



Healing the heart of humanity one soul at a time

SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS HANDBOOK



“In all things it is better to hope than to despair”

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



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***A working document for Emotional and Spiritual Care
including:
Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster***

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INTRODUCTION

Disasters impact lives and the dimensions that express life:

- the physical - a destroyed home or bodily injury,
- the collective - disrupted relationships and routines,
- the psychological - both intellectually and emotionally, and
- the spiritual - searching for meaning and connectedness.

As volunteer agencies and individuals, we should be prepared to address each disaster with the resources we have. It is in our working collaboratively and cooperatively that we may be



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better able to respond more holistically to the needs of Individuals and communities impacted by disaster.

The Spiritual Preparedness Handbook will highlight Spiritual Care broadly in disaster response and recovery. We will:

- share how emotional and spiritual care may overlap,
- share additional ideas and thoughts on emotional care and spiritual care respectively, and
- offer some basic resources to promote immediate response and planning which can be shared as appropriate.

“Hope is the dream of a soul awake.”

~ French Proverb



WHAT IS SPIRITUAL CARE?



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“Spiritual care is to devote presence, attention and respectful assistance to helping people discern what is the meaning in their life now, in this new environment of destruction and pain; and how they seek to live out that meaning as the recovery unfolds.”

~ Foster McCurley, November 24, 2003

The word trauma evolved from the Greek word for “wound.” Trauma is a rare event that is beyond the normal range of human experiences.

Why offer spiritual care? Because a great number of people impacted by disaster profess belief and practice spirituality in their life.

Language is a tool of individuality. In the aftermath of disaster, how one uses language can be the means to process the trauma of the event. When people experience trauma or a disaster, they feel vulnerable. Healing comes from people’s ability to reclaim their lives; including their abilities to self-determine and make decisions. The use of language is a major contributing factor to healing.

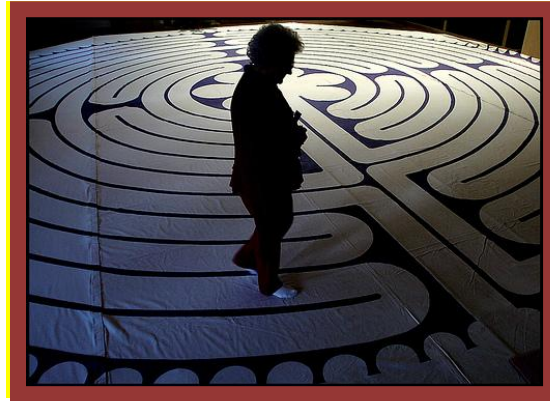
Human contact and compassion are also powerful tools to be used on a journey of healing. When speaking with people affected by a disaster, you will notice a variety of expressions in storytelling and in how individuals refer to themselves. Some want to be called “victims” because they want others to know of their pain, suffering, and ongoing struggle. Others quickly state that they are “survivors” because they have endured a crisis and are moving to recover their lives. In some other cases, individuals initially state they are “victims,” and as they move through the recovery process, they call themselves “survivors.”

There is a significant philosophical difference between being a Victim of an event and being a Survivor.

A disaster can devastate people through degrees and a variety of experiences. Did the experience happen directly to the individual, such as one’s home being destroyed? Is the individual responding to the experience: a first responder evacuating a family from their home, and therefore experiencing secondary trauma: or did the individual live in a neighboring community not impacted by the Disaster and he or she feels a mix of emotions? The question is how to be prepared to respond spiritually to a situation or disaster?



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OBJECTIVES FOR DISASTER RESPONSE

1. Provide immediate relief from pain and help.
2. Provide time for problem solving.
3. Regain old coping skills and/or develop new ones.
4. Mobilize whatever resources are necessary and available to meet the crisis.
5. Return to functioning and regain feelings of self worth.
6. Assess the person's ability to function and refer the person to further assistance if necessary



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TURN ON YOUR SPIRITUAL GPS™ - GROUND, PROTECT & SHIELD

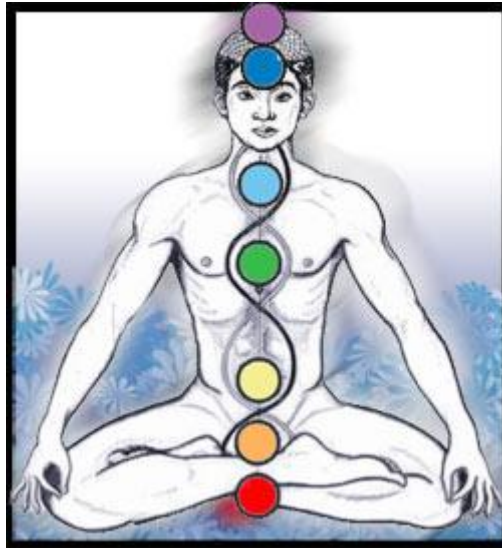


When circumstances leave you feeling energetically lost, or when you need to enter a situation where others are feeling lost, you need to activate your Soul GPS™ - Ground, Protect and Shield¹. These basic spiritual techniques can restore your sense of balance and prepare you to deal with the crisis.

