



HELPING ONE ANOTHER AFTER A MAJOR STRESSOR

Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services
877-370-9988
www.accounseling.org
info@accounseling.org

This Presentation is for You!

- The material in this presentation is applicable to people who experienced the effects of the tornado directly, indirectly, and for those who are seeking to be supportive to those affected.
 - Some of the information will apply to you personally.
 - Some of the information will be useful in helping you understand and respond to others.
- **1 Corinthians 12:26-27**, *“And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”*

Why This Topic?

- **Romans 12:15**, *“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:14**, *“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded [fainthearted], support the weak, be patient toward all men.”*
- **Luke 6:31**, *“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”*
- Satan wants us to be harmed through trials, while God wants us to grow closer to Him and to bring Him glory through them.
- We must encourage each other to look to Jesus for grace, strength, and guidance as we are going through trials.

To God be the Glory

**Matthew
5:14-16**

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Christ's Mission

**Luke
4:18-19**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Dealing With Crisis: Four Phases

The information on the next four slides was quoted from:

Faberow, N.L. & Gordon, N.S. (1981). Manual for child health workers in major disasters (DHHS Pub. # ADM81-1070). Rockville, MD: CMHS.

Everly, G.S. (2000). Five principles of crisis intervention: Reducing the risk of premature crisis intervention. *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health*, 2(1), p. 1-4.

1. Heroic Phase

- This phase begins immediately upon the onset of the disaster and may even begin in anticipation of the impact of the event itself.
- It consists of efforts to protect lives and property.
- Depending on the scope of the crisis/disaster, this may involve local, state, national, or international efforts.

2. Honeymoon Phase

- There is a “sigh of relief” as the realization of survival is appreciated.
- Thankfulness for help and assistance received.
- This phase is characterized by optimism and thanksgiving.
- Congratulatory behavior is common.
 - “We are going to make it through this!”
 - “We will rebuild our community!”

3. Disillusionment Phase

- This phase may begin as early as a few weeks post- disaster.
- The size of the recovery effort “sinks in” and getting to the new normal seems far off.
- This phase often has an “accordion-like-feel” to it.
 - That is, there are periods of overwhelming work and decisions with periods of waiting, delay, and frustration.
- There can be a great deal of “second-guessing,” anger, frustration, and even efforts to place blame.
 - “If only...”
 - “They should have...”
 - “They shouldn’t have...”

3. Disillusionment Phase

- “Why?” questions are common as part of the desire to try to make sense of what has occurred.
 - Religious questions often occur. Over time our goal is to help people move from “Why?” to “What?”
- As shock from previous phases wears off, the mourning process follows.
- This phase may last weeks, months, or even years.
 - Some individuals get stuck in this phase and stay here, long term.
- Our desire is to help people transition from this phase to the final phase.

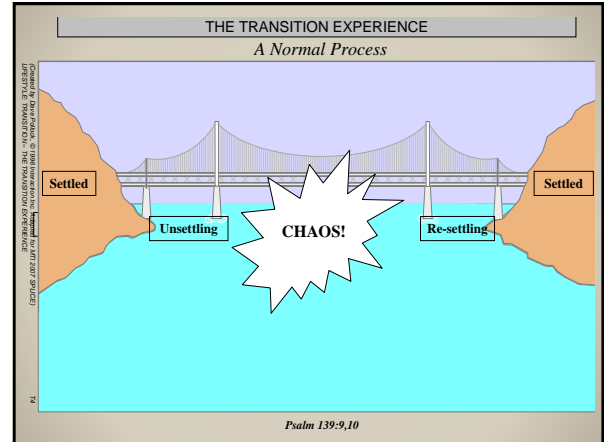
4. Reconstruction Phase

- In this final phase, restoration of typical routine functioning is achieved.
- The “new normal” arrives.
- Memories of the disaster are not erased, but life does continue on.
- The growth of individuals and communities is continued.

Transitions And Loss

**Matthew
11:28-30**

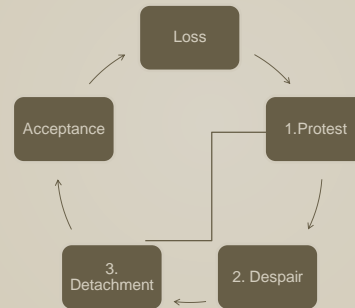
“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”



Types of Losses

- Transitions always involve loss(es).
 - Some are welcome while others catch us by surprise.
- Physical - Symbolic
- Acknowledged - Unacknowledged

Grief and Loss



3 Phases of Grief after Loss or Perceived Loss

- 1. Protest**
 - Shock, confusion, denial, anger at others, anger at self, anger at God, lowered self-esteem.
 - Crying, pain, weakness, nausea, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance, etc.
- 2. Despair**
 - Agony, grief, anguish, depression.
 - Bargaining and "urge to recover" that which was lost, slowed thinking and actions, continuing physical symptoms.
- 3. Detachment**
 - Apathy, indifference, loss of interest, desire to withdraw and "give up".
 - Decreased socialization, no new friendships, bland expression, absent spontaneity.

