



## DISASTER SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL CARE TIP SHEETS

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Strategies for Self-Care</b>
<b>Aim:</b>	This sheet explains the importance of intentionally taking care of oneself (meaning actively and with specific strategies) in stressful situations. Equipping staff with the skills of self-care, and clergy and chaplains modeling self-care, will reduce the risk of unhealthy effects from stress.
<b>General Information:</b>	An important factor in the health of any organization is the vitality of its members. By acting intentionally in promoting good habits of self-care, the church can protect its members from the harmful effects of stress. Here are tips that will help you get started.
<b>Plan Well:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set a goal and break it down into easily managed pieces. This helps staff to see they are making progress, and reduces the stress of possibly overwhelming aims.</li> <li>• Take small steps, working through each piece, until you reach your goal.</li> <li>• Reward yourself as you complete each step and when you reach the goal. (A reward can be a break, some social time, or just working on a less demanding task).</li> <li>• Tell others in your life what your goals are and enlist their support.</li> <li>• After you reach your goal, work to maintain your improvements.</li> </ul>
<b>Maintain Faith:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get in touch with and do things you find uplifting, noble, or creative.</li> <li>• Read spiritual, inspirational, or religious materials, such as Scripture.</li> <li>• Get involved in a religious community and discuss spiritual topics with others.</li> <li>• Attend religious ceremonies and engage in religious rituals like prayer, meditation, listening to religious music, and observing religious symbols.</li> <li>• If you have had bad experiences with religion or spirituality in the past, talk to someone you trust, such as a close friend, chaplain, or counselor.</li> </ul>
<b>Balance Life Activities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in meaningful leisure activities, including activities you have enjoyed in the past and new activities that get you out of a weekly pattern.</li> <li>• Schedule regular vacations and be intentional in finding times to relax.</li> <li>• Exercise regularly; 20-30 minutes three or four times a week.</li> <li>• Sleep is important. Try to go to bed and wake up the same time each day.</li> <li>• Eat three balanced meals each day. Breakfast is especially important.</li> </ul>
<b>Keep an Optimistic Perspective:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance the aspects of situations-- avoid focusing only on the negative.</li> <li>• Recognize that there are multiple contributing factors to your difficulties.</li> <li>• Focus on the big picture and avoid all-or-nothing thinking.</li> <li>• Think realistically and gather the facts--avoid "jumping to conclusions."</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid rigid expectations, watch for the words "should," "must," or "have to" in your speech and thoughts.</li> </ul>
<b>Action Steps for Clergy &amp; Chaplains:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clergy and chaplains are role models for their staff and volunteers. Set a good example by clearly demonstrating the skills of self-care.</li> <li>• Teach the skills to your staff and team. It is easy to assume everyone knows how to do this, but it is often not true.</li> <li>• Start with recognizing the need for self care.</li> <li>• Describe the impacts of stress and encourage awareness of those signs.</li> <li>• Set an example by being open about stress.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Resources:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harding, S. (2007). <i>Spiritual care and mental health for disaster response and recovery</i>. New York: New York Disaster Interfaith Services.</li> <li>• National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2006). <i>Psychological first-aid: Field operations guide for community religious professionals</i>. Los Angeles, CA: Author.</li> <li>• National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. (2009). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Points of Consensus</i>. Arlington, VA: Author.</li> <li>• National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. <i>Light our way: A guide for spiritual care in times of disasters</i>. Arlington, VA: Author.</li> <li>• Roberts, S., &amp; Ashley, W. (2008). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Practical clergy responses to community, regional, and national tragedy</i>. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing.</li> </ul>

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