¹ Spiritual GPS and Soul GPS are Trademarks of HHN, LLC.



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GROUND

Step 1: Ground Yourself!

When you are about to interfere or enter a situation where you will be dealing with pain, suffering and grief, it is very important for you to to ground yourself. Grounding techniques can help mitigate the effects of extreme dissociative episodes where you may experience distancing from your body, your environment, or the people around you. You may implement any grounding technique that you may be currently used to using in your daily routine. If you are not currently using Grounding Techniques, here are some of the fast ways to get grounded.

LIST OF THINGS TO DO TO QUICKLY GROUND

- Get ice or ice water
- Breathe - slow and deep, like blowing up a balloon.
- Take your shoes off and rub your feet on the ground.
- Open your eyes and look around. See you are in a different place than then.
- Move around. Feel your body. Stretch out your arms, hands, fingers.
- Peel an orange or a lemon. Notice the smell. Take a bite. Focus on the taste.
- Pet your cat, dog or rabbit.
- Spray yourself with favorite perfume.
- Eat ice cream! Or any favorite food. Pay attention to the taste.



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- Hold a stuffy. Pay attention to the feel of it.
- Repeat "this is now, not then"
- Call a friend.
- Take a shower.
- Take a bath.
- Go for a walk. Feel the sunshine (or rain, or snow!)
- Count nice things.
- Dig in the dirt in your garden.
- Turn lights on.
- Play your favorite music.
- Hug a tree!
- Touch things around you.

USE OF GROUNDING STONES

There are many types of stones that work for grounding: Like Obsidian and black Tourmaline. Try to carry your grounding stones with you at all times, in your knapsack or purse wherever you go...just in case. We suggest 2-3 stones of a fairly small size...So; the use of 3 together can easily be hold in one hand. Whenever you feel the need to ground, simply hold them in your hand or hands and roll them around. Something in the stones releases the excess energy that would allow you to be brought back down to earth. This method is easy to use and can be done without anyone even noticing.

CLEARING THE FIELD

SIMPLE WATER VISUALIZATION

Nothing brings one back down from the clouds quite as quickly as a bucket of water. Picture yourself being doused with water. Use your Imagination to see this picture clearly in your mind's eyes. Have it stream over you and flow back into the earth, like a waterfall from Heaven, carrying with it all the excess energy that has accumulated inside and around you. This is also very effective to visualize this happening with an area you are about to go through.



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CENTERING

The use of Centering Techniques helps one to find spiritual and emotional balance by refocusing on one's own identity and essence. This is you, separate from the influences of societal expectations and pressures. It can enhance shielding or even make them unnecessary. It allows you to perceive energy clearly. It keeps you emotionally stable as you encounter new things.

STAYING CENTERED IN CROWDS

With practice, you will be able to pause for a few seconds and center yourself in almost any situation or circumstances. If you tend to be susceptible to empathic overload, learning to stay centered in crowds will reduce the flooding of surrounding emotions to a manageable level.

It may take practice to become good at it, but it will help significantly.

PROTECT

CALL FOR DIVINE ASSISTANCE

There are many Spiritual teams, on various levels of existence, which work hand of hand with Human Beings who are willing to be the conduits of Compassion and Healing for others.

After grounding yourself, send mentally a request to the higher beings of light and love that operate under the Law of One.

Crisis intervention may be thought of as psychological "first aid" designed to lessen acute distress, but the purpose of Spiritual Crisis Intervention is to reach out to the inner levels of a Human Being, through the assistance and support that would empower the one in distress to be able to return to normal functioning of daily life.



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ACTIVATE THE VIOLET FLAME



The Violet Flame is a high-frequency spiritual energy that you can access to help heal your body, mind and soul. The Violet Flame changes negative energy into positive energy, darkness into light, "fate" into opportunity. The Violet Flame also erases the resultant "bad karma" of our mistakes.

