

10 Tips for Coping with Anxiety and Trauma

Not everyone responds in the same way to news, day after day, from natural disasters, war, kidnappings, shootings, and other traumatic events. Experts suggest the following steps to help cope with anxiety and trauma:

- 1. Make connections**
Keep in touch with family, friends and others. Connecting with people provides social support and strengthens resilience. Some find comfort in connecting with a higher power, whether through organized religion or privately.
- 2. Help yourself by helping others**
Assisting others in a time of need can be empowering, such as volunteering at a community organization or donating money to a relief organization.
- 3. Maintain a daily routine**
Keeping up with your daily routine of work, errands, household chores and hobbies provides you with a feeling of stability when the world around you seems chaotic. Sticking with a routine can be comforting to your children, as well.
- 4. Take care of yourself**
Make time to eat properly, exercise, and rest. Schedule time to do things you enjoy such as hobbies and social activities. Caring for yourself and even having fun will help you stay balanced and enable you to better deal with stressful times.
- 5. Give yourself a "news" break**
Be sure to control the amount of time you and your family spend watching and reading war-related news coverage. Although it's natural to seek out the news to keep informed, too much news can make you more anxious. Perhaps limit your news intake to no more than one hour a day, and try not to watch the news right before you go to bed, when you need to "wind down." It's okay to turn off the TV or radio and allow yourself to focus on non-war related things.
- 6. Have a plan**
Having an emergency plan in place will make you feel in control and prepared for the unexpected. Establish a clear plan for how you, your family and friends will respond and connect in the event of a crisis. Have a family or neighborhood meeting to talk about who to call in emergencies, or designate a place to meet if you can't reach someone by phone. Make a plan for your pets and a list of items you will need to take in an emergency.
- 7. Prepare an emergency kit**
When pulling together an emergency kit, remember to include those things that give you comfort and security, such as a favorite book, a journal or pictures of loved ones. Also include a list of your loved ones phone numbers so that you can re-establish connections with them as soon as possible.
- 8. Nurture a positive view of yourself**
Recall the ways you have successfully handled hardships in the past, such as the loss of a loved one, a divorce or major illness. Draw on these skills to meet current challenges. Trust yourself to solve problems and make appropriate decisions.
- 9. Keep things in perspective**
Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Remember that circumstances can ultimately improve. Previous generations have faced natural disasters and war and gone on to prosper - use their examples to inspire you.
- 10. Maintain a hopeful outlook**
An optimistic and positive outlook enables you to see the good things in your life and can keep you going even in the hardest times. There are positive things in everyone's life, such as good health, a place to call home and friendships. Taking the time to identify and appreciate them will enhance your outlook and help you keep going.

Try these. Above all try turning off the TV or go rent a movie. Restrict the amount of time you devote to news about the war. A once-a-day update will keep you informed.

Beware of drifting into depression. Once you are depressed, your ability to fight the stress is diminished. If you think you may need help, don't wait. Call your Employee Assistance Program provider or family doctor.