



MINISTRY OF FAMILY AND SOCIAL
SERVICES

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES

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ADULTS' REACTIONS FOLLOWING DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR COPING



Carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services and
UNICEF.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE REACTIONS FOLLOWING DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES?

Physical reactions:

- Headache, stomach ache and backache, dizziness, feeling tired easily,
- Shortness of breath, chest pain, racing heart, chest tightness,
- Not feeling anything, being numb, tingling, hot flash, dizziness, muscle strain/twitch, shaking without any reason, being unable to stop moving, etc.;
- Digestive problems, especially stomach disorders,
- Skin irritations (Itchiness, eczema, etc.),
- Loss of or increased appetite;
- Changes in the sleep pattern (Being unable to sleep, too much sleep, unable to onset sleep, interrupted sleep),



Emotional reactions

- Freezing or panicking;
- Intense feelings of sadness, anger, intolerance, fear etc.,
- Feeling shocked, excited, blaming oneself or others, distrust, ashamed, feeling desperate or disconnected from reality,
- Isolation, feeling gloomy, despair, losing hope and desire to live,
- Not feeling anything,
- Wanting to be alone or around people all the time,
- Feeling tense and anxious,
- Feeling of being treated unfairly,

Mental reactions

- Not being able to get the moment of the incident out of mind, constantly reliving that moment, recurring thoughts and dreams about the incident,



- Nightmares and/or dreams about the incident,
- Experiencing difficulty in memory and concentration,
- Absence of mind, inability to make decisions, inability to think,
- Thinking “Why did it happen to us?”

Behavioural reactions

- Avoiding places, people, conversations or activities that remind the incident,
- Getting angry quickly, acting aggressively,
- Talking too much or not being able to talk at all,
- Decrease in problem-solving skills,
- Experiencing deterioration in interpersonal relationships, discord within the family, communication conflicts etc.,
- Postponing, delaying or inability to complete work, home and school responsibilities, etc.
- Acting in ways that will result in self-harm,
- Using addictive substances or increase in the use of addictive substances compared to the pre-incident period



REACTIONS FOLLOWING DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES ARE NORMAL REACTIONS THAT EVERYONE CAN EXPERIENCE.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FEEL GOOD?

- You are not alone. Remember that a lot of people like you have been affected by this incident and that everyone may have similar emotions.
- You may find it difficult to accept the incident you are experiencing on the first days but over time it will become easier for you to accept this.
- Do not be alone. You can get together with your spouse, friends and loved ones and spend time together.



- Feel free to talk about your feelings, and share your feelings.
- You can chat and play games with small children around you.
- Try to support other people around you. Helping out will make you feel good.



- You can plan what you can do for yourself and your loved ones in the future.
- Instead of closing yourself off in a tent or house, you can go outside, get some air, take short walks and do other activities.
- You can pray according to your religious belief and fulfill your religious obligations.
- In order not to constantly think about the negative incidents you have experienced, you can acquire feel-good hobbies.



- You can do things you love or enjoy (knitting, tending flowers, meeting with friends, doing sports, relaxation exercises, breathing exercises, etc.).
- Continue to do the routines you used to do in your daily life to the best of your ability (going to work, cooking, going to the market, taking care of the children, etc.).
- Pay attention to your sleep pattern and diet.
- Remember to drink plenty of water. Consuming plenty of water helps your body relax.
- If you feel the need to use medication (painkillers, sleeping pills, etc.) for your physical and mental reactions after the incidents you have experienced, consult a physician first and use them under the supervision of a doctor.
- During this period, take care to obtain information from accurate and reliable sources.



Remember!

WE FACE MANY CHALLENGES IN LIFE AND WHEN WE LOOK BACK, WE SEE THAT WE OVERCOME EVERYTHING WITH TIME.

WHAT HAPPENS AS TIME GOES BY?

- We begin to accept what has happened.
- The intensity of our reactions decreases over time.
- We begin to show interest in everyday life.
- We make plans for the future.
- Our emotions such as pessimism, sadness, anger, guilt, etc. decrease.
- We feel better emotionally.
- While the disaster or emergency we experienced becomes a part of our history, it does not completely occupy our minds.



WE MAY NEED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FROM PROFESSIONALS AS WELL AS FROM OUR FAMILY AND LOVED ONES FROM TIME TO TIME.



When to Consult a Mental Health Professional?

- If the stress reactions you experience were present before the disaster and emergency and increased after these,
- If the previously mentioned reactions do not decrease over time after a disaster and emergency, but continue with a severity and intensity that affects your daily life,
- If your stress reactions are repeated in many situations or different settings,
- If you have extreme hopelessness, extreme irritability, constant sleep (inability to get out of bed) or insomnia,
- If you are unable to return to or completely let go of your responsibilities such as school or work,
- If you are acquiring habits that can harm you physically and mentally to overcome the stress you are experiencing,
- If you have thoughts of harming yourself or your loved ones,
- If you are experiencing one or more of these problems together,
- If you think or feel that you need the support of an expert,

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET SUPPORT FROM A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL.





Remember!

You can seek help from psychosocial support staff deployed in times of disaster and emergency through the Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Services.



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FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND REFERRAL:

..... Provincial Directorate of Family and
Social Services

Address:
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Phone: