COPING WITH STRESS

PUTTING PROBLEMS INTO PERSPECITVE

Everyone—adults, teens, and even children—experiences stress at times. Stress can be beneficial. It can help people develop the skills they need to deal with possible threatening situations throughout life. Stress is not helpful when it prevents a person from taking care of themselves or their family. You can put problems into perspective by finding healthy ways to cope. Getting the right care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

After a traumatic event , people may have strong and lingering reactions. These events may include personal or environmental disasters, or threats with an assault. These strong emotions, may be normal and temporary.

COMMON REACTIONS TO A STRESSFUL EVENT CAN INCLUDE:

- Disbelief, shock, and numbness
- Feeling sad, frustrated, and helpless
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Feeling guilty
- Anger, tension, and irritability
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Crying
- Reduced interest in usual activities
- Wanting to be alone
- Loss of appetite
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Nightmares or bad memories
- Reoccurring thoughts of the event
- Headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
- Increased heart rate, difficulty breathing
- Smoking or use of alcohol or drugs

HELPING YOUTH COPE WITH STRESS

Children and adolescents often struggle with how to cope well with stress. Youth can be particularly overwhelmed when their stress is connected to a traumatic event—like a natural disaster (earthquakes, tornados, wildfires), family loss, school shootings, or community violence. Parents and educators can take steps to provide stability and support that help young people feel better.

HEALTHY WAYS TO COPE WITH STRESS:

Feeling emotional and nervous or having trouble sleeping and eating can all be normal reactions to stress. Here are some healthy ways you can deal with stress:

- **Take care of yourself.**
  - Eat healthy, well-balanced meals
  - Exercise on a regular basis
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out
- **Talk to others.** Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a parent, friend, counselor, doctor, or pastor.
- **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** These may seem to help with the stress. But in the long run, they create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.
- **Take a break.** If news events are causing your stress, take a break from listening or watching the news.

Recognize when you need more help. If problems continue or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.

Source: www.cdc.gov