Coping with Disasters

URL of this page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/copingwithdisasters.html

After surviving a disaster, people may feel dazed or even numb. They may also feel sad, helpless, or anxious. In spite of the tragedy, some people just feel happy to be alive.

It is not unusual to have bad memories or dreams. You may avoid places or people that remind you of the disaster. You might have trouble sleeping, eating, or paying attention. Many people have short tempers and get angry easily. These are all normal reactions to stress.

Sometimes the stress can be too much to handle alone. Some people have long-term problems after a disaster, including

- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Depression
- Self-blame
- Suicidal thoughts
- Alcohol or drug abuse

If your emotional reactions are getting in the way of your relationships, work, or other important activities, talk to a counselor or your doctor. Treatments are available.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Start Here
- Coping with a Traumatic Event [http://www.bt.cdc.gov/masscasualties/copingpub.asp] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Overviews
- Recovering from Disaster [http://www.ready.gov/recovering-disaster] (Department of Homeland Security)

Latest News

Treatment
- Having Trouble Coping After a Disaster? Talk with Us [http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/media/748/ddh_walletcard.pdf] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) - PDF

Disease Management
Related Issues
- Anniversary Reactions [http://www(ptsda.va.gov/public/pages/anniversary-reactions.asp](National Center for PTSD)
- Common Reactions After Trauma [http://www(ptsda.va.gov/public/pages/common-reactions-after-trauma.asp](National Center for PTSD)
- Tips for Managing and Preventing Stress: A Guide for Emergency Response and Public Safety Workers [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/KENO1-0098R2/KENO1-0098R2.pdf](Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) - PDF

Journal Articles
References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

Organizations
Also available in Spanish [http://www.fema.gov/es]

Statistics

Children
Also available in Spanish [http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/Facts_for_Families_Pages/Spanish/Cuando_se_Habia_a_los_Ninos_Acerca_del_Terrorismo_y_la_Guerra_87.aspx]
Stress Network - PDF

- Tips for Talking with and Helping Children and Youth Cope After a Disaster or Traumatic Event [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA12-4732/SMA12-4732.pdf (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) - PDF
Also available in Spanish [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA12-4732SPANISH/SMA12-4732SPANISH.pdf]

Teenagers

- Maintain a Healthy State of Mind: High School Students [http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/mind/highschool/] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Maintain a Healthy State of Mind: Middle School Students [http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/mind/middleschool/] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Seniors

- Maintain a Healthy State of Mind: Seniors [http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/mind/seniors/] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Adults

- Maintain a Healthy State of Mind: Adults [http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/mind/adults/] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

You may also be interested in these related MedlinePlus topics:


The primary NIH organization for research on Coping with Disasters is the National Institute of Mental Health [http://www.nimh.nih.gov]


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