

Support Services for Front Line and Community Workers

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It is not the event that determines whether something is traumatic, but the individual's experience of the event.

Given many factors such as the scale of the disaster, individual coping strategies, and community characteristics; it is well documented that ***early intervention*** is one of the keys to quicker recovery for first responders.

911: early interventions = 5% PTSD

Katrina: delayed interventions = 30% PTSD

(estimates from Town of High River)

Responding to a Disaster

“R.E.A.C.T” (A&MH; AHS)

Remove yourself and loved ones from danger

Eat nutritious food and drink water

Activity: find balance between activity and rest

Connect: find ways to help others when you can
and accept help from others when you
need it

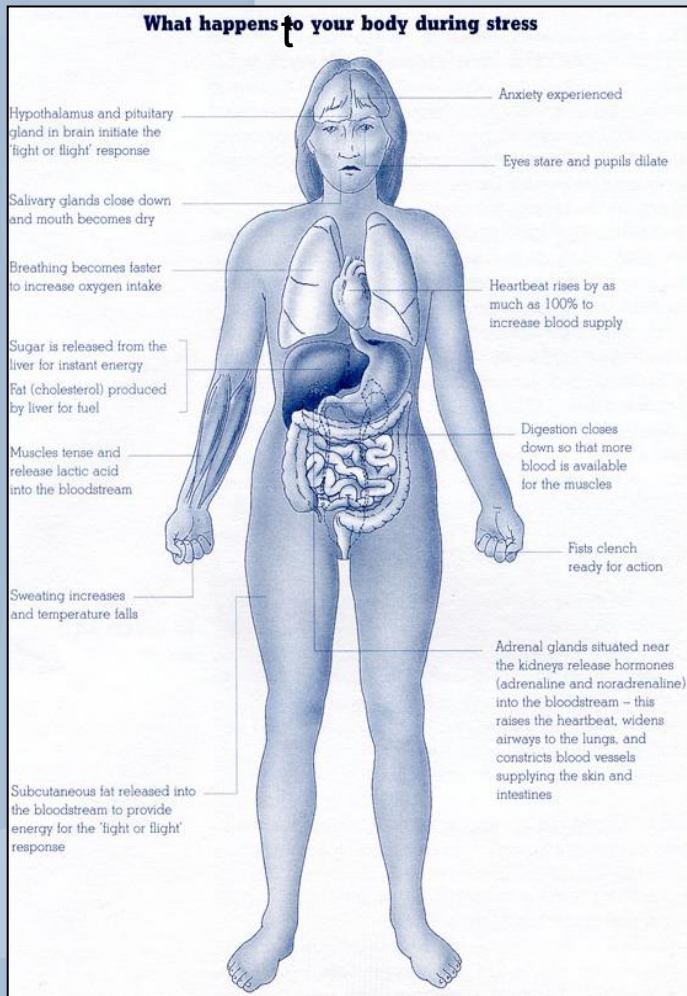
Talk: let friends and family know where you are
and how you are doing

Impact of Stress on Crisis Communications

- Delayed reaction time
- Loss of time perception
- Diminished self-monitoring
- Changes in perception impacts situational awareness and risk assessment
- Decreased concentration and logical reasoning
- Memory loss
- Reversion to first language in second language speakers

Acute Stress Response

Acute Stress: The body's initial response to a situation that seems demanding or dangerous.



“Fight or Flight”

- Release of stress hormones

➤ Adrenalin

➤ Cortisol

➤ Oxytocin and Vasopressin

- Increased heart rate

- Rapid breathing

- Increased blood pressure

- Tense muscles

Recovery After a Disaster

“C.A.L.M” method for self-care (A&MH; AHS)

Connect with others to help build hope

Accept what has changed

Look for the positive

Manage stress

Psychological First Aid (WHO)

- Provide practical care & support (non-intrusive)
- Assess needs and concerns
- Help people to address basic needs (food, water, information, etc)
- Listen to people, but no pressure to talk
- Comfort people and help them feel calm
- Help people connect to information, services, support
- Protect people from further harm

Stress Management

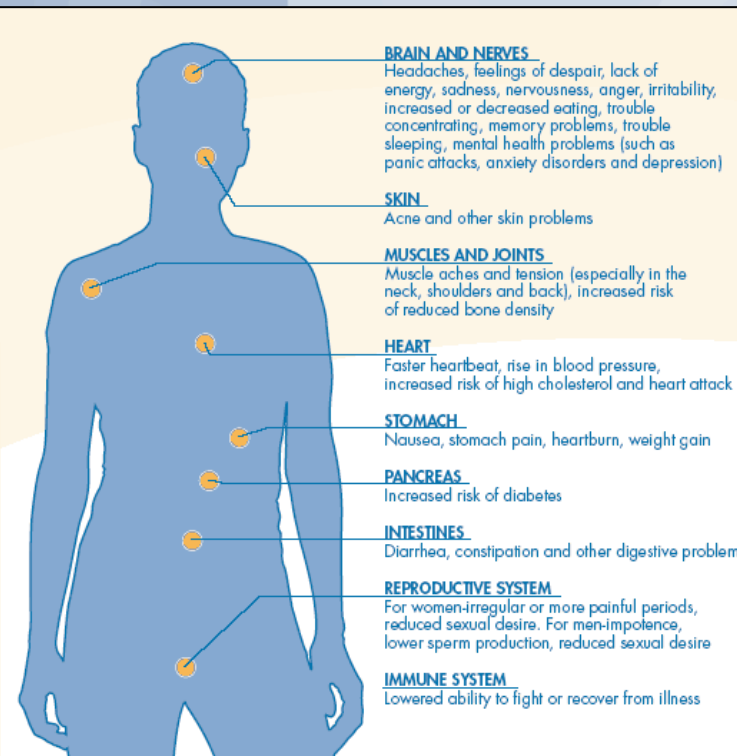
- Breathe
- Get moving
- Eat and drink healthy
- Sleep
- Laugh
- Calm your mind
- Focus on the positive
- Get in touch with your emotions
- Play and have fun
- Give back

Normal Reactions to an Abnormal Event

- Physical (sleep)
- Emotional (anxiety)
- Behavioural (isolation)
- Cognitive (memory)
- Spiritual (hope)

Chronic Stress Response

Chronic Stress: Stressful situations or events that are sustained over a long period of time. This constant stress can have negative physical and emotional consequences.



