

Reactions to Disaster

Emotional:

- Anxious or fearful
- Overwhelmed by sadness
- Angry
- Guilty
- Heroic
- Too much energy or no energy at all
- Disconnected, not caring about anything or anyone
- Numb, unable to feel either joy or sadness

Physical:

- Stomachaches or diarrhea
- Headaches or other physical pain for no clear reason
- Eating too much or too little
- Sweating or chills
- Tremors or muscle twitches
- Being Jumpy or easily startled

Behavioral:

- Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, sleeping too much, or trouble relaxing
- Increase or decrease in energy and activity levels
- Sad or crying frequently
- Using alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or even prescription medication in an attempt to reduce distressing feelings or to forget
- Outbursts of anger, feeling irritated and blaming others for everything
- Difficulty accepting help or helping others
- Wanting to be alone and isolating yourself

Problems in your Thinking:

- Trouble remembering things
- Trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Feeling confused
- Worrying a lot
- Difficulty making decisions
- Difficulty talking about what happened or listening to others

Tips for Relieving Reactions to Disaster

Talk to Others:

- To those who understand and accept how you feel—trusted friend or family member
- Connect with other survivors of the disaster

Body Movement:

- Helps get rid of the building of extra stress—exercise once daily or in smaller amounts.
- Consider taking walks, stretching, or meditating.

Take Deep Breaths:

- Deep breathing—it can move stress out of our body and help you to calm yourself.

Listen to Music:

- Music is a way to help your body relax naturally. Play music timed to the breath or to your heartbeat.

Pay Attention to Your Physical Self:

- Make sure to get enough sleep and rest each day. Eat healthy and drink plenty of water.

Use Known Coping Skills:

- How did you handle past impacting events? What helped them (e.g., spent time with family, went to a support group meeting, etc.)?

