

Techniques for Handling Stress After a Crisis

- Learn and utilize relaxation breathing. Slow, deep breathing will bring your heart rate and respiration back to normal.

Many of us breathe too fast for the conditions in which we find ourselves, that is, we actually hyperventilate. This fast, shallow breathing expels carbon dioxide too quickly and has many bad effects on our physical and emotional health. When our breathing is deep, however--when it involves in an appropriate way not only the respiratory muscles of the chest but also the belly, lower ribcage, and lower back--our breathing slows down. This slower, deeper breathing, combined with the rhythmical pumping of our diaphragm, abdomen, and belly, helps turn on our parasympathetic nervous system--our "relaxation response." Such breathing helps to harmonize our nervous system and reduce the amount of stress in our lives.

- Exercise- moderate, prolonged rhythmic exercise is best, such as walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging.

There is also good evidence that physically fit people have less extreme physiological responses when under pressure than those who are not. This means that fit people are more able to handle the long- term effects of stress, without suffering ill health or burnout.

- Water - inside and out.

Water is necessary for our body to operate efficiently. Water is vital to the body in temperature regulation, nerve impulse conduction, circulation, metabolism, immune system, eliminative processes, sensory awareness and perceptive thinking.

- Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals even if you don't feel like it.

You may rationalize that you're not hungry yet, that you don't have time, or that you need to diet anyway, or that the milk in the latte you pick up on the way is all the good nutrition you need. But skipping meals when under stress makes it harder to maintain stable blood sugar levels. This hinders your emotional well being and renders you ineffective at functioning while handling the crisis.

- Get enough sleep.

Improving the quality of your sleep gives you more energy and keeps you focused to tackle the demands you are facing. Be as consistent with your sleep schedule as possible.

