

Self-Care Toolbox & CERT Team Care

ANTICIPATE ahead of disaster:

- Taking care of ourselves, for our own personal welfare, resiliency
- Self-awareness: a more prepared, confident mindset increases effectiveness with others.

Self-Care

- How we take care of ourselves informs how we can take care of our survivors
- Recognize your strengths
- What are your stress triggers/ landmines, & stress relievers?
- Frankly look for traits in yourself that concern you in others.
- Sanity & health now: Be able to say no. Where do I want to invest my time, myself?
What will give me more energy than it'll take away?
- Give yourself permission to fail. Be gentle with yourself. Start small; start over, for progress
- Vicarious trauma: identifying too strongly with a survivor- a common challenge:
balance controlling our own emotions with empathy.
- Circle of Meaning: Hope, healing- write down your pleasures, & significant areas to your life. Look at the list when down/stressed

Deal With Delayed Reaction, as the stress will accumulate.

- Delayed response: traumatic reactions can come to the surface at a later time. Also, disillusionment often occurs months after trauma, when we don't find ourselves made whole again, when outside resources and sympathy wear thin. Reluctance to 'bother' others: "...Trained responders power through!" "...Don't show grief" ---stress accumulates.
- PTSI ('Injury') – not PTSD ('Disorder')- 'Injury' is more understood, accepted. A process for dealing with it: Acknowledge, Express, Act, Re-connect (i.e., make some meaning out of it)
 - Validate the emotion. Each might then come to our own Action.
 - Taking an action to 'Re-connect' with the experiences, can help deal with it, diffuse it

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced"
James Baldwin

CERT Psych- Team Benefits:

- Team organization concepts can help us both operationally, and personally. Working together; looking out for each other are important aspects of successful Teams.
- Cultivate a spirit of open communication and acceptance- listening to each other. Allow all to be heard, to admit doubts/fatigue; all treated & feel accepted as they are. (Needn't feel compelled to share perhaps private thoughts, fears...but consider that they also may be helpful to cue others to think about them in our own terms.)
- Asking, Listening; not necessarily advising. Likely need your ear; more than your opinion.
- Some basic underlying causes of responder stress: Lack of control; guilt, anger, fear, worry, regret, hurt, fatigue
- Recognize symptoms, changes and fatigue signs among your buddies. Suggest taking a break from the action, rotate someone else in for a time. Ensure hydration.
- Offer to de-compress volunteers: through ending their shift with a low-stress job, a quick conversation about what they encountered, encourage expression of their feelings.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing:

1. Introduction; setting ground rules for group: e.g., everyone gets opportunity to speak
2. Review the factual situation
3. Sharing of initial thoughts/feelings
4. Sharing of emotional reactions to the incident.
5. Instruction about normal stress reactions and coping strategies (e.g., stress level down/ oxytocin goes up; breathing exercises; availability of stress mitigation services)

**General resource book: “The Unthinkable, Who Survives When Disaster Strikes, And Why?”
by Amanda Ripley**