Dealing with stress brought on by the fear of Ebola

Things to Remember:
• We each have different needs and different ways of coping.
• It is normal to feel anxious about your family’s and your own health and safety.
• Fear of the unknown or of exposure can also cause increased stress.
• Focusing on your strengths and abilities will help you to heal.
• Acknowledging our feelings helps us recover.
• Gathering and following expert information from credible sources, like DHEC and CDC, can help direct your actions and minimize stress. For more information and guidance about Ebola, please visit www.scdhec.gov/Health/FHPF/HealthAlertsNotifications/ebola/.

Signs that Adults May Need Stress Management Assistance:
• Difficulty communicating thoughts
• Difficulty sleeping
• Difficulty maintaining balance
• Easily frustrated
• Increased use of drugs/alcohol
• Limited attention span
• Headaches/stomach problems
• Tunnel vision/muffled hearing
• Disorientation or confusion
• Difficulty concentrating
• Depression, sadness
• Feelings of hopelessness
• Mood-swings
• Crying easily
• Overwhelming guilt and self-doubt

Ways to Ease Stress and Build Resilience:
• When possible talk with someone about your feelings of fear, anger, sorrow, and other emotions - even though it may be difficult.
• As much as possible maintain a normal household and daily routine, limiting demands of yourself and your family.
• Maintain contact with family, friends, and social supports, e.g. church or pastor.
• Reduce tension by practicing relaxation techniques, e.g. deep breathing.
• Try to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.
• Keep things in perspective.

Where Can I Find Help?
If you need additional assistance contact your local public health department, community mental health center, a counselor, or a mental health professional. South Carolina 2-1-1 is available, as a resource, to help you find assistance in your local community. Call 2-1-1, or 866-892-9211, to link to vital services in your community. For more information about 2-1-1, please visit www.sc211.org.

If you have specific questions relating to Ebola, please email Ebola@dhec.sc.gov.