HOW THE VIOLET FLAME WORKS

The Violet Flame works by changing "vibrations". In physics, vibration is the speed of oscillation - the speed at which something moves back and forth. On the atomic level, vibration can be understood to be the speed at which electrons orbit around the nucleus of the atom. The Violet Flame works by changing vibrations on this level.



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The following invocations were written by Elizabeth Clare Prophet²

I AM THE VIOLET FLAME

I AM the Violet Flame
In action in me now
I AM the Violet Flame
To light alone I bow
I AM the Violet Flame
In mighty Cosmic Power
I AM the Light of God
Shining every hour
I AM the Violet Flame
Blazing like a sun
I AM God's Sacred Power
Freeing every one

DECREE

Lovely God Presence, I AM in me,
Hear me now I do decree:
Bring to pass each blessing for which I call
Upon the Holy Christ Self of each and all!

² The Summit Lighthouse



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Let violet fire of Freedom roll
Round the world to make all whole
Saturate the earth and its people, too,
With increasing Christ-radiance shining through!

I AM this action from God above
Sustained by the hand of heaven's love,
Transmuting the causes of discord here,
Removing the cores so that none do fear.

I AM, I AM, I AM
The full power of Freedom's love
Raising all earth to heaven above
Violet fire now blazing bright
In living beauty is God's own light

Which right now and forever
Sets the world, myself, and all life
Eternally free in Ascended Master perfection!
Almighty I AM! Almighty I AM! Almighty I AM!



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RADIANT SPIRAL VIOLET FLAME

Radiant spiral violet flame,
Descend, now blaze through me!
Radiant spiral violet flame,
Set free, set free, set free!
Radiant violet flame, O come,
Expand and blaze thy light through me!
Radiant violet flame, O come,
Reveal God's power for all to see!
Radiant violet flame, O come,
Awake the earth and set it free!
Radiance of the violet flame,
Expand and blaze through me!
Radiance of the violet flame,
Expand for all to see!
Radiance of the violet flame,
Establish Mercy's outpost here!
Radiance of the violet flame,
Come, transmute now all fear!



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SHIELD



There are many techniques for shielding. The following are some of the more effective.

CHI BALL

- Begin by Grounding and Centering yourself
- Visualize a ball of chi energy centered on your 3rd chakra, the solar plexus and the seat of your personal power.
- Place your hands, palms together, in front of your 3rd chakra
- Grow the ball until it is large enough in diameter for both hands to fit inside
- Inhale deeply and as you exhale, move your hands straight out to each side, “pushing” and expanding the energy ball until it completely surrounds you.

BUBBLE SHIELD

The way to make this shield is to simply close your eyes, clear your mind, and then imagine yourself wrapped in a bubble of pure white light.



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(Note: when moving around in spiritual realms, astral travel, etc. you'll notice a silver cord attached to the bubble that goes to the solar plexus of the body some it may attach to the heart chakra or another place. Everyone is different. This cord does not mean that you have a hole in your shield)

A variation to the white light is picture yourself jumping through a circle made of violet and the inside is clear as you go through you are inside a bubble (like the soap bubbles children blow). Make sure you let the shield be clear and let different colors be reflected to whomever for the type of protection you need.

TUBE OF LIGHT

Another slightly more difficult shield than the Bubble Shield is the Tube of Light. This Shield has the additional benefit of making sure that the area around you is also cleansed. This can be done by smudging with herbs, Reiki symbols or other methods.

Then ask for help from the Divine and imagine a tube of white light having a base under you and going up to the heavens. This lets it get energy directly from the Divine.

To vary this shield, some add a second layer of light. Let this layer be violet which a powerful healing color. Another thing you can add to the outside of the shield is mirrors. Let them be all around your shield and let it reflect any attacks back to the person or entity that sent it.

If you have trouble visualizing the Tube of Light, there is an invocation for this that was written by Elizabeth Clare Prophet³:

Beloved I AM presence bright,

Round me seal your tube of light from Ascended Master Flame called forth now in gods own name.

Let it keep my temple free from all discord sent to me.

