

COPING WITH STRESS AFTER AN EMERGENCY

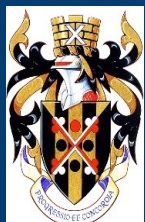
STRESS IN EMERGENCIES

Emergencies can cause emotional and physical reactions. When people are caught in an emergency situation, they can feel confused and may not act like themselves for a while. Therefore, it is important for people dealing with an emergency to take good care of themselves and their families.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH AN EMERGENCY

- Rest often and eat well.
- Keep a manageable schedule, make a list and do one job at a time. Decide what needs to be done right away and defer the rest until a less stressful time.
- Get as much physical activity as possible.
- Ask for and accept help from others.
- Touch is powerful – give someone a hug and follow public health guidelines should an epidemic occur;
- Think about the coping skills used at other difficult times and use them.
- Focus on positive thoughts and memories.
- It is important to be aware of children’s reactions, as children may withdraw and try to be brave when they really need reassurance.
- To get the family back on track, talk about what has happened. **Here are a few suggestions:**
 - encourage children to express themselves by drawing or playing rather than talking, take their fears seriously, reassure them and give them additional attention, talk to them about what has happened, be honest but gentle;
 - give them a real task to do in helping the family back on its feet, let them help in planning something to remember the loss;
 - watch for health problems and signs of stress, such as nightmares and depression, in you and all members of the family;
 - seek help if needed;
 - continue with regular routines, teeth brushing, bedtime stories, chores and picking out their own clothes to wear, etc.; and
 - avoid or minimize watching news reports of frightening events.

During times of stress, our body has a physical response as well. Without good selfcare, our physical body struggles to return to its normal functioning level. If after a couple of weeks, you find that the new stress related symptoms that you are experiencing are not going away, or that you are not able to return to your normal routine, it is important to reach out for support.



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