

After the Storm – Self Care

After a hurricane, or other critical incident, it is normal to experience strong reactions which may interfere with your ability to function as usual. Even though the event is over, strong physical and emotional aftershocks are common -- in fact -- normal. Sometimes they occur immediately after the event, but some may not appear until hours, days or even months later.

After a hurricane, the community is together dealing with the aftershocks, but personal reactions can take an additional toll. Being aware of the types of common reactions helps us to keep a healthy perspective.

Common Stress Reactions

- **Tension:** physical and emotional tension, muscle tremors or twitches, inability to sit still.
- **Chronic Fatigue:** decreased energy, inability to sleep, a desire to sleep continuously
- **Sleep Disturbances:** insomnia, bad dreams, nightmares, or waking up too early.
- **Diet:** changes in eating or drinking habits. Increased or decreased intake.
- **Nausea:** queasiness, nausea, vomiting, and other gastrointestinal problems.
- **Recurring Memories:** circular thinking about the incident, recurring memories.
- **Negative Feelings:** unpleasant feelings that may come without warning: profound sadness, helplessness, fear, anxiety, anger, rage, discouragement, frustration, sense of vulnerability, depression.
- **Self-Blame:** vague feeling of self-blame, fixed on some aspect of the event.

Interpersonal Problems: increased irritability, insensitivity, blaming others for your problems, wanting distance instead of closeness.

Talking with others who have survived the critical incident helps us to put the events in perspective. Seek out nonjudgmental listeners, and remember to offer a listening ear, as well, to others in need. If symptoms continue, and additional intervention is needed, the contacts below may be helpful.

LRH Meditation Line	x7729 (try the <i>Breath meditation or Body Scan</i>)
Team Support Chaplain	x1247
LRH Behavioral Health	x2746
Employee Assistance Program	877-240-6863 (<i>Therapists, Financial & legal Counselors</i>)