

Coping with anxiety in times of crisis

No one who sees or hears about a tragedy is untouched by it. In an era of instant communication, many people are exposed to violence in some way. Most of us feel some anxiety and stress. This fades over time. For others, these feelings may not go away on their own. Help is available. And it is effective.

Common reactions

Mass tragedies affect us in many ways:

- Physically.
- Emotionally.
- Mentally.

They can make people feel:

- Angry
- Enraged.
- Confused.
- Sad.
- Guilty.

When to get help

The feelings may not go away. They may last a few weeks. Or they may seem to get worse. Get help for yourself. Or for a loved one who is having difficulty. Some signs to look for over time:

- Feeling tense and nervous.
- Constant tiredness.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Constant crying.
- Isolation.
- Excessive alcohol and/or drug use.
- Difficulty concentrating.

What can you do?

Take simple steps:

- Take time to understand your emotions and how you are feeling.
- Know how your family and friends are feeling.
- Get advice from someone trained to see signs of post-traumatic stress.

- Pay special attention to children. Speak with them in a calm and supportive way about their fears.

Get help right away from a trained professional if you or a loved one has any of these problems:

- Unable to return to normal routines.
- Feeling helpless.
- Having thoughts of hurting oneself or others.
- Excessive use alcohol and drugs.

Help Is Available

Call us using the phone number in your member handbook for help and support. We are here to help you get and stay well. We have also set up a hotline to help you cope with your feelings about the Boston Marathon and Texas plant tragedies. The number is **1-800-327-7451**. You may call this number even if you are not a member.