



Helping Your Family After Exposure to Disasters and other Traumatic Events

Exposure to disasters and other traumatic events can leave members of your family frightened, confused and insecure; whether experiencing the event directly, seeing it on television or hearing about it from others.

You can help your family to better cope with the situation by taking simple actions, such as:

- Spending time with your family
- Giving and asking for support from family members
- Talking and listening to your family members, including children
- Being extra patient, supportive and non-judgmental
- Expecting things not to get back to normal instantly
- Accepting that healing, both physical and emotional takes time
- Being more flexible with roles and responsibilities
- Acknowledging the feelings of the other family members
- Involving all family members in problem solving and dealing with the situation
- Reassuring children, making sure that they understand that they are not responsible for the problems
- Reassuring the elderly that they are safe
- Respecting others need for privacy and private grief
- Making emergency plans for future disasters
- Resuming routine family activities as soon as possible and feels comfortable
- Taking time to do fun things together

Seeking Additional Help

If after one month of witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event you or your loved ones are still suffering from symptoms of stress or stress interferes with the functioning of your family, you should consider seeking professional help. To find help you can contact 1-800 LifeNet a 24 hour, 7-days-a-week crisis hotline. LifeNet staff are mental health professionals who speak a variety of languages:

- English 1800-LifeNet (1-800-543-3638)
- Spanish 1-877-AYUDESE (1-877-298-3373)
- Asian 1-877-990-8585
- Deaf/Hearing Impaired (TTY): 1-212-982-5284

You can also visit their Website at www.mhaofnyc.org