

RECOVERING AFTER TRAUMA

- Knowledge** After working through this lesson, participants will be able to
- Attitude**
- Practice**
1. Give examples of traumatic events.
 2. Describe common reactions after trauma;
 3. List ways to care for yourself after a traumatic event.
 4. Describe ways to care for others after a trauma.

Overview This series of lessons is based on the *Health Education Program for Developing Communities*, which is available from <http://hepfdc.info/>.

These lessons are accompanied by a series of health teaching booklets on the individual topics. They are based on information and standards from the World Health Organization and can be used with adults or with older children and teens. This lesson also uses information from the American Red Cross.

- Materials** *Collect these items before beginning the lesson:*
- Poster-size paper, markers, and masking tape
 - Handouts:
 - *Response to Trauma*

LESSON

60 minutes

Role play: (5 minutes)

Instructions: Divide into small groups. Each group will briefly act out a disaster or a major traumatic event, and the response of a family to that event

Drawing: (5 minutes)

Instructions: Give out the drawing, *Response to trauma*

- What is happening?
- How did the others respond?

Use the attached role play or starter.

Ask SH Questions:

What did you **S**ee?

What was **H**appening?

Reactions to Traumatic Events (15 minutes)

Instructions: Discuss as large group.

- A.** Give some examples of traumatic events.

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1. Natural disasters such as hurricanes or cyclones
 2. Wars, political unrest
 3. Refugees
 4. Assaults, robberies, violence
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 6. Car accidents
- B.** How do people react immediately after they have experienced trauma?
1. They may feel shock.
 2. They often are overwhelmed.
 3. Many are confused, or may not understand fully what is happening.
 4. Dazed, numb
 5. Denial (“This can’t be happening to me.”)
- C.** What are some later responses to trauma? Think of how a traumatic event may affect our emotions, relationships, and also of physical symptoms that may result
1. Physical
 - Loss of appetite
 - Difficulty sleeping, nightmares
 - Diarrhea, nausea, stomach pain
 - Chest pain, pounding heart
 - Fatigue, no energy
 - Headaches
 - Restless, hyperactive
 2. Relationships
 - Strained relationships
 - Arguments
 - Stress within a marriage
 - Distancing
 3. Emotions
 - It’s all my fault!
 - Blame shifting. He started it!
 - Angry, irritable
 - Sad, depressed, grieving
 - Isolation, withdrawal
 - Recurrent memories of the event
 - Poor concentration

Care For Ourselves and Others (20 minutes)

Instructions: Divide into small groups. How can we take care of ourselves after a traumatic event? What should you do (and not do)?

- A.** Caring for ourselves
1. Recognize that it will take time to heal.
 2. Take time to mourn
 3. Be patient with yourselves and with your fluctuating emotions.
 4. Keep a healthy lifestyle—regular exercise, getting plenty of sleep, eating well.
 5. Find a support group of people who have gone through trauma.
 6. Be part of a prayer group or small group.
 7. Spend time with God. Take time to pray. Search the Bible for answers
 8. Talk with others. Ask for support

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9. Communicate your emotions—by talking, with a journal, spend time with friends.
10. Don't call yourself crazy or weak
11. Don't make big decisions or make big changes
12. Don't drink too much coffee—your body is already hyped up.
13. Don't use alcohol or drugs.
14. Don't watch violent movies or TV shows that could trigger memories

Helping Others to Cope (10 minutes)

- A.** Imagine that your neighbor just suffered a major crisis—his house burned down. How can you help others to cope immediately after the trauma?
 1. Introduce yourself and offer to help
 2. Move the person to a safe spot, away from the crowds or the media.
 3. Offer to call a friend or family member
 4. Stay with him or her.
 5. Listen carefully.
 6. Pray together.
 7. Help with practical tasks.
 8. Don't be surprised if he seems confused or is not thinking clearly.
 9. Don't take it personally if she is angry or upset.
- B.** How can you work with your neighbor in the weeks and months after the event?
 1. Visit your neighbor.
 2. Pray with him.
 3. Spend time listening.
 4. Help with practical needs
 5. Organize the neighbors to help rebuild.

References:

Carr, K. *Ways to cope after a trauma*. MMCT. Available from: http://www.mmct.org/ways_to_cope.php

Headington Institute. *Taking care of yourself after traumatic events*. Available from: <http://www.headington-institute.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2078>

Health Education Program for Developing Communities. Available from: <https://hepfdc.org/>

HEALTH EDUCATION: RECOVERY AFTER TRAUMA

RESPONSE TO TRAUMA



1. What is happening?
2. How did the others respond?
3. What else can you do (or not do)?



Source: Health Education Program for Developing Communities. Available from: <https://hepfdc.org/>