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## Post-Disaster Responses – Suggestions for Adults

Disasters affect people in many ways. Some disaster situations may mean loss of loved ones, including relatives, friends, neighbors, or co-workers. We may become inundated with media coverage of events that occur in our area or other locations. The emotional effects, whether felt because of direct involvement or because of secondary trauma, can be devastating and the emotional effects may show up immediately or appear many months later. ***It is very important to understand that there is a natural grieving process following any loss, and that a disaster of any size can cause unusual and unwanted stress in those attempting to reconstruct their lives.***

### Initial Responses

- Fear and Disbelief
- Reluctance to abandon property
- Disorientation and numbing
- Difficulty making decisions and concentrating
- Frustration with lack of available resources and information
- Wanting to be helpful to other disaster survivors

### Later Responses

- Changes in appetite
- Difficulty sleeping
- Moodiness and irritability
- Anger, suspicion, apathy and depression
- Crying spells or crying “for no reason”
- Frustration & feelings of powerlessness
- Increased effects of allergies, colds, and flu
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Anxiety about the future
- Disappointment with and rejection of outside help
- Isolating oneself from family, friends or social activities
- Domestic violence

### What You Can Do After The Initial Crisis

- Recognize our own feelings
- Listen when you can to those who are having problems
- Talk to others about your feelings; this will help relieve stress and help you realize that other survivors share your feelings
- Be tolerant of irritability and short tempers - everyone is stressed at this time.
- Accept help from others in the spirit in which it is offered
- Share information on assistance and possible resources
- 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.

Source: American Red Cross