What You Can Do After the Initial Stress

- Recognize your own feelings. They are normal reactions to a disaster.
- Talk to others about your feelings and memories. This will help relieve stress and help you realize that your feelings are shared by others.
- Seek help for yourself and your family.
- Accept help from others in the spirit it's given.
- Give yourself time to grieve and heal; your losses are significant.



If you or someone you know is feeling the effects of disasterrelated stress, the people at

Your Local
Area Mental Health
Center
can help.



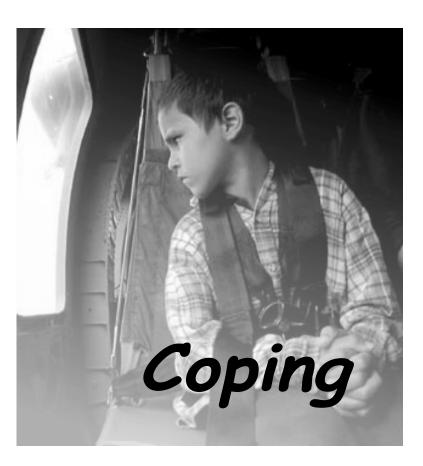
Outreach workers are available to:

- · Come to you.
- Work with you to pinpoint your immediate challenges.
- Help you find available resources and practical solutions.

Outreach workers who use sign language are available for people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

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with

Disaster



Some First Responses to the Disaster

- · Feeling disoriented or numb
- Having difficulty making decisions
- Needing information
- Not wanting to abandon property
- Feeling concern for other disaster victims

Some Later Responses to the Disaster

- · Increased aggressive behavior
- Changes in appetite, digestive problems
- Difficulty sleeping and headaches
- · Anger and suspicion
- Depression
- · Feeling overwhelmed
- · Moodiness and irritability
- Anxiety about the future
- Self-imposed isolation
- Guilt over not being able to prevent the disaster

Common Reactions of Children

- Returning to earlier behaviors such as thumb sucking or bed wetting
- · Clinging to parents
- · Reluctance to go to bed
- Nightmares
- Fantasies that the disaster never happened
- · Crying and screaming
- Withdrawal
- · Irritability

Ways To Help Your Child

- Talk with your child about his or her feelings and your feelings. Many feelings are shared among all ages.
- Talk with your child about what happened, giving factual information that he or she can understand.
- Spend extra time with your child, especially at bedtime.
- Encourage your child to draw pictures of the disaster or act it out. This will help you understand how he or she views what happened.
- Develop a child safety plan for future emergencies.



- Listen when you can to those who are having problems.
- Share your feelings about the disaster.
- Be tolerant of other people's short temper - everyone is feeling stressed.
- Share information about help being offered and possible resources.

People Who May Be Especially Vulnerable To Stress

- People without a support system
- People with disabilities or a history of mental illness
- Frail elderly people
- Substance abusers or those in early recovery
- Adolescents or children under family or school stress
- People recently ill