

STEP #4: KNOW WHAT TO DO COPING WITH DISASTERS

What You Might Experience

It is not unusual to have physical and emotional reactions to a traumatic event.

Physical

- Rapid heart beat
- Difficulty breathing
- Chills or sweating
- Nausea or vomiting
- Weakness or fatigue
- Change in appetite
- Increased sensory perception, hyper vigilance
- Difficulty in sleeping
- Headaches

Emotional

- Fear or panic, confusion or poor concentration
- Denial, disbelief
- Withdrawn from family and/or friends
- Anger, guilt, suspicion
- Reoccurring thoughts, flashbacks, nightmares
- Difficulty making decisions
- Need for information

- Reluctance to abandon property
- Rejection of outside help

How Do Families Cope With Disasters

- Recognize the way you react to the event is not unusual.
- Try not to make big life changes.
- Talk to family members and friends.
- Listen to one another.
- Help each other with daily tasks.
- Try to achieve a balance between rest and activity.

Emotional Problems After a Disaster

Emotional problems following a disaster are a result of problems in daily life and not from personal reactions or poor coping skills.

Problems can include:

- Dealing with the emotional reaction of family members.
- Family and marital problems including domestic violence.
- Uncertainty about insurance coverage or the need to borrow money because of insurance shortfall.
- Reconstruction strains and delays.
- The discomfort and lack of privacy of having to live in shelters, damaged homes, motels or with relatives.