

Emotional Health Issues During Times of Crisis

by the American Red Cross

Some Initial Responses to the Disaster

- Fear
- Disbelief
- Disorientation and numbing
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Need for information
- Seeking help for yourself and your family
- Helpfulness to other disaster victims

Some Later Responses

- Change in appetite and digestive problems
- Difficulty in sleeping and headaches
- Anger and suspicion
- Apathy and depression
- Crying for "no apparent reason"
- Frustration and feelings of powerlessness over one's own future
- Increased effects of allergies, colds, and flu
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Moodiness and irritability
- Anxiety about the future
- Disappointment with, and rejection of, outside help
- Isolating oneself from family, friends, or social activities
- Guilt over not being able to prevent the disaster
- Domestic violence

Help for You and Your Family

- Recognize your own feelings.
- Talk to others about your feelings; this will help relieve your stress and help you realize that your feelings are shared by other victims.
- Accept help from others in the spirit in which it is given. Wouldn't you help them?
- Whenever possible, take time off and do something you enjoy.
- Get enough rest.
- Get as much physical activity as possible, such as running or walking.
- Give someone a hug; touching is very important.