When should a person seek more help?

Some people may need extra help to deal with a disaster. These may include:

- people directly affected by this tragedy
- young children
- people of any age who have been through other traumatic events
- people with previously existing emotional problems

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Helping Others by Helping Yourself

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What can people do...

Taking care of oneself is often treated as the lowest priority in a crisis, but it is only through taking care of yourself that you are able to help family, friends, and community. Please consider the importance of self care when helping others.

Common reactions to disasters include:

- New or renewed fears, sadness, helplessness, anger.
- Feeling overwhelmed, confused, distracted, emotionally numb, or disoriented.
- Nightmares or upsetting thoughts and images that come to mind.
- Increased physical complaints

The emotional effects of natural disasters are felt by many people: victims, bereaved family members, friends, rescue workers, emergency medical care providers, mental-health care providers, witnesses to the event, volunteers, members of the media, and citizens of the community, the effected country, and the world.

These are normal reactions to very stressful events. With the help of family and friends, most people gradually feel better as time goes by.

What can people do to cope?

- Spend time with other people.
- Resist the tendency to isolate yourself from your known supports, such as friends and family.
- If it helps, talk about how you are feeling. Use judgment about whether you feel able to listen to others who need to talk.
- Get back to your everyday routines. Familiar habits can be very comforting even if they occur in a new setting.
- Take time to grieve. Letting these feelings out will help them to pass.
- Take small steps toward tackling big problems. Take one thing at a time instead of trying to do everything at once.
- Try to eat healthy food regularly.
- Take time to walk, stretch, exercise, and relax, even if just for a few minutes at a time.
- Get enough rest and sleep.
- Do something that just feels good to you like taking a warm bath, or taking a walk.
- Take breaks from the stress of the event. Turn off the TV news reports and do something you enjoy.
- Take care of your spiritual needs.

Other people may need extra help coping over time if 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 problems with important relationships that are continuing to get worse since the disaster
- Uses drugs or drinks significantly more than before the disaster
- Feels jumpy or has ongoing nightmares
- Has flashbacks about the disaster
- Remains unable to enjoy life

Many people are not used to seeking help from people outside of their families. However, during times of severe stress, mental health treatment can be an additional source of support to the family.