September is Suicide Prevention Month
Many myths are associated with suicide. Shining light on these myths can prompt more intervention sooner. Intervention starts with asking whether the potential victim is suicidal, planning suicide, or is thinking about “harming themselves in some way.” One such myth is that suicidal people appear depressed, but this may be true for only 60% of victims. 80% of victims do display warning signs, but despondency is not at the top of the list. More important is what’s expressed. Pay attention to utterances about personal uselessness, being trapped, being a burden on others, having no reason to live, being in too much pain, or having “the” solution to all one’s troubles. Then ask about suicidal thinking or planning, and direct the person to help. You may save a life. Learn more: hhs.gov [search “depression increase risk of suicide”]

While Waiting for Your Therapy Appointment
You’ve decided to see a professional counselor, but your chosen psychotherapist isn’t available for a couple weeks or more. It’s difficult waiting, and you feel a burning need to start. Contact your company’s EAP for short-term support. The EAP won’t provide psychotherapy services, but there is a lot of “pre-therapy” work you might be able to achieve, like getting clarity on the problems and issues you face, thinking about goals, learning about how psychotherapy works, what to expect from therapy, and how to get the most out of it.

Supporting Employees Who Have Chronic Pain
Many employees experience chronic pain, but it is not uncommon for pain sufferers to minimize discussing their conditions for fear it could affect their job in some way. Some employees with fibromyalgia, lupus, and chronic fatigue syndrome may never tell anyone at work about it, not even their boss. Some employees have even reported avoiding the pain associated with getting dressed in the morning by sleeping in their clothes all night. How can coworkers help. Based on an online community survey of employees who experience chronic pain, the most requested need from coworkers was compassion and understanding. Pain sufferers want you to know that they are not lazy, unmotivated, or unwilling, and that the last thing they want is to feel like they let down the team. Learn more at www.themighty.com (search content tab, and “chronic illness coworkers”).
**Tips for Survivors of a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event:**

**Managing Stress**

If you were involved in a disaster such as a hurricane, flood, or even terrorism, or another traumatic event like a car crash, you may be affected personally regardless of whether you were hurt or lost a loved one. You can be affected just by witnessing a disaster or other traumatic event. It is common to show signs of stress after exposure to a disaster or other traumatic event, and it is important to monitor your physical and emotional health.

**Possible Reactions to a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event**

Try to identify your early warning signs of stress. Stress usually shows up in the four areas shown below, but everyone should check for ANY unusual stress responses after a disaster or other traumatic event. Below are some of the most common reactions.

**YOU MAY FEEL EMOTIONALLY:**
- Anxious or fearful
- Overwhelmed by sadness
- Angry, especially if the event involved violence
- Guilty, even when you had no control over the traumatic event
- Heroic, like you can do anything
- Like you have too much energy or no energy at all
-Disconnected, not caring about anything or anyone
- Numb, unable to feel either joy or sadness

**YOU MAY HAVE PHYSICAL REACTIONS, SUCH AS:**
- Having stomachaches or diarrhea
- Having headaches or other physical pains for no clear reason
- Eating too much or too little
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors (shaking) or muscle twitches
- Being jumpy or easily startled

**YOU MAY HAVE BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS, SUCH AS:**
- Having trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, sleeping too much, or trouble relaxing
- Noticing an increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels
- Feeling sad or crying frequently
- Using alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or even prescription medication in an attempt to reduce distressing feelings or to forget
- Having outbursts of anger, feeling really irritated and blaming other people for everything
- Having difficulty accepting help or helping others
- Wanting to be alone most of the time and isolating yourself

**YOU MAY EXPERIENCE PROBLEMS IN YOUR THINKING, SUCH AS:**
- Having trouble remembering things
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Feeling confused
- Worrying a lot
- Having difficulty making decisions
- Having difficulty talking about what happened or listening to others

**After the Event: Managing Your Tasks**

If you’ve been involved in a disaster or other traumatic event, a number of tasks likely require your attention fairly urgently. First, make sure you are not injured, as sometimes survivors don’t realize they’ve been physically hurt until many hours later. If you realize you’ve been injured, seek medical treatment before you do anything else. If you need to find a safe place to stay, work on that task next. Make sure to let a family member or friend know where you are and how to reach you. Secure your identification and any other papers you may need, such as insurance, bank, property, and medical records. Completing one task at a time may help you feel like you are gaining back some control, so make a list of the most important things you need to do. Remember to be patient with yourself. Take deep breaths or gently stretch to calm yourself before you tackle each task. Plan to do something relaxing after working for a while.
**Practical Tips for Relieving Stress**

These stress management activities seem to work well for most people. Use the ones that work for you.

**Talk with others who understand and accept how you feel.** Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or faith-based leader to explore what meaning the event may have for you. Connect with other survivors of the disaster or other traumatic events and share your experience.

**Body movement helps to get rid of the buildup of extra stress hormones.** Exercise once daily or in smaller amounts throughout the day. Be careful not to lift heavy weights. You can damage your muscles if you have too much adrenaline in your system. If you don’t like exercise, do something simple, like taking a walk, gently stretching, or meditating.

**Take deep breaths.** Most people can benefit from taking several deep breaths often throughout the day. Deep breathing can move stress out of your body and help you to calm yourself. It can even help stop a panic attack.

**Listen to music.** Music is a way to help your body relax naturally. Play music timed to the breath or to your heartbeat. Create a relaxing playlist for yourself and listen to it often.

**Pay attention to your physical self.** Make sure to get enough sleep and rest each day. Don’t leave resting for the weekend. Eat healthy meals and snacks and make sure to drink plenty of water. Avoid caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol, especially in large amounts. Their effects are multiplied under stress and can be harmful, just making things worse.

**Use known coping skills.** How did you handle past traumatic events like a car crash or the death of a loved one? What helped then (e.g., spent time with family, went to a support group meeting)? Try using those coping skills now.

**When Your Stress Is Getting the Best of You**

Know that distressing feelings about a disaster or traumatic event usually fade over time (2–4 weeks after the event) as you get back to routines—and especially if you have engaged in some ways to help yourself. Try to use some of these tips several times a week.

---

**When You’re a First-Time Manager**

If you’re a new first-time supervisor, you’ll discover an endless stream of advice, including do’s, don’ts, how-to’s, websites, and lots of books. Supervising others and developing leadership skills to get the work done will be your most measured job function. With experience, you’ll grow instincts, but there is no rushing becoming a great supervisor. Avoid novice mistakes, which include the following: 1) taking on more work, rather than managing the completion of work; 2) not communicating enough above, below, and around you; 3) becoming overwhelmed with to-dos that rob you of your work-life balance; 4) believing others will act quickly and blindly on your say-so; 5) not modeling the type of employee you want others to be; and 6) not getting to know those you supervise one-on-one.

**Activities & Risks of COVID-19 Infection**

Which activity places you more at risk for contracting COVID-19—getting groceries or eating outside at a restaurant? What about traveling by airplane, attending a basketball game, or eating in a buffet line? Experts were asked to consider the risk associated with 36 different activities and then grade them on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is the most risky). Although not scientific, the list and scores (find below) might help you protect yourself with a decision to participate in certain activities, or in some cases, avoid them altogether.

---

*Source: www.healthassociatesllc.com; search natural disasters*