



TIP of the Month – November 2017

Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professionals



"There are far, far better things ahead than anything we leave behind." — C. S. Lewis

Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professionals

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline provides crisis counseling and support: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professions provided SAMHSA, CMHS and DHHS. This document has information on Managing Stress Before, During, and After an Event (pgs. 7-12): [Managing Stress in a Crisis Response](#)

The FOH Employee Assistance Program 1-800-222-0364 | (TTY: 1-888-262-7848) www.FOH4YOU.COM is a good resource for Federal Employees

Sooner or later, each of us will experience that dagger in the heart called grief. Dealing with grief is a challenge like no other. With the recent events of tragedy and the aftermath of numerous hurricanes, we as health providers need to be able to help others with the healing process while also helping ourselves and family and friends. How can we pick up the pieces, heal the wounds, and move on? It is essential to deal with our feelings to move toward healing. "A positive attitude gives you power over your circumstances instead of your circumstances having power over you." — Joyce Meyer

Coping mechanisms and self-care for trauma

- Keep a journal where you can give your thoughts and fears a voice. This is helpful and allows you to unburden yourself.
- Discuss your concerns with others and listen to theirs so that you can see that you aren't alone and that what you're experiencing is a normal process.
- Remember that some changes in emotion are part of getting back to normal after a traumatic event.
- Seek out things that give you enjoyment and peace. It's time to recharge your psychic batteries.
- Be sure that you get sufficient sleep and eat a balanced diet. "Part of maintaining our mental health is through maintaining your physical health, and diet plays a big role here."
- Practice self-relaxation exercises such as relaxation breathing and guided imagery whenever you feel you need it "or even when it's not apparent that you may need a break."
- Keep your lines of communication open to others in your life.
- Laugh whenever you are amused. "Laughter is one of those medicines that is very potent, yet requires no prescription," Farrell says.
- Plan a "day of nonsense" where you do absolutely nothing but something you enjoy.
- Don't assume you "should have known" anything; we're all human, we're all allowed to make mistakes, and we'll make them in the future.
- Avoid quick fixes such as drugs and or alcohol.
- Mindfulness -managing thoughts through deep breathing and physical exercise and practicing "self-talk."

Source: <https://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/features/hope-hurricanes-emotional-survival-tips>

Easing the healing process of grief

1. Acknowledge your pain
2. Actively grieve and mourn
3. Look to loved ones and others for support
4. Don't make major decisions while grieving
5. Take care of yourself
6. Remember that time helps, but it might not cure

grief
is just an
interval
between two
moments of
joy

It is known that depression is a possible emotional reaction to a stressor. Not all depression is caused by stressful life events, but it is certainly a risk associated with exposure to trauma. Findings imply that providing emotional support to victims during the height of a disaster may provide a critical time for intervention. At that basic level, your emotional support can help individuals cope with the challenges yet to come. Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201709/what-does-it-take-survive-emotionally-after-disaster>

Additional Resources:

[Visit FEMA Hurricane Harvey resource page](#)

[Obtain public health and safety information for 2017 hurricane response](#)

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