

HELPFUL TIPS TO...

Coach the Distressed Policyholders in the Aftermath of Crisis



Resist the desire to withdraw.

Do not isolate yourself. Maintaining a connection with the people in your life is of the utmost importance. Maintain your support systems of family and friends. If you feel the need for some quiet time, tell those around you of this need. Ask them to give you some "space." Do not just shut down.

Engage in simple exercise and eat well balanced meals.

The stress reactions produced by the incident, coupled by the wide range of thoughts, will produce a sense of unrest. Engaging in simple exercise such as walking, biking and swimming will assist in dissipating these reactions.

Limit exposure to news.

We live in a media powerful world that allows us to experience events in real time. The constant exposure to the incident through media will continue to trigger negative reactions as the event unfolds over and over. Choose a news program to stay informed. Watch the program in the early evening and allow yourself time to process the information and take appropriate action steps to alleviate the stress reaction that may be created. Do not watch the news immediately prior to going to bed.

Maintain a normal schedule.

Traumatic incidents disrupt the sense of normalcy. By maintaining as normal a schedule as possible you protect some degree of a normal existence while in the midst of the incident. During this time of stress it is important to continue to do things you enjoy.

Set short range goals.

Goals provide a sense of direction during a time when confusion and fear of the unknown are present. Attempt to set goals for 1 week, 2 weeks, etc. Be certain that the goal you set is realistic and manageable. By setting realistic goals you will avoid the frustration that always accompanies failed goals.

Set limits for yourself.

Avoid the urge to push on without allowing sufficient time to relax and unwind. Give yourself permission to take the "intermission." Listen to the wisdom of your body. When you are tired...rest.

Be aware of your feelings.

Talk about them. Keep a journal and write your thoughts. If you have difficulty sleeping, do not fight the sleeplessness. Find a quiet place and write your way through the sleepless nights. The process of talking or writing will assist you in quieting your mind thus enabling you to relax and sleep.

Resist the desire to make major life changes.

Allow time for the incident to pass before making major decisions.

Remember your symptoms are normal.

Having experienced a powerful negative event you must understand that during times of great distress **"it is OK not to be OK."**

PREPARED BY: **RAYMOND SHELTON PH.D.**



1.800.548.5196

HELPFUL TIPS TO...

Manage Stress in the Claims Profession

ACHIEVING A BALANCE IN MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

Maintain a life beyond the job. Give yourself permission to step away and do the things you enjoy.

Have the strength to let go. Holding on to negative events and experiences creates inner turmoil that blocks your ability to move forward. Start from where you are, let go of the past.

Talk about the things that are bothering you. Holding negative thoughts inside creates anxiety, frustration and anger.

Don't sweat the small stuff. It's all small stuff; if you can't fight and you can't flee find a way to FLOW.

Take the time to laugh. Claims work exists in a negative environment; you serve people who are not in a good place based on their crisis. It is easy to become the job, taking on the negative. Find the humor in life and laugh at yourself once in a while.

Set expectations and goals that are based in reality. If the goal or expectation does not match the real life picture, three things occur: frustration, conflict and pressure rise. Be reasonable in what you hope to achieve.

Exercise. The stress response is an action oriented physical event designed to keep you alive in the presence of a real life threat. If the tiger is chasing you – run like mad! However, if your stress is from everyday life issues, exercise will help you off load the very real energy stress produces. Go for a walk, ride your bike. Do something physical.

Stop biting the hooks. Identify the things that bother you like traffic, difficult people, bad drivers etc. See these things as "hooks" and remember your control is found in the choice to bite or not!

Avoid rigid narrow thinking. Having a plan is important but remember plans have a way of being disrupted. Allow for possibility thinking and embrace the opportunity to select an alternative way.

Listen to your body. Don't push, when you are tired take an intermission. Eat a balanced diet. Give yourself permission to say no when you feel overwhelmed.

Prepared by: Raymond Shelton Ph.D.

FELLOW, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF EXPERTS

IN TRAUMATIC STRESS

DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL CENTER FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT



1.800.548.5196

