



Emotional Stress

It is very common for people to experience a wide range of emotional reactions to a disaster or catastrophic event. It is important to remember that these reactions are normal reactions to an abnormal event. It is possible that you could experience one or more of the following reactions, which could last a few days to a few weeks. They could also occur weeks after the event occurred. If at any time you are uncomfortable with the way you are behaving, feeling or thinking, call the LSUHSC-NO Campus Assistance Program at 504-568-8888.

Warning Signs of Emotional Stress

Behaviors

- Isolating yourself or withdrawing from others
- Keeping excessively busy to avoid the effects of the disaster
- Avoiding activities, places, or even people that remind you of the disaster
- Increased irritability, anger, or conflict with family members or other people
- Increase in the use of mood altering substances
- Decrease in appetite
- Easily becoming tearful for no apparent reason
- Experiencing sleep disturbance

Feelings

- Feeling not like yourself
- Feeling a loss of interest
- Feeling a sense of despair, hopelessness, or emptiness
- Experiencing anxiety or fear
- Feeling irritable or short-tempered
- Feeling depressed, sad, or down much of the time

Thoughts

- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making decisions
- Replaying the events in your mind
- Recurring dreams or nightmares
- Questioning your spiritual beliefs



Methods for Coping with Stress

- Talk to others about the way you are feeling. Talking about your experiences is important. Maintaining social contact helps in expressing feelings of sadness, grief, anger, and fear of what has happened or will happen in the future.
- Eat nutritional foods and avoid consuming large amounts of caffeine and alcohol. Numbing the pain with alcohol or other drugs could lead to a substance abuse problem.
- Get exercise when possible and don't overwork yourself.
- Use outlets such as relaxation, spending time with your family, religion, art, reading, yoga, deep breathing exercises, massage, and hobbies.
- Pay attention to your physical health. Stress can take a toll on the body. Remember to eat nutritional foods, get enough sleep, and exercise.
- Try to keep your routine as normal as possible with regular meals, activities, and family events.