


After A Disaster: Support Strategies

Human beings can have reactions to any demanding and stressful event such as a death, illness, natural disaster, robbery, crisis or trauma. You can help others cope with their reactions. Your genuine concern can support another's beginning to returning their life to somewhat of a normal state.

Below are examples of support strategies:

- Practice listening.
- Ask questions respectfully.
- Give permission to repeat his/her story.
- Avoid saying, "I know how you feel."
- Periods of silence can be healing.
- Don't personalize the other's emotional responses.
- Avoid euphemisms.
- Don't assume that another's faith beliefs are like your own.
- Take care of yourself.
- Spend time together doing something enjoyable.
- Allow tears and laughter.
- Don't try to fix it.
- Be patient.
- Be honest.
- Provide a place of safety.
- Offer your companionship even if it is declined.
- Lower expectations for a while.
- Encourage physical activity.

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- Learn about normal stress reactions such as:
 - reduced concentration
 - withdrawal
 - sadness
 - guilt
 - anger
 - frustration
 - Recognize your own reactions, particularly survivor's guilt.
 - Support the use of professional services.

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