- Decreased immune function
- Muscle tension and fatigue
- Migraines and ulcers
- Poor cardiovascular health
- Digestive problems
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Decreased concentration and memory

Strategies to Build Resilience

- Re-establish positive connections
- Take action
- Seek stability in the daily routine
- Nurture a positive view and hopeful outlook
- Maintain perspective
- Participate in mutual-help programs

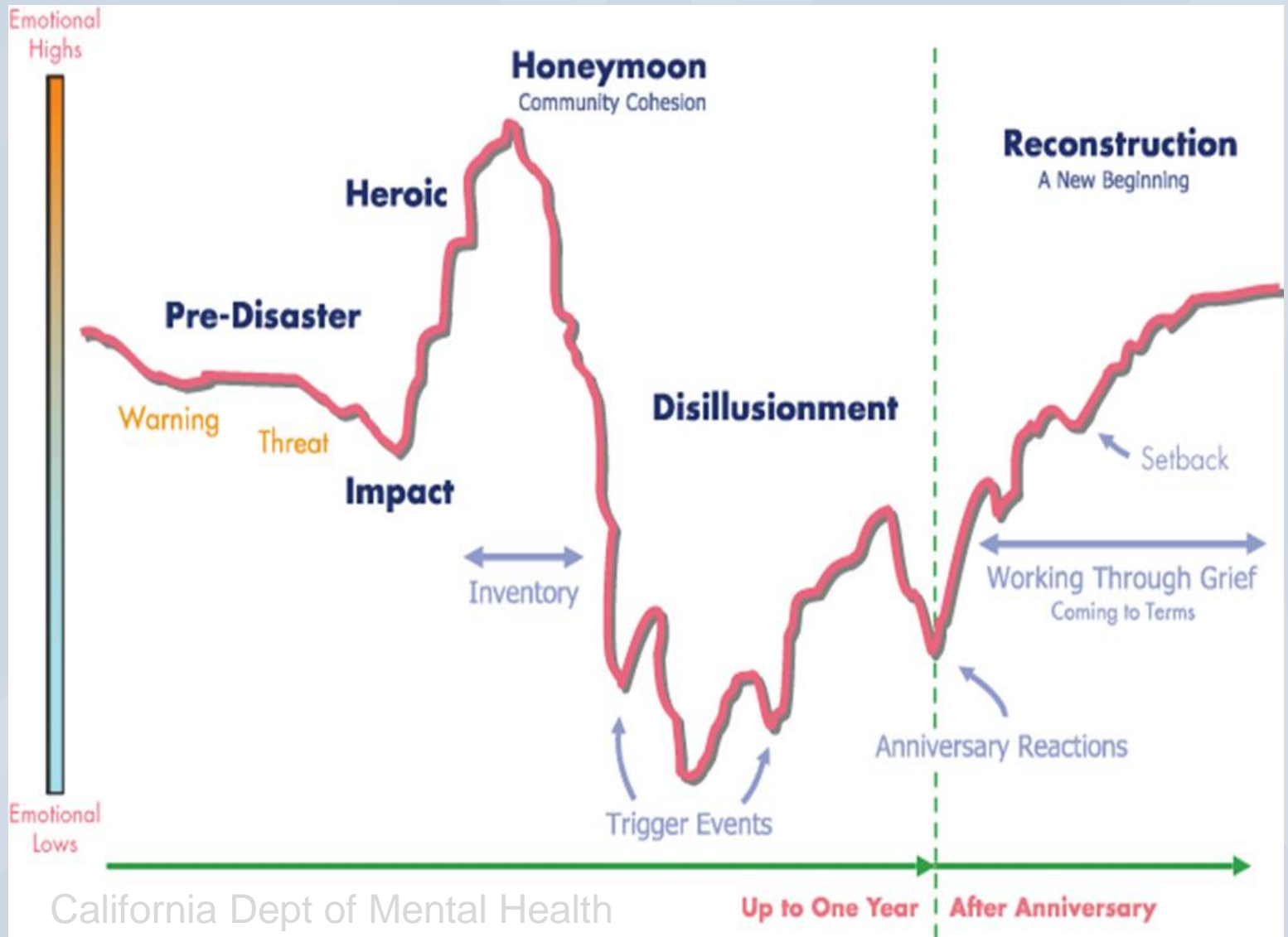
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(Trauma-Informed Care; AHS)

Resources

- Psychological First Aid
- “Heartmath”
- Grief and Loss
- Skills for Psychological Recovery
- Critical Incident Stress Management
- EFAP Programs
- Leadership and Workplace Support

Disaster Recovery



10 Characteristics of Resiliency

1. Optimism
2. Altruism – Billy Joel was wrong
3. Having a moral compass
4. Humour
5. Faith and spirituality

10 Characteristics of Resiliency

6. Having a role model

7. Social Support – John Lennon was right

8. Facing Fear

9. Having a mission: Be the best you can be!

10. Experience

Charney and Southwick

Create Your Personal Action Plan for Resiliency

- What are your strengths?
- What are your stressors?
- What are your coping strategies?
- What are your positive connections?
- What would I do if...?
- *Who would you share your plan with?*

Thank you

Questions?