

Path to Coping

Each of us has different ways of coping with difficult news and situations. It is impossible to predict how you, your loved ones, and others may react. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to feel.

When you encounter difficult experiences, you may feel:

- Shock because you can't believe that what happened is real.
- Helplessness because you want to "fix" the situation and are unable to change the outcome.
- Sadness about the news and compassion for the affected individuals, families, and loved ones.
- Anger over the news and its implications.
- Shame because you feel a sense of responsibility or that you have somehow let others down.
- Anxiety because of all the unanswered questions you may have or that others might ask of you.
- Confusion about the feelings that you may be experiencing, especially when they seem to come in waves.
- Physical symptoms such as dry mouth, dehydration, or an inability to think clearly or process information.
- Grief, both because of this news and because it may trigger difficult memories.

Self-care steps include:

- Seek out support from friends, family, and other helpful resources. Let people know what is helpful and what is not.
- Avoid gossip. Check facts and avoid spreading rumors. Reacting to inaccurate information is wasted energy.
- Recognize that there may never be answers to some of the questions that you and others may have about the situation.
- Reflect on what has helped you cope with difficult situations in the past. Determine if the same strategies can help you now.
- Engage in healthy sleep, diet, and exercise routines. Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid impulsive or destructive behaviors, such as drug use or excessive drinking or eating.
- Limit your exposure to media (including social media) if the event is in the news. Keep in mind that more news may unfold over time.
- Engage in meaningful activities. Replenish your emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual energy.
- Use mindfulness techniques such as meditation or writing in a journal.
- Be patient. Give yourself and others space to heal. Remember, rebuilding resiliency takes time.

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