

Self Care for Emergency Responders

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What is best way to mitigate a disaster?

- Prevent it by planning and preparation.
- Have people trained and equipment prepared to respond when it cannot be prevented.

Why do you train and practice?

- So you will know the best way to respond to a particular situation.
- This is necessary for your stress reactions also.

Symptoms of acute critical stress

Cognitive changes:

- Memory loss or mental confusion
- Concentration or attention problems
- Disorientation to person, place or time
- Changes in dreams
- Decreased problem solving ability
- Trouble making decisions

Symptoms of acute critical stress (cont.)

Behavior changes

- ▶ Changes in our usual behavior
- ▶ How we get along with others
- ▶ Withdrawal
- ▶ Excessive sick humor
- ▶ Suspiciousness, paranoia
- ▶ Eating habits
- ▶ Increased alcohol, nicotine or drug intake
- ▶ Anger outbursts
- ▶ Crying spells

Symptoms of acute critical stress (cont.)

Emotional changes

- Anxiety, panic or fear
- Depression
- Numbness
- Anger at or about the event
- Phobia the event will reoccur
- Feeling overwhelmed

Symptoms of acute critical stress (cont.)

Physiological changes (Some of these may demand immediate medical attention)

- ▶ Chest pain
- ▶ Cardiac arrhythmia
- ▶ Sleep disturbance
- ▶ Muscle aches
- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Dry (cotton) mouth
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Profuse sweating

Stress Inoculation

- Conceptualization
- Skill acquisition and rehearsal
- Application

Wellness Test

- Mind/Body = Bodymind
- Nourish the body, nourish the mind
- Good foods/Mood foods
- Bad foods
- Aerobic exercise – 30 minutes at least 4X/wk
- Good practices: Relaxation, meditation, yoga, kindness, gratitude

Mindfulness

Self-care begins with awareness of what is going on in our own body and mind.

- Jon Kabat-Zinn: Mindfulness is paying attention, on Purpose, in the present moment without judgement.
- Benefits:
 - ❖ Gives greater control over habits, behavior and automatic responses [example]
 - ❖ Improves resilience
 - ❖ Decreases anxiety, chronic pain, depression, and hypertension.
 - ❖ Restorative for the mind.
 - ❖ Being versus doing

3 Secrets to Successful stress management

*Your thoughts determine
Your feelings.*

- Wayne Dyer

We always move in the
direction of our
dominant thoughts

- Dennis Waitley

All of your pain and
suffering comes from
your resistance to
what is

- Dick Sutphen

What is the secret ingredient for dealing
with stress?

O₂

4 – 5 – 6 Breathing

- Breathe in through your nose while you count to 4
- Hold the oxygen in your lungs while you count to 5
- Breathe out through your mouth while you count to 6

Law of Attraction

That which is like unto itself is drawn

- *Whether you think about what you want or what you don't want, that is what you will attract more of into your life.*