

# 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 return to some semblance of normalcy. 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 awhile.
- Encourage physical activity.
- 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.