family member helps.



RECOGNIZE YOUR LIMITS

As tough as it is, learn to accept the face that you are not capable of doing all things all of the time! Neither is anyone else.



SLEEP AND DIET

The better nourished and rested you are, the better equipped you are to tackle your stress.



GET INVOLVED

Becoming a member of a positive activity is a good way to reduce stress. It's all right to ask for help from family, friends, and your community.



ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Even though they might make you feel better for the moment, neither helps manage your stress. Instead they end up aggravating it.



DO THINGS YOU ENJOY

Laugh and smile when you can.



REALIZE PEOPLE AROUND YOU ARE STRESSED ALSO

Everyone thinks and feels differently but are probably experiencing some of the same reactions that you are. Reach out to them.

And, above all, remember, you are normal and your reactions are like those of anyone experiencing an abnormal event.