



## In the Aftermath of the Hurricanes

The recent major hurricanes have caused massive devastation and destruction and may be the worst natural disasters experienced in the United States. Katrina's devastation of New Orleans and the severe flooding caused by Hurricane Rita have put many lives at risk, closed businesses, and caused thousands to evacuate. Safety, shelter and meeting basic needs are priorities. Rebuilding will take time, effort and patience. In addition to a sense of disbelief, shock and sadness, many of us feel a sense of powerlessness. These hurricanes were major ones. The flooding issues, particularly in New Orleans and Lake Charles in Louisiana, and Beaumont and Port Arthur, Texas, have created a swath of devastation so enormous it is difficult to comprehend.

### ***Reactions to Traumatic Events***

Individually, we react to trauma and tragedy in different ways. Some react with increased emotions. Some of us need to talk about the events and find comfort in being with people. Others may try to put the events aside as soon as possible, resume life and business as usual, and avoid people or places that bring reminders of the tragedy. While traumatic events affect people differently, there are some common reactions that may be experienced. Emotional reactions can include:

- sadness and grief, an increased sense of vulnerability,
- helplessness and powerlessness,
- anxiety, irritability, anger and guilt.

Physical reactions often include:

- fatigue, insomnia, hyperactivity and headaches.
- concentration difficulties and a tendency to overwork may impact daily functioning and productivity at work.

Any traumatic event can cause a resurfacing of emotions experienced from a prior trauma. Reactions may begin immediately, or arise a few days or even weeks after the present event. The important thing to remember is that most reactions are normal. Though you may feel some distress, in all likelihood you are experiencing a normal reaction to an extraordinary and abnormal event. Typically, reactions will grow less intense and disappear within a few weeks. What is important to note is the duration and intensity. ***If your reactions interfere with your ability to carry on your life normally, or the intensity doesn't diminish over time, seek professional help. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 337-436-9533 or 1-888-414-FYCA.***

*The following tips can help you keep life in order following a traumatic event:*

- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible, but don't overdo it. Minimize taking on new projects.
- Acknowledge and accept that you may be operating below your normal level for awhile.
- Structure your time more carefully than usual. It's natural to forget things when you're under stress. Keep lists, and double-check any important work.
- Try to limit the amount of exposure to the media.
- Maintain control where you can.
- Spend time with others. Family, friends, community and support can help you in difficult times.
- Contribute to or volunteer for an organization that is providing relief aid.

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