

## Recognizing and Reducing Anxiety in Times of Crisis

No one who sees or hears about a tragedy, such as the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, is untouched by it—and in an era of instant mass communications, the numbers of people exposed to such traumatic events in one way or another is significant. Most of us will experience some related anxiety and stress that will fade over time. For some, however, such feelings may not go away on their own. We need to recognize the difference and understand that, if needed, help is available and effective.

### What are Common Reactions?

Tragic events can affect us in many ways: physically emotionally and mentally. They can make people feel helpless, angry, confused, sad, or even guilty. When those feelings don't go away over a few weeks, or when they seem to get worse, it may be appropriate to seek help for yourself or the person in your life who is experiencing these difficulties. Among the signs to look for over time are:

- Feeling tense and nervous
- Being tired all the time
- Having sleep problems
- Crying often or easily
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Drinking alcohol or taking drugs more often or excessively
- Feeling numb
- Being angry or irritable
- Having problems concentrating and remembering things

### What Can You Do to Help?

Everyone can take one simple step: get in touch with your emotions and how you are feeling and how your family and loved ones are doing as well. If you think there may be a problem, get advice from someone trained to recognize signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Pay special attention to children's needs and talk with them in a calm, supportive way about their fears. Don't neglect or let anyone you know neglect his or her other health care needs at this time.

You should get immediate help from a trained mental health professional if you or a loved one is experiencing any one or more of these problems: inability to return to normal routine; feeling extremely helpless; having thoughts of hurting one's self or others; using alcohol and drugs excessively; thinking about or being abusive or violent; or having noticeable symptoms of mental illness.

### Resources Are Available

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at [www.FOH4YOU.com](http://www.FOH4YOU.com). Or call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.



Employee Assistance Program  
*We Care, Just Call*

**1-800-222-0364**

1-888-262-7848 TTY Users  
[www.FOH4YOU.com](http://www.FOH4YOU.com)