Understanding and Coping with Traumatic Stress

Things to Remember When Trying to Understand Traumatic Events

- Profound sadness, grief, fear, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event
- Acknowledging our feelings helps us recover
- Focusing on our strengths and abilities helps us heal
- Accepting help from community programs and resources is healthy
- We each have different needs and different ways of coping

Signs That Adults Need Stress Management Assistance

- Difficulty communicating thoughts
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty maintaining balance
- Easily frustrated
- Increased use of drugs/alcohol
- Limited attention span
- Poor work performance
- Headaches/stomach problems
- Tunnel vision/muffled hearing
- Colds or flu-like symptoms
- Disorientation or confusion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Reluctance to leave home
- Depression, sadness
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Mood-swings
- Crying easily
- Overwhelming guilt and self-doubt
- Fear of crowds, strangers, or being alone

Self-Care Strategies for Easing Stress

- Talk with someone about your feelings, even though it may be difficult
- Take steps to promote your own physical and emotional healing by staying active in your daily life patterns or by adjusting them (i.e., healthy eating, rest, exercise, relaxation, meditation)
- Maintain a normal household and daily routine, limiting demanding responsibilities of yourself and your family
- Minimize your exposure to all types of media, including the Internet. While getting the news informs you, being overexposed to it can augment your distress
- Participate in memorials and rituals as ways to express feelings
- Use existing supports of family, friends, and/or places of worship
- Get help through your LifeScope Employee Assistance Program