I AM calling forth Violet Flame to blaze and transmute all desire,

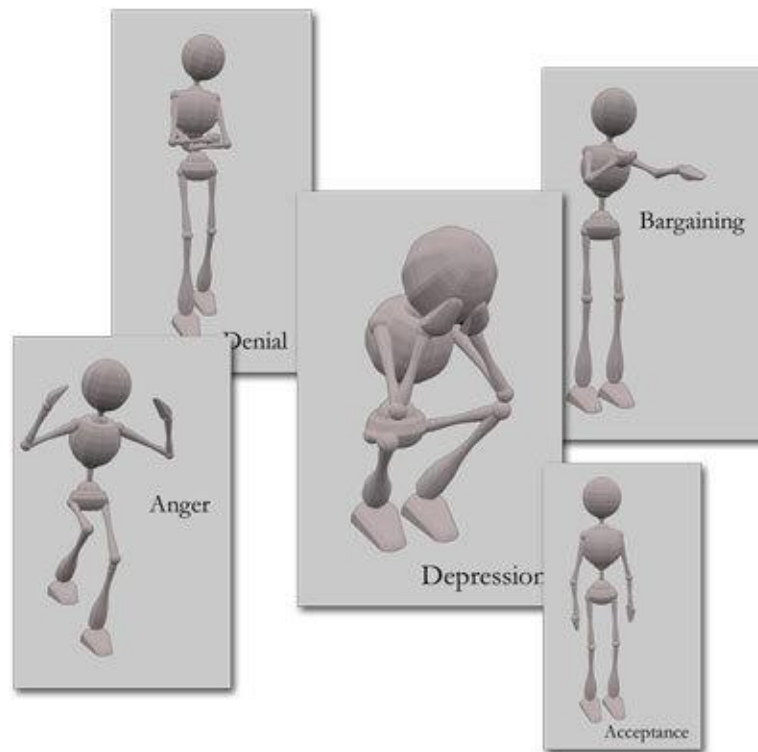
keeping on in freedoms name till I AM one with the Violet Flame.

³ The Summit Lighthouse



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DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH



SUGGESTED “DO’S AND DON’TS” FOR THE TRAUMA SURVIVOR⁴

These are examples of coping skills that may assist recover

Don’t

1. Drink alcohol excessively.
2. Use legal or illegal substances to numb post-traumatic effects.
3. Withdraw from family, friends, and coworkers.
4. Automatically stay away from work.
5. Shut off feelings.
6. Look for easy answers to explain the Incident.
7. Think you are “crazy”.
8. Have unrealistic expectations for Recovery.

⁴ From the National Organization for Victim Assistance



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9. Blame yourself or others for the Incident.
10. Pretend that it doesn't bother you.
11. Minimize the impact the incident will have.
12. Be afraid to ask for help and consideration from others.
13. Push yourself to "get over it."

Do

1. Expect that you will be bothered by unusual feelings that may not be "Like you".
2. Maintain a good diet and exercise.
3. Spend time with family, friends, and coworkers, talking about the incident.
4. Take time for leisure activities.
5. Remind yourself that post-traumatic effects are normal.
6. Learn as much as possible about Critical Incident Stress.
7. Get extra help, if necessary.
8. Take one step at a time, be patient with yourself and others.
9. Be aware of your thinking and think more realistically about the incident.
10. Allow yourself time to recover from the shock.



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Helping Survivors in the Wake of Disaster⁵

WHAT ARE NORMAL STRESS REACTIONS IN THE WAKE OF A DISASTER?

Most disaster survivors (children and adults as well as disaster rescue or relief workers) experience normal stress reactions after a traumatic event. These reactions may last for several days or even a few weeks and may include:

- Emotional reactions: shock, fear, grief, anger, guilt, shame, feeling helpless or hopeless, feeling numb, feeling empty, diminished ability to feel interest, pleasure or love.
- Cognitive reactions: confusion, disorientation, indecisiveness, worry, shortened attention span, difficulty concentrating, memory loss, unwanted memories, self-blame.
- Physical reactions: tension, fatigue, edginess, insomnia, bodily aches or pain, startling easily, racing heartbeat, nausea, change in appetite, change in sex drive.
- Interpersonal reactions: distrust, conflict, withdrawal, work problems, school problems, irritability, loss of intimacy, being over-controlling, feeling rejected or abandoned

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE SEVERE REACTIONS TO A DISASTER?

Studies show that as many as one in three disaster survivors have severe stress symptoms that put them at risk for lasting Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Symptoms may include:

- Dissociation (depersonalization, de-realization, amnesia)
- Intrusive re-experiencing (terrifying memories, nightmares, or flashbacks)
- Extreme emotional numbing (completely unable to feel emotion, as if empty)
- Extreme attempts to avoid disturbing memories (such as through substance use)
- Hyper-arousal (panic attacks, rage, extreme irritability, intense agitation)
- Severe anxiety (debilitating worry, extreme helplessness, compulsions or obsessions)
- Severe depression (loss of the ability to feel hope, pleasure, or interest; feeling worthless)

WHAT ASPECTS OF DISASTER ARE ESPECIALLY TRAUMATIZING?