**Hebrews
4:15-16**

15. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Negative Effects Of Major Stress On Individuals

Things That Affect How People Cope

- History of previous losses and traumas
- Emotional coping skills
- Information
 - Accurate?
 - Unknowns?
- Social support
- Spiritual foundation
- Personality
- Ability to adapt to change
- Experience with dealing with difficult circumstances.

Physical Effects

- Difficulty sleeping or wanting to oversleep.
- Loss of appetite or over-eating.
- Feeling “keyed up” or “on edge” OR feeling sluggish and slowed down.
- Transient physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, muscle aches, gastrointestinal issues, lowered immune system functioning).

Emotional Effects

- Feeling like you are riding an emotional roller-coaster.
- Emotional intensity or numbness.
- Feelings of helplessness and/or hopelessness.
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Irritability
- Anxiety and/or depression

Emotional Effects Cont'd

- Rumination
 - Replaying things over and over in your mind focusing on the negatives and difficulty seeing blessings.
- Poor concentration
- Worry and your mind is filled with “What ifs?”

Spiritual Effects

- Clinging to faith (positive)
 - “God, I need You now more than ever.”
- Connecting with others (positive)
 - “Bear ye one another's burdens...”
- Spiritual questions (neutral)
 - “Why, God?”
- Disillusionment (negative)
 - “I give up... I quit.”

Short, Medium, and Long Term

- How quickly do people “get over it?”
- The most intense effects of stress and crisis tend to peak during and shortly after the event occurs.
- Individuals respond to stress, trauma, and loss very differently from each other.
- Some rebound very quickly while others may deal with issues on an ongoing basis.

When is More Help Needed?

- Sleep difficulty (insomnia or hypersomnia) becomes a pattern.
- Intrusive thoughts/memories that “trigger” a strong emotional response.
- Using unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with anxiety, stress, etc.
- Difficulty coping with the day-to-day tasks and challenges; feeling like you can’t cope or go on.
- Depression
- Anxiety and/or panic attacks

Negative Effects Of Major Stress On Relationships

Relational Effects

- Clinginess
- Detachment
- Irritability or “short-fuse” with others
- Isolating from others
- Distrust
- Suspiciousness

Symptoms of Marital and Family Stress

- Little time to spend together
- Sense of frustration -- too much to do
- Desire for the simpler life
- Never time to relax
- Infrequent opportunities for conversation
- Explosive arguments
- Bickering
- Conversations centered on time and tasks rather than people and feelings.
- Meals eaten in haste
- Constant rushing from place to place, task to task
- Escaping into work or other activities
- Isolation
- Insufficient one-on-one contact
- Sense of guilt
- Dwelling on “what could have been” or thinking about “if only”

“Cut Each Other Some Slack”

- Under significant stress people can become irritable, rigid, and even irrational.
- Avoid taking things too personally.
- Take comments that people say and let them “roll off” as much as possible.
- Suggested prayer, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they just said.”

Dealing with Conflict

- Work through conflicts and grievances as quickly as possible.
- **Colossians 3:12-14**
“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

Providing Support To One Another

Galatians 6:2

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Time “on” and Time “off”

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:”
Ecclesiastes 3:1

Time “on” and Time “off”

- It is important to allow yourself (and others) time to deal with serious issues AND to also have time **to not** deal with them.
 - Some people will tend to either do one or the other.
- Understand people’s roles, responsibilities, personal circumstances, and how they are coping all affect how much they want to focus on dealing with issues (or not).
- Sometimes what people need the most is time to focus on things **other than** the disaster.

Time “on” and Time “off” Cont’d

- Realize people differ widely in how much they want to talk about their issues.
 - Some people are very private while others are quite open.
 - You need to adjust yourself to their style.
- Also, realize sometimes people want to talk about their issues **and** other times they want to be able to focus on other things not related to their issues.
 - The best plan is to talk to the person privately and see if they want to talk. If not, that’s fine. At least they know you care.

God's Work Is Accomplished In All Sizes

What God Expects of Us During Recovery

- Focus on what you can do instead of what you can't. Trust God to take care of what you can't do.
- No matter the size, anything done in Jesus' name is of value.
 - *Mark 9:4, "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."*
- Focus on being the part of the Body of Believers that God designed you to be.
 - Pray for (and thank God for) the other parts of the Body.

The Circle of Concern

Represents 100% of the things that concern you in life

Adapted from Covey

The Circle of Influence

10% of the Circle of Concern. It represents the portion of your concerns that you can actually do something about right now.

Adapted from Covey

Circle of Concern vs. Circle of Influence

- Many people spend 90% of their time in the 90% they cannot control.
- This leads to stress, anxiety, feeling out of control, difficulty letting go.
- The goal is to spend 90% of your time in the 10%.

Adapted from Covey

Spiritual Foundations To Cling To In Times Of Trial

Spiritual Questions and Crisis

- Common Questions:
 1. "Why?"
 2. "Where is God?"
 3. "Is God trying to teach me a lesson?"
 4. "Is this a punishment?"
 5. "Can I trust God?"
 6. Why did this happen to me?
 7. Why did I escape what happened to them?

