

COMMON DISASTER WORKER STRESS REACTIONS

<p>Psychological and Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling heroic, invulnerable, euphoric • Denial • Irritability and anger; anxiety and fear • Worry about the safety of self or others • Restlessness, sadness, depression, moodiness • Distressing dreams • Guilt or “survivor guilt” • Feeling overwhelmed, hopeless • Feeling isolated, lost, abandoned • Apathy • Identification with survivors 	<p>Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory problems • Disorientation • Confusion • Slowness of thinking and comprehension • Difficulty setting priorities, making decisions • Poor concentration • Limited attention span • Loss of objectivity • Unable to stop thinking about disaster • Blaming
<p>Behavioral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in activity • Decreased efficiency and effectiveness • Difficulty communicating • Increased use of humor • Outbursts of anger • Inability to rest or “let down” • Change in eating habits • Change in sleeping patterns • Change in patterns of intimacy and sexuality • Change in job performance • Period of crying • Increased use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs • Social withdrawal, silence • Vigilance about safety of environment • Avoidance of activities or places that triggers memories • Proneness to accidents 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased heartbeat, respiration's • Increased blood pressure • Upset stomach, diarrhea, nausea • Change in appetite, weight gain or loss • Sweating or chills • Tremor (hands or lip); Muscle twitching • “Muffled” hearing • Tunnel vision • Feeling uncoordinated • Headaches • Soreness in muscles; Lower back pain • Feeling a “lump in the throat” • Exaggerated startle reaction • Fatigue • Menstrual cycle changes • Decreased resistance to infection • Flare-up of allergies and arthritis • Hair loss

HELPFUL COPING ACTIVITIES

<p>Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation • Write things down • Break large tasks into smaller one • Get the most info you can to help make decisions • Make small, daily decisions • Anticipate needs; It is okay to ask for help • Plan for the future • Remember you have options • Review previous successes • Problem-solving • Take mini-breaks 	<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation • Allow yourself to experience what it is that you feel; Find a “vent partner” • Label what you are experiencing • It’s OK to ask for help • Be assertive when needed • Keep communication open with others • Keep communication as simple as possible • Remember you have options • Develop or use your sense of humor • Use “positive” words and language
<p>Behavioral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation • Spend time by yourself or with others • Limit demands on time and energy • Help others with tasks • It’s OK to ask for help • Do activities that were previously enjoyable • Take different routes to work or trips • Remember you have options • Find new activities that are enjoyable • Set goals, have a plan • Relax 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation • Aerobic exercise • Routine sleep patterns • Minimize caffeine, alcohol and drugs • Eat well-balanced & regular meals • Drink water • Wear less-restrictive clothing • Engage in some physical luxuries-baths, massage, exercise trainer • Breathe
<p>Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation • Find spiritual support; Discuss your (changed) beliefs with a spiritual leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness; Meditation and Prayer • Practice your faith/rituals • Spiritual retreats/workshop • Read spiritual literature