⁵ A PTSD Fact Sheet from the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



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Certain aspects of disaster are particularly likely to be traumatic. The following are likely to put Survivors at risk for severe stress symptoms and lasting PTSD if the survivor directly experiences them or witnesses them:

- Life threatening danger or physical harm (especially to children)
- Exposure to gruesome death, bodily injury, or dead or maimed bodies
- Extreme environmental or human violence or destruction
- Loss of home, valued possessions, neighborhood, or community
- Loss of communication with or support from close relations
- Intense emotional demands (e.g., rescue personnel and caregivers searching for possibly dying survivors or interacting with bereaved family members)
- Extreme fatigue, weather exposure, hunger, sleep deprivation
- Extended exposure to danger, loss, emotional/physical strain
- Exposure to toxic contamination (e.g., gas or fumes, chemicals, radioactivity)



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SELF-CARE AND SELF-HELP FOLLOWING DISASTERS

The impact of the terroristic violence on September 11, 2001 will affect people at all levels of involvement: victims, bereaved family members, friends, rescue workers, emergency medical and mental-health care providers, witnesses to the event, volunteers, members of the media, and citizens of the community, the country, and the world. Terroristic events can cause people to feel angry, frustrated, helpless, and afraid. Terrorism can also make people want to seek revenge. Studies have shown that acting on this anger and desire for revenge can increase feelings of anger, guilt, and distress rather than decreasing them.

However, there are strong mechanisms that contribute to natural recovery from traumatic events. Many trauma experts (Staab, Foa, Friedman) agree that the psychological outcome of our community as a whole will be resilience, not psychopathology. For most survivors, symptoms of fear, anxiety, re-experiencing, urges to avoid, and hyper-arousal, if present, will gradually decrease over time.

COPING STRATEGIES

There are a number of common strategies that individuals utilize when coping with extraordinary stress in their lives. These strategies, while effective at manageable levels of stress, can become unproductive or detrimental when stress reaches overwhelming or traumatic levels. It is important to remember that individuals have their own way of and pace for processing traumatic events, and each individual must listen to and honor his or her own pace and way. It is suggested that survivors monitor their reactions and increase the coping strategies that have worked in other stressful situations.

Research on individuals with positive responses after a traumatic event indicates that their preferred coping mechanisms are to:

- When problem-solving, focus on brief time intervals (e.g., think only about what the next step is), or focus on a larger time interval to obtain a less devastating picture of the trauma (i.e., as one tragic event in a full and meaningful life)
- Maintain a view of oneself as competent and a view of others as willing and able to provide support



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- Focus on the current implications of the trauma and avoid regretting past decisions and actions⁶

The process of converting traumas into growth experiences has the following characteristics:

- It is usually done by the individual alone, but confidants can also suggest new ways of viewing the situation.
- It usually occurs between 2 weeks and 4 months following the stressor.
- It can enhance one's ability to cope with subsequent stressors.
- It usually depends more on an individual's psychological resources than on the characteristics of the stressor event.
- It is intuitive, rapid, and sudden rather than being an extended logical thinking process (i.e., it is characterized by sudden insight and revelation). (Finkel and Jacobsen, 1977)⁷

SPECIFIC COPING STRATEGIES FOR TRAUMATIC STRESS AND PTSD SYMPTOMS

POSITIVE COPING ACTIONS

Positive coping actions are those that help to reduce anxiety, lessen other distressing reactions, and improve the situation in a way that does not harm the survivor further. These types of coping actions improve things not only for today but for the future as well. Positive coping methods include:

- Using natural supports and talking with friends, family, and coworkers at your own pace. It is helpful to follow one's own natural inclination with regard to how much and to whom you talk.
- Learning about trauma and PTSD. It is useful for trauma survivors to learn more about trauma and PTSD and how it may affect them. Learning how common PTSD is and finding that these problems are shared by hundreds of thousands of survivors of trauma can help people with PTSD recognize that they're not alone, weak, or "crazy."
- Talking to other trauma survivors for support. When survivors are able to talk about their problems with others, something helpful often results. Through the process of seeking support from other trauma survivors, the survivor may come to feel less alone, feel supported or understood, or he or she may receive concrete help with a problem situation. One of the best places to find support is in a specially designed support

⁶ Horowitz, M.J. (1986). Stress-response syndromes: A review of posttraumatic and adjustment disorders. *Hospital and Community Psychiatry*, 37(3), 241-249.

⁷ Finkel, N.J., & Jacobsen, C.A. (1977). Significant life experiences in an adult sample. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 5(2), 165-175.



