

## **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.*
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- *Eat right, get enough rest and exercise.*
  - *Celebrate your survival and accomplishments.*
  - *Plan ahead in case of future disasters.*

*If you or someone you know is feeling the effects of disaster-related 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