



**Georgia
Primary Care
Association**

**Emergency Preparedness
Workshop
Disaster Mental Health
Support**

**Dr. Amy Stevens Ed.D.
David Newton, LPC**





Learning Objectives

- Identify common emotional reactions to disasters
- Learn supportive ways to support individuals during a disaster
- Learn additional disaster mental health response resources

When Terrible Things Happen – What Individuals May Experience

Immediate Reactions

There are a wide variety of positive and negative reactions that individual can experience during and immediately after a disaster.

These include:

| DOMAIN | NEGATIVE RESPONSES |
|---------------|---|
| Cognitive | confusion, disorientation, worry, intrusive thoughts and images, self-blame |
| Emotional | shock, sorrow, grief, sadness, fear, anger, numb, irritability, guilt and shame |
| Social | extreme withdrawal, interpersonal conflict |
| Physiological | fatigue, headache, muscle tension, stomachache, increased heart rate, exaggerated startle response, difficulties sleeping |



When Terrible Things Happen – What Helps Individuals

- Getting adequate rest and eating healthy meals
- Trying to maintain a normal schedule
- Focusing on something practical and manageable that can be done now to support disaster recovery
- Keeping a journal
- Exercising in moderation
- Engaging in positive distractive activities (sports, hobbies, reading)
- Seeking support from others

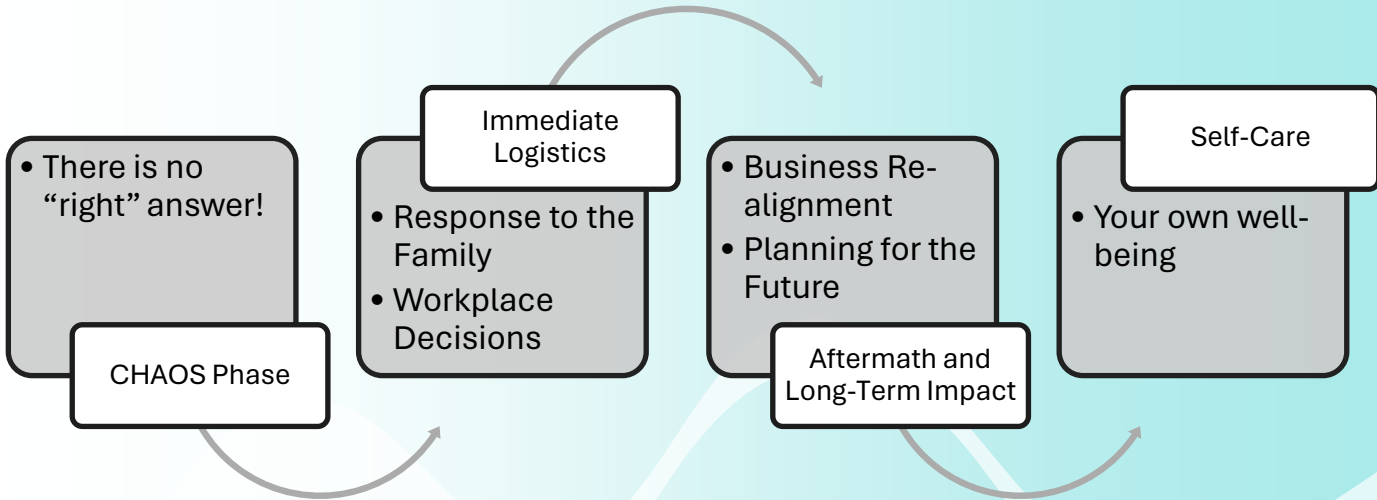


When Terrible Things Happen – What Helps for Organizations / Managers

- Provide a physical or virtual space where staff can meet, and if possible, keep the space available throughout the day for co-workers to gather and talk.
- It is important for staff to be able to share memories, discuss the situation and spend time talking. Doing so is not wasted time and helps affected staff cope with the shock and grief of the situation.
- Allow people to express their feelings.
- Model and Normalize It is important that supervisors and managers model and normalize responses to grief.
- Take the time to allow for acknowledgment of loss and associated difficult feelings.
- Some employees will be impacted more significantly than others and may want to take a break from work, end their workday, contact the EAP or just need some additional private time. It is important to honor these needs as much as possible.



When Terrible Things Happen – Leadership Guide



When Terrible Things Happen – Individuals Impacted

Resources

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/dbhis>
- https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/types/disaster_risk_resilience.asp
- <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/262884/resilience-questionnaire-fillable.pdf>
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-disasters-and-other-traumatic-events>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>

Spanish Language

- <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/tips-survivors-disaster-or-other-traumatic-event-managing-stress/sma13-4776>



Resources – Staff Training

Psychological First Aid:

<https://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=11>

FEMA- Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP)

<https://www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/crisis-counseling-assistance-training-program>

Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) Staff Field Guide booklet.

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/skills-for-psychological-recovery>

Mental Health First Aid - <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>

Suicide Prevention - <https://qprinstitute.com>

Stress Management and Resiliency Training (SMART) Program

<https://cmecatalog.hms.harvard.edu/stress-management-and-resiliency-training-smart-program>

Compassion Fatigue and Self Care

<https://traumahealth.org/programs/compassion-fatigue-workshops/>



THANKS!

