

DISASTER SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL CARE TIP SHEETS

<p>Topic:</p>	<p>Strategies for Self-Care</p>
<p>Aim:</p>	<p>This sheet explains the importance of intentionally taking care of oneself (meaning actively and with specific strategies) in stressful situations. Equipping staff with the skills of self-care, and clergy and chaplains modeling self-care, will reduce the risk of unhealthy effects from stress.</p>
<p>General Information:</p>	<p>An important factor in the health of any organization is the vitality of its members. By acting intentionally in promoting good habits of self-care, the church can protect its members from the harmful effects of stress. Here are tips that will help you get started.</p>
<p>Plan Well:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a goal and break it down into easily managed pieces. This helps staff to see they are making progress, and reduces the stress of possibly overwhelming aims. • Take small steps, working through each piece, until you reach your goal. • Reward yourself as you complete each step and when you reach the goal. (A reward can be a break, some social time, or just working on a less demanding task). • Tell others in your life what your goals are and enlist their support. • After you reach your goal, work to maintain your improvements.
<p>Maintain Faith:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get in touch with and do things you find uplifting, noble, or creative. • Read spiritual, inspirational, or religious materials, such as Scripture. • Get involved in a religious community and discuss spiritual topics with others. • Attend religious ceremonies and engage in religious rituals like prayer, meditation, listening to religious music, and observing religious symbols. • If you have had bad experiences with religion or spirituality in the past, talk to someone you trust, such as a close friend, chaplain, or counselor.
<p>Balance Life Activities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in meaningful leisure activities, including activities you have enjoyed in the past and new activities that get you out of a weekly pattern. • Schedule regular vacations and be intentional in finding times to relax. • Exercise regularly; 20-30 minutes three or four times a week. • Sleep is important. Try to go to bed and wake up the same time each day. • Eat three balanced meals each day. Breakfast is especially important.
<p>Keep an Optimistic Perspective:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance the aspects of situations-- avoid focusing only on the negative. • Recognize that there are multiple contributing factors to your difficulties. • Focus on the big picture and avoid all-or-nothing thinking. • Think realistically and gather the facts--avoid "jumping to conclusions."

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid rigid expectations, watch for the words "should," "must," or "have to" in your speech and thoughts.
<p>Action Steps for Clergy & Chaplains:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clergy and chaplains are role models for their staff and volunteers. Set a good example by clearly demonstrating the skills of self-care. • Teach the skills to your staff and team. It is easy to assume everyone knows how to do this, but it is often not true. • Start with recognizing the need for self care. • Describe the impacts of stress and encourage awareness of those signs. • Set an example by being open about stress.
<p>Other Resources:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harding, S. (2007). <i>Spiritual care and mental health for disaster response and recovery</i>. New York: New York Disaster Interfaith Services. • National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2006). <i>Psychological first-aid: Field operations guide for community religious professionals</i>. Los Angeles, CA: Author. • National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. (2009). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Points of Consensus</i>. Arlington, VA: Author. • National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. <i>Light our way: A guide for spiritual care in times of disasters</i>. Arlington, VA: Author. • Roberts, S., & Ashley, W. (2008). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Practical clergy responses to community, regional, and national tragedy</i>. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing.

CITATION: Stegman, S., Boan, D., & Aten, J. (2012). *Tip sheet: Strategies for self-care*. Wheaton, IL: Humanitarian Disaster Institute, Wheaton College.