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group. Being in a group with others who have PTSD may help a trauma survivor reduce his or her sense of isolation, rebuild trust in others, and it may provide an important opportunity to contribute to the recovery of other survivors of trauma.

- Talking to a doctor about trauma and PTSD. Part of taking care of oneself means mobilizing the helping resources that are available. A doctor can take better care of a patient's physical health if he or she knows about the patient's PTSD symptoms, and doctors can often refer trauma survivors for more specialized and expert care.
- Practicing relaxation methods. These can include muscular relaxation exercises, breathing exercises, meditation, swimming, stretching, yoga, prayer, listening to quiet music, spending time in nature, and so on. While relaxation techniques can be helpful, they can sometimes increase distress by focusing attention on disturbing physical sensations or by reducing contact with the external environment. Be aware that while negative or painful physical sensations may become more apparent when a person is relaxed, continuing with relaxation in a way that is tolerable (i.e., interspersed with music, walking, or other activities) is, in the long run, helpful in reducing negative reactions to thoughts, feelings, or perceptions.
- Increasing positive distracting activities. Positive recreational or work activities help distract a person from his or her memories and reactions. Artistic endeavors have also been a way for many trauma survivors to express feelings in a positive, creative way. These endeavors can help improve a person's mood, limit the harm caused by PTSD, and can help a person rebuild his or her life. It is important to emphasize that distraction alone is unlikely to facilitate recovery; active, direct coping with traumatic events and their impact is also important.
- Calling a counselor for help. Sometimes PTSD symptoms worsen and ordinary efforts at coping don't seem to work very well. If the survivor of trauma feels fearful or depressed, it is important that he or she reach out and telephone a counselor, who can help the survivor turn things around.
- Taking prescribed medications to tackle PTSD. Many people with PTSD have found that by taking medications they are able to improve their sleep, anxiety, irritability and anger, or urges to drink or abuse drugs.
- Starting an exercise program. It's important to see a doctor before starting to exercise, but after getting the OK, exercise in moderation will potentially benefit those with PTSD in a number of ways. Walking, jogging, swimming, weight lifting, and other forms of exercise may reduce physical tension. These activities may also help distract the person from painful memories or worries and thus give them a break from difficult emotions. Perhaps most important, exercise can improve self-esteem and help people feel that they have some control in their lives.
- Volunteering in the community. It's important to feel like you have something to offer to others and that you are making a contribution. When you're not working, you may not feel that you are contributing anything worthwhile. One way that many survivors of trauma have reconnected with their communities and regained a feeling of



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connection and importance is to volunteer: to help with youth programs, medical services, literacy programs, community sporting activities, and so on.

NEGATIVE COPING ACTIONS

Negative coping actions help perpetuate problems. They may reduce distress in the short term, but in the long-term, negative coping actions may short-circuit more permanent change. Actions that may feel immediately helpful but that can cause later problems include things like smoking or using drugs. These habits can become difficult to change. Negative coping methods can also include isolation, workaholism, violent behavior, angry intimidation of others, unhealthy eating, and self-destructive behavior (e.g., attempting suicide). Before people with PTSD learn effective and healthy coping methods, they may try to cope with their distress and other reactions in ways that lead to more problems.



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PRACTICING LIFESTYLE BALANCE⁸

There are many ways to restore lifestyle balance, and keeping track of and making progress with as many of the following changes is a good way to regain balance after having been exposed to or witnessed cumulative traumatic experiences:

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get regular medical care when needed
- Take time off when sick
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
- Take time to be sexual--with yourself, with a partner
- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothes you like
- Take vacations
- Take day trips or mini-vacations
- Make time away from telephones

PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE

- Make time for self-reflection
- Have your own personal psychotherapy
- Write in a journal
- Read literature that is unrelated to work
- Do something at which you are not expert or in charge
- Decrease stress in your life

⁸ A PTSD Fact Sheet from the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. (Excerpted from: Saakvitne, K. W., & Pearlman, L. A. (Eds.). 1996. *Transforming the pain: A Workbook on vicarious traumatization*. New York: Norton).



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- Notice your inner experiences -- listen to your thoughts, judgments, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings
- Let others know different aspects of you
- Engage your intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art museum, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theater performance
- Practice receiving from others
- Be curious
- Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in your life
- Give yourself affirmations, praise yourself
- Find ways to increase your sense of self-esteem
- Reread favorite books, review favorite movies
- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places, and seek them out
- Allow yourself to cry
- Find things to make you laugh
- Express your outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- Play with children

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time with nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish your optimism and hope
- Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
- Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- Be open to not knowing
- Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
- Meditate
- Pray
- Sing



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- Spend time with children
- Have experiences of awe
- Contribute to causes in which you believe
- Read inspirational literature (talks, music, etc.)



