

<p style="text-align: center;">MENU FOR SELF-CARE WAYS TO HELP MANAGE YOUR STRESS</p>

BASIC CONCEPTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

- Maintain contact and connection with primary social supports.
- Talk about your thoughts and feelings that keep returning with someone who is a good listener. Discuss the difficult parts. This helps you "let the steam out", integrate, and move on from the experience. Be gentle with yourself. There will always be things you could have done differently. Also remember to discuss the positive contribution you made and the good that will come from your participation.
- Nurture and pamper yourself. Get plenty of rest. Allow yourself downtime and don't push yourself. Spend time with your support system of family and friends and dog or cat. Take a leisurely hot bath, get a massage. Plan extra time to do usual tasks; you may not be able to function as efficiently as usual. Allow others to help with your tasks; you're not the only one who can do it.
- Eat well and take your time. Avoid caffeine, fast foods, and sugar. Drink sufficient water. Avoid overeating.
- Accept whatever feeling you are having and recognize that others who were involved in the same incident may be on a different timetable of emotions. Be patient with yourself and others.
- Turn off your radio and television when the news is being broadcast. Too much trauma exposure just increases the unease, promotes feeling overwhelmed and slows returning to normal. This is also good advice if you have children. The younger they are the less they should watch of the news.
- Find some release for what is inside. Write down your thoughts and feelings in journal, paint, draw, make music, or dance.
- Do some mild exercise -walking is great- be present, watch your breath, breathe deeply with long, slow exhalations. Let go and release tension and discomfort

with each exhalation. See each inhalation as restoring yourself.

- If you are having trouble sleeping don't stay in bed for too long trying to fall asleep as this may just increase restlessness, anxiety and rumination. Instead get up, read a book, listen to some soothing music or watch an old favorite movie until you are sleepy.
- See a funny movie or play. Go to the theater. It is okay to laugh and enjoy yourself. Affirm life.
- Read an inspiring quote or religious passage. Maintain your spiritual practice.
- Don't immediately make major changes in your life - give yourself some time first.
- Don't try to self medicate, numb out with ETOH or other agents. You will recover more quickly without them.
- Gradually resume your normal routine.
- Remember no one who responds to a mass casualty event is untouched by it.
- Profound sadness, grief, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event.
- Seek professional assistance if you feel you are getting stuck with repeated thoughts or emotions about the experience or are having difficulty returning to your normal routine. Ask for a debriefing or see someone through Employee Assistance. Don't feel bad about asking for help; it is not uncommon to have some reaction after this type of experience and remember it usually passes.