

Appendix B: American Red Cross Coping with Stress Reactions after a Mass Violence Event



COPING WITH STRESS REACTIONS AFTER A MASS VIOLENCE EVENT

This is a difficult time for everyone affected and it's important for people to connect with and support each other. The Red Cross offers the following tips to help people stay strong:

- Events like this can cause feelings of uncertainty and anxiety since no one knows for sure what will happen next. Remember that it's okay to feel nervous.
- Be patient with yourself and others. It's common to have any number of temporary stress reactions such as anger, frustration and anxiety.
- Spend more time with family and friends, and offer your support. Hug one another and listen.
- Stay informed but limit media exposure of the events, especially for children. Children are often more vulnerable to stress reactions related to media than adults.
- Parents should let children talk about their fears and then reassure them about their safety. Talk with them in ways that they can easily understand. Let them guide the conversation; share details only when they ask about them.
- Watch for signs of stress in your family, friends and children. Get help from others if needed.
- Take care of yourself. Eat healthy, drink plenty of water and get enough rest.
- To reach out for free 24/7 counseling or support, contact the Disaster Distress Helpline at 800- 985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

Practice Psychological First Aid with each other:

The following practices do not need to be performed in order but should be considered as helpful strategies and tools to help your family and friends.

Make a connection with your friends and family	Encourage good coping strategies
Help people be safe	Help people connect with their support systems
Be kind, calm and compassionate with each other	Provide accurate and timely information (no rumors!)
Help people meet their basic needs (food, water, etc.)	Make referrals to other resources (as needed)
Listen to their stories	End the conversation (ask if there's anything else you can do to help before you leave)
Give realistic reassurance	Take care of yourself

Getting ourselves and our lives back in a routine that is comfortable for us takes time. Each positive action you take can help you feel better and more in control. While we each have our own unique ways of reacting to stress, our resilience nonetheless helps us navigate our way through it, regardless of our many individual differences. In addition, there are ways we can help each other with our stress reactions.