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WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Several studies have pointed out that following a terroristic event such as the Oklahoma City bombing, many of those in closest proximity to the disaster do not believe that they need help and will not seek out services, despite reporting significant emotional distress⁹. Sprang lists several potential reasons for this:

- Some people may feel that they are better off than those more affected and that they, therefore, should not be so upset.
- Some may not seek help because of pride or because they think that distress indicates weakness of some sort.
- Some individuals may not define services they receive as mental-health intervention, especially if such intervention is unsolicited (e.g., lectures, sermons, discussions, community rituals). Indeed, because the goal of many disaster mental-health workers is to have interventions be a seamless, integrated part of an overall disaster effort, those who receive these services may not recognize them as mental-health interventions.
- Many individuals are more apt to seek informal support from family and friends, which may not be sufficient to prevent long-term distress for some.

It is critical to address this hesitance about seeking help given that a large portion of the individuals who were directly exposed to the Oklahoma City bomb blast continued to have active postdisaster psychiatric symptoms six months after the bombing. (PTSD was the most common disorder, and major depression was the second most common disorder¹⁰).

There may be times when self-help strategies are not effective in reducing the effects of exposure to traumatic stress. Research has shown that exposure to trauma may result in a change in brain chemistry and function. Research has also shown that the use of antidepressant or other medication reduces both PTSD and depressive symptoms in individuals who are unable to use behavioral techniques to manage their symptoms. Individuals have also experienced partial or full relief from posttraumatic stress symptoms when using certain types of cognitive-behavioral treatment. As stated above, it is recommended that you seek

⁹ Sprang, G. (2000). Coping strategies and traumatic stress symptomatology following the Oklahoma City bombing. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 8(2), 207-218.

¹⁰ North, C.S., Nixon, S.J., Shariat, S., Mallonee, S., McMillen, J.C., Spitznagel, E.L., & Smith, E.M. (1999). Psychiatric disorders among survivors of the Oklahoma City bombing. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 282(8), 755-762.



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assistance from your medical doctor or from a mental-health professional who is skilled in the treatment of trauma if:

- You are experiencing any symptoms that are causing distress, are causing significant changes in relationships, or are impairing functioning at work
- You are self-medicating with alcohol or drugs
- You are unable to find relief with the strategies listed above

Coping with PTSD symptoms and the problems they cause is usually a continuing challenge for survivors of trauma. As stated above, those who are able to convert traumas into growth experiences are often able to do so through sudden insight or revelation. For those who develop PTSD, however, recovery is an ongoing, daily, gradual process. It doesn't happen through sudden insight and there isn't a quick cure. Healing doesn't mean that a survivor will forget the trauma experiences or have no emotional pain when remembering them. Some level of continuing reaction to memories is natural and reflects a normal body and mind. Healing may mean that reactions will occur less often and be less intense. Healing also means having a greater ability to manage trauma-related emotions and having greater confidence in one's ability to cope.

When a trauma survivor takes direct action to cope with problems, he or she often gains a greater sense of personal power and control. Active coping means recognizing and accepting the impact of a traumatic experience and then taking concrete action to improve things.

SEEKING HELP

WHERE TO GET HELP:

Listed below are some ways to find help. When you call, tell whomever you speak to that you are trying to find a mental-health provider who specializes in helping people who have been through traumatic events and/or who have lost loved ones. Check this website regularly for updated information on how to get help. We will be listing more ways to get help as they become available.

FOR VETERANS

VA medical centers and Vet Centers provide veterans with mental-health services that health insurance will cover or that costs little or nothing, according to a veteran's ability to pay. VA



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medical centers and Vet Centers are listed in the phone book in the blue Government pages. Under "United States Government Offices," look in the section for "Veterans Affairs, Dept. of." In that section look for VA Medical Centers and Clinics listed under "Medical Care" and for "Vet Centers: Counseling and Guidance," and call the one nearest to where you live. On the Internet, go to www.va.gov/ and look for the VHA Facilities Locator link under "Health Benefits and Services," or go to www.va.gov/rcs.

FOR NON-VETERANS

Some local mental-health services are listed in the phone book in the blue Government pages. In the "County Government Offices" section for the county where you live, look for a "Health Services (Dept. of)" or "Department of Health Services" section. In that section, look for listings under "Mental Health." In the yellow pages, services and mental-health professionals are listed under "counseling," "psychologists," "social workers," "psychotherapists," "social and human services," or "mental health." Health insurance may pay for mental-health services and some are available at low cost according to your ability to pay.

