Understanding Disaster Events

• No one who sees or experiences a traumatic event is untouched by it.
• It is normal to feel anxious about your and your family's safety and future.
• Profound sadness, grief and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event.
• Acknowledging your feelings can help you recover.
• Focusing on your strengths and abilities can help you heal.
• Accepting help from community programs and resources, as well as the EAP, is healthy.
• We each have different needs and different ways of coping.
• It is common to want to strike back at people who have caused great pain. However, nothing good is accomplished by hateful language or actions.

Warning Signs of Stress

• Difficulty communicating thoughts
• Difficulty sleeping
• Difficulty maintaining emotional balance
• Increased use of drugs/alcohol
• Limited attention span, difficulty concentrating
• Poor work performance, easily frustrated
• Headaches/stomach problems
• Tunnel vision/muffled hearing
• Colds or flu-like symptoms
• Disorientation or confusion

Ways to Ease the Stress

• Consider talking to a professional.
• Don’t hold yourself responsible.
• Take steps to promote your own physical and emotional healing (i.e., healthy eating, rest, exercise, relaxation, meditation).
• Maintain a normal daily routine, limiting demanding responsibilities of yourself and your family.
• Spend time with family and friends.
• Participate in memorials and rituals.
• Use existing support groups: family, friends and religious.

When to Seek Help

If self-help strategies are not helping or you find that you are using drugs/alcohol in order to cope, you may wish to seek outside or professional assistance with your stress symptoms.