

Stress Strategies for You and Your Loved Ones

For Yourself:

1. Periods of strenuous physical exercise alternated with relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions resulting from stress.
2. Structure your time—keep busy.
3. You're normal and have normal reactions—don't label yourself as "crazy."
4. Talk to people...talk is the most healing medicine.
5. Avoid the use of drugs and alcohol.
6. Keep your life as normal as possible.
7. Spend time with others you truly care about.
8. Give yourself permission to feel bad and share your feelings with others.
9. Keep a journal; write your way through those sleepless hours.
10. Do things that feel good to you.
11. Realize that those around you are under stress, also.
12. Maintain a well-balanced diet.
13. Don't make any big life changes.
14. Do make as many daily decisions as possible, which will give you a feeling of control over your life, e.g., if someone asks you what you want to eat, answer even though you're not sure.
15. Try to rest a bit.
16. Contact friends.
17. Have someone stay with you for at least a few hours of the day.
18. Reoccurring thoughts, dreams and flashbacks are normal. Don't try to fight them. They'll decrease over time and become less painful.
19. Fight against boredom.
20. Express your feelings as they arise.



For Family Members and Friends:

1. Listen carefully.
2. Spend time with the traumatized person.
3. Offer your assistance and a listening ear even if they have not asked for help.
4. Help them with everyday tasks such as cleaning, cooking and caring for family and children.
5. Give them some private time.
6. Don't take their anger or other feelings personally.
7. Don't tell them that they are "lucky it wasn't worse." Traumatized people are not consoled by those statements. Instead, tell them you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them.