



Employee Assistance of the Pacific

What can people do to cope with a traumatic event?

- Spend time with other people. Coping with stressful events is easier when people support each other.
- If it helps, talk about how you are feeling. Be willing to listen to others who need to talk about how they feel.
- Get back to your everyday routines. Familiar habits can be very comforting.
- Take time to grieve and cry if you need to. To feel better in the long run, you need to let these feelings out instead of pushing them away or hiding them.
- Ask for support and help from your family, friends, church, or other community resources. Join or develop support groups.
- Set small goals to tackle big problems. Take one thing at a time instead of trying to do everything at once.
- Eat healthy food and take time to walk, stretch, exercise, and relax, even if just for a few minutes at a time.
- Make sure you get enough rest and sleep. People often need more sleep than usual when they are very stressed.
- Do something that just feels good to you like taking a warm bath, taking a walk, sitting in the sun, or petting your cat or dog.
- If you are trying to do too much, try to cut back by putting off or giving up a few things that are not absolutely necessary.
- Find something positive you can do. Give blood. Donate money to help victims of the event. Join efforts in your workplace or community to respond to this tragedy.
- Get away from the stress of the event sometimes. Turn off the TV news reports and distract yourself by doing something you enjoy.

What can adults do to help children cope?

- Let them know you understand their feelings.
- Tell them that they really are safe.
- Keep to your usual routines.
- Keep them from seeing too many frightening pictures of the events.
- Educate yourself about how to talk to children of different ages about trauma.

Common reactions to traumatic events

These reactions include feeling afraid, sad, horrified, helpless, angry, overwhelmed, confused, distracted, emotionally numb, or disoriented. People may also be bothered by nightmares or upsetting thoughts and images that come to mind. Young children may be upset, distracted, or feel out of sorts. These are normal reactions to very stressful events. With the help of family, friends, co-workers, and a support network, most people gradually feel better as time goes by.

When should a person seek more help?

Sometimes people need extra help to deal with a traumatic event. People directly affected by this tragedy, young children, people who have been through other traumatic events, and people with emotional problems are more likely to need professional help. Sometimes it helps people to talk about their experiences immediately – sometimes people need a day or more to share their experiences. People should not be forced to discuss their experience as much as allowed opportunities to share what happened with them when they are feeling safe enough to do so. You can get help as soon after the event as you want to reach out.

A person may need extra help coping if a month after the event he or she:

- Still feels very upset or fearful most of the time
- Acts very differently compared to before the trauma
- Can't work or take care of kids or home
- Has important relationships that are continuing to get worse
- Uses drugs or drinks too much
- Feels jumpy or has nightmares a lot
- Still can't stop thinking about the traumatic event
- Still can't enjoy life at all

Where can you go to get help?

Employee Assistance of the Pacific provides **free** professional counseling for covered employees and their family members. The counseling is **confidential** and up to six sessions per year are provided at no cost to the employee. You may make an appointment for a session with a counselor for yourself or an eligible family member who lives with you by phoning **(808) 597-8222**. Your EAP is a resource with caring professionals and experts on trauma recovery. We help people stay resilient following traumatic events.



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