FOR ANYONE

Call your doctor's office or ask friends if they can recommend any mental-health providers.

If you work for a large company or organization, call the Human Resources or Personnel office to find out if they provide mental-health services or make referrals.

If you are a member of a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), call to find out if mental-health services are available.

Call the National Center for Victims of Crime's toll-free information and referral service at 1-800-FYI-CALL. This is a comprehensive database of more than 6,700 community service agencies throughout the country that directly support victims of crime.

Contact your local mental-health agencies or family physician. The National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder has a fact sheet with information on how to talk to your primary care physician about trauma and PTSD.



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HEALING TOOL KIT

BASIC CRYSTALS



Amethyst

Has a dual effect of calming and of exhilaration. It can bring calmness to those that are overexcited or anxious. When that subsides, it can allow more of an exhilaration to take place, so that people can integrate with the environment; Allowing healing on deep levels to take place.

Black Tourmaline

This mineral has the capability to disperse negative energy fields and to clean rapidly an entire environment.

Calcite



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The only other family of healing stones that I use regularly is the calcite. I find them to be absorbing, softening and calming. Green calcite, for example, is very calming; honey calcite is more grounding and blue works with the mind. Calcite has opacity and a depth to it that belies its strength. Do not let the fact that it is gentle distract you from its power.

Citrine

This stone tends to stimulate clarity and decision making. The golden citrine is useful for clearing upper respiratory system and facilitates deep breathing. This stone bears a power of Aura cleansing.

Clear quartz

Many people without any adjustment can easily accept the pure vibration rate. It is at its most powerful when it has as little movement (cloudiness) within it as possible. It is also retains the property of Protection on extreme situations.

Rose quartz

It has all the qualities of the clear quartz, but with a slightly more diffuse energy because it grows in massive formations, rather than single points or clusters. It can be very calming, especially for people who are agitated or anxious. A large piece in a living or consulting room can assist relaxation.

Rutile

This specific stone can be an influential tool on dispersing outburst of Violence, hostility and aggression deriving from borderline situations and immediately after disasters.



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AROMATHERAPY



Blends to help promote a faster sensation of well being, especially if one is dealing with traumatic events.

The below blends can help alleviate feelings and bring immediate relieve. When selecting and using oils, be sure to follow all safety precautions and remember that aromatherapy should not be used as a substitute for proper medical treatment.

Blends to Help Relieve Anxiety

Blend #1: 2 drops Bergamot
 2 drops Clary Sage
 1 drop Frankincense

Blend #2: 3 drops Sandalwood
 2 drops Bergamot



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Blend #3: 3 drops Lavender
2 drops Clary Sage

Blend #4: 1 drop Rose
1 drop Lavender
2 drops Mandarin
1 drop Vetiver

Blends to Ease Feelings of Panic and Panic Attacks

Blend #1: 2 drops Helichrysum
3 drops Frankincense

Blend #2: 1 drop Rose
4 drops Lavender

Blend #3: 1 drop Neroli
4 drops Lavender

Blend #4: 1 drops Rose
4 drops Frankincense

Blends to Help Cope with Grief



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Blend #1: 2 drops Rose
3 drops Sandalwood

Blend #2: 2 drops Rose
3 drops Cypress

Blend #3: 1 drop Neroli
1 drop Rose
3 drops Sandalwood

Blend #4: 1 drop Rose
1 drop Helichrysum
1 drop Cypress
2 drops Frankincense

Blends to Aid Self-Confidence and Eliminate Insecurity

Blend #1: 3 drops Bergamot
1 drop Jasmine
1 drop Vetiver

Blend #2: 2 drops Cedarwood
1 drop Bergamot



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1 drop Frankincense

Blend #3: 4 drops Sandalwood

1 drop Jasmine

Blend #4: 2 drops Frankincense

3 drops Sandalwood



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WEBSITES AND REFERENCES

BeliefNet	http://www.Beliefnet.com
Explore Faith	http://www.Explorefaith.com
Gratefullness.org	http://www.Gratefulness.org
India Times Spirituality	http://www.Spirituality.indiatimes.com
International Critical Incident Stress Foundation	http://www.lcifs.org
Medline Plus	http://www.Medlineplus.gov
National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	http://www.ptsd.va.gov
National Organization for Victim Assistance	http://www.trynova.org
Spirituality & Health	http://www.Spiritualityhealth.com
Spiritual Support Groups	http://www.humanityhealing.ning.com
Suicide Prevention, Awareness & Support	http://www.suicide.org