

# To look after yourself and others

## For Those Affected by the Disaster:

- Try to talk to the people around you.
- It is natural to become worried and anxious, but in most cases this will gradually ease.
- Sleep may be difficult but simply lying down gives you rest.
- It is important to support each other instead of trying to heal painful feelings.
- Don't carry on alone and seek advice from someone close or professionals.

## To Help Friends and Neighbors feeling anxious:

- Sit next to them and comfort them,
- Talk slowly making eye contact,
- Use short and clear sentences,
- Do not force them to talk about their painful experiences and express emotions,
- Listen to their concerns whether emotional or physical.



## Caring for your children:

- Do not leave a child alone. Try to make them comfortable and secure,
- Hug them and maybe nurse the painful area,
- Accept that children may behave oddly; resorting to baby-like behaviour and depending excessively on adults. Or they may become selfish.

(Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)



# Guide to Good Mental Health for Those affected by Natural Disasters

Take the first step by talking to people around you.



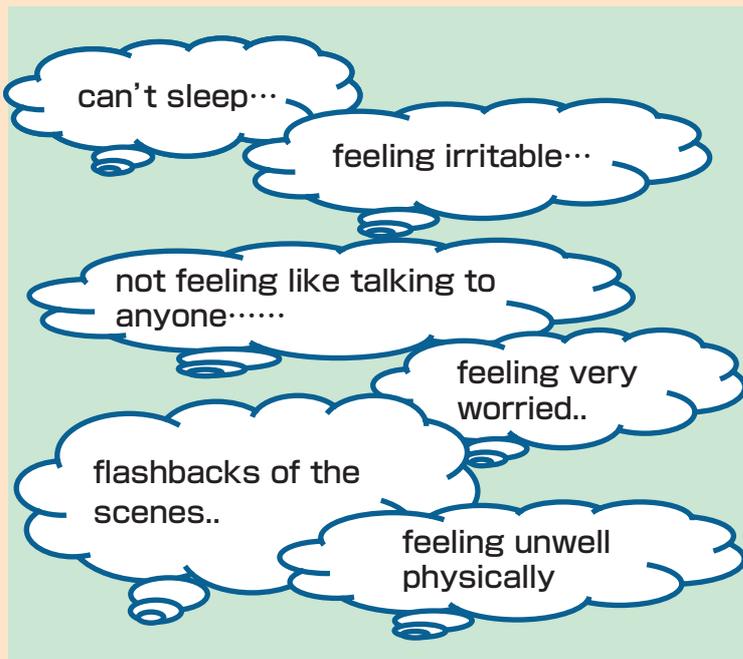
For Those Affected by the Disaster

Cabinet Office

Editor: National center of Neurology and Psychiatry

## Bodily and Mental Changes after the Disaster:

Various changes may occur in your body and mind after the shock.



These are mostly normal reactions to abnormal severe events. In most cases, healing occurs as time goes by as long as protection is provided.

Measures that one can take to ease these symptoms;

1. Rest
2. Eat meals and keep hydrated
3. Avoid too much alcohol and caffeine as in coffee, green tea and black tea
4. Try not to shoulder worries and troubles alone but share them with the people around you
5. Say hello and talk to each other

To help relax - 'Take 6 seconds to exhale and another 6 seconds to inhale. Repeat this for 5 minutes each in the morning and evening'.

In most cases it is not illness, but if the condition persists for a long time, consult with the doctors or community nurses.



# To those who take care of **children** affected by the disaster

Children who suffered from a disaster can be affected deeply both physically and emotionally.



## Stress related reactions can be experienced as;

- Behaving like a baby,
- Leaning on adults more than usual,
- Whining and becoming selfish,
- Becoming rebellious or violent,
- Repeatedly playing a game of disaster



## How to deal with their reactions;

- Spend more time with them,
- Listen to children without denying what they say,
- Don't force them to talk when they don't feel like talking,
- Increase physical contact, for example, give them a hug. Not appropriate unless you are a family member or care taker.
- Do not stop them playing disaster experience games. It is a natural process of calming down.

**These changes are normal reaction. In most cases, they recover as time goes by if the adults accept them calmly and warmly.**



## Advice for those Offering Support to their family and/or friends



Stress related reactions can happen to those who are supporting others. They may undertake more than they are capable of and over-extend themselves wanting to be useful.

### [Three dangers supporters could fall into]

#### ○ Supporters are 'hidden victims' of a disaster.

Supporters could also be a victim and suffer from stress.

#### ○ You are not a Superman.

No one at the disaster sites is free from stress. Do not overestimate yourself.

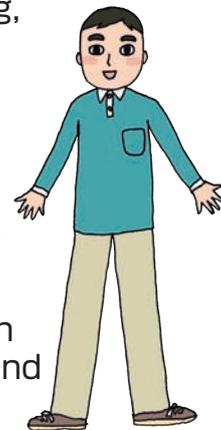
#### ○ You can't see yourself.

Without knowing it, fatigue and stress will mount up.



#### ○ Checking for signs of stress;

- Lack of concentration,
- Losing the ability of enjoyment,
- Feeling irritable and blaming others,
- Misjudging situations and making errors in decision making,
- Headache,
- Feeling depressed,
- Forgetful,
- Sleeplessness,
- Anxious,
- Physical symptoms such as stiff shoulders, chill and hotflashes.



Even if you can not take much time to rest, try to find time to relax. If the conditions persist, consult with the doctors or community nurses.