



After Disaster: What Teens Can Do

- Whether or not you were personally affected by a disaster or violent event, it is normal to be worried about your own safety, to picture the event in your mind and to wonder how you would react in an emergency.
- People react in different ways to trauma. Some people become moody or depressed, others lose sleep or have nightmares and others ignore their feelings or “blank out” the bad event.
- While it may feel better to pretend the event didn’t happen, in the long run it is best to be honest about your feelings and let yourself accept the feelings of loss and uncertainty.
- It is important to realize that while things may seem off balance for a while, your life should return to normal.
- It is important to talk with someone about your sadness, anger and other emotions, even though it may be difficult to start.
- You may feel most comfortable talking about your feelings with a teacher, counselor or church leader. The important thing is that you can talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust.
- It is common to want to strike back at people who have caused a lot of pain. This desire comes from our anger for the innocent victims. We must understand, though, that it is pointless to respond with more violence. Nothing good comes from hateful language or actions.
- While you will always remember the event, the painful feelings will get better over time. You will begin to understand that, in learning to deal with tragedy, you have become stronger, more flexible and better able to rely on yourself.

Where can I find help?

For additional assistance, contact your local public health department, community mental health center, a counselor or a mental health professional.

The information in this fact sheet was adapted from a publication by the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.