Avoid clichés or simplistic answers

- **Proverbs 25:20** says, "As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart."
- No simple answers.
- Don't over interpret.
- You aren't God's attorney.
 - Be careful not to assert you know the mind of God (except through what He has revealed in the Scripture).

Remember: God is Good. Period.

- **Nahum 1:7**, "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him."
- God is good... all the time... even when circumstances are not!
- God understands that we don't understand.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

*"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: **Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.** The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places."*

Times of Crisis help us to Reflect

- Luke 13:1-5**, "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
- Reflection does not mean each person will, or should, come to the same conclusion.

Remember the effects of the Fall

- When sin entered the world, the entire creation was affected.
- **Romans 8:22-23**

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

God's Grace

- God gives us grace as we need it, in the amount that we need.
- We don't get to store up grace... it's like manna!
- **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

God Redeems Our Hurts

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

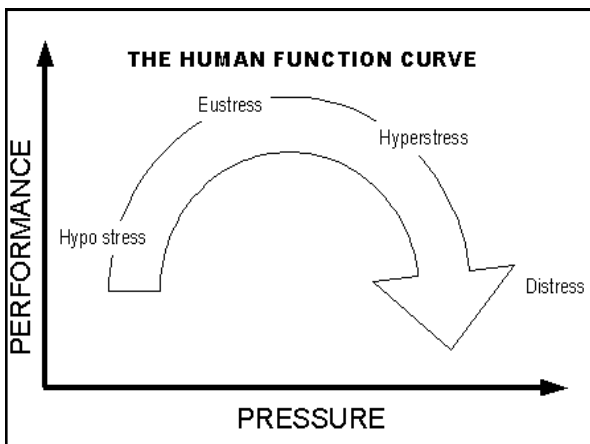
Appendix

Types Of Stress

Why You Need to Know What Kind You Have...

And

why you need to watch out for each other.



Hypostress

- Occurs when we are not challenged enough, have set our expectations too low, or are being lazy.
- Leaves us bored, unfulfilled, without a sense of mission and purpose; mindless activities.

Eustress

- Refers to the optimal amount of stress which helps promote health and growth.
- Provides us with a challenge and a mission, but doesn't overwhelm us.
- Uses our skills and focus and can be hard work; however, we also feel energized by our involvement in the tasks and accomplishing something.

Hyperstress

- Occurs from time to time in the course of normal life.
- Significant stress and strain.
- Can only be sustained for a short time before negative effects occur physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually.
- If not remedied, will eventually progress to burnout and distress with time.

Distress

- Increasing deterioration of functioning in all areas.
- Harm to one's body, emotions, relationships, and spirituality is occurring and becomes more serious the longer it goes.
- Burnout, compassion fatigue, etc.

Dealing With High Emotion

10. Panic Anxiety
9. High distress *Red Zone = High Tension*
8. Moderate distress
7. Distress

-
6. High tension
 5. Unpleasant tension *Yellow Zone = Caution*
 4. Tense

-
3. Relatively calm
 2. Relaxed *Green Zone = Calm*
 1. Calm
 0. Wonderfully calm

Red, Yellow or Green: It Matters

- The higher our tension level, the more opportunities Satan has to get an advantage with us. Think about it:
 - In what zone are you more likely to say something you regret later?
 - In what zone are you more likely to do something impulsive and not care about the consequences.
 - In what zone are your emotions more likely to "run the show" rather than you being in submission to the Holy Spirit?

Red, Yellow or Green: It Matters con't

- Pray for each other. Remember Satan doesn't give a struggling person ANY breaks. He is going to try to kick you when you are down.
- Momentary ups and downs are normal and expected.
- Emotions tend to come in "waves." Sometimes a wave of emotion will knock you over. Other times you will feel like you are handling things well. That is normal.
- If you are finding it difficult to get adequate sleep, talk to your health care provider.

Red, Yellow or Green: It Matters, con't

- If there are other family, educational, financial issues, etc. that need to be addressed, help the person find someone who can assist.
- You are a vessel. Avoid the trap of feeling like you should fix the problem on your own. A team effort is needed.
- Accept that everyone struggles at one time or another....even good Christians!
- Avoid the mindset that struggle is automatically a sign of a spiritual weakness.
- Avoid the extremes of: (A) Denial or (B) Everything everywhere is bad and falling apart.

Accept People Respond & Cope Differently To Stress

Problem Processing Styles

- Individuals tend to work through their problems in one of two main ways:
 1. **Thinkers:** Cope primarily by thinking things through.
 2. **Feelers:** Cope primarily by working through emotions.
- Neither style is wrong.
- Both have strengths and weaknesses.

Source: Millon, Grossman, Meagher, Millon, & Everly, 1999

Thinkers and Stress

- They tend to work through stress and crisis by:
 1. Keeping emotional distance.
 2. Focusing on information and facts.
 3. Seeking assistance in problem-solving for dealing with a specific challenge.
 4. Seeking assistance with re-establishing healthy control and a plan.

Feelers and Stress

- They tend to work through stress and crisis by:
 1. Sharing their feelings and experiences.
 2. Venting and pouring out their emotions.
 3. Needing others to empathetically listen.
 4. Wanting to be understood.