



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
MINISTRY OF FAMILY AND
SOCIAL SERVICES

ADULTS' REACTIONS FOLLOWING DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR COPING



Prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services and UNICEF.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE REACTIONS FOLLOWING DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES?

Physical reactions:

- Headache, abdominal and back pain, dizziness, fatigue,
- Shortness of breath, chest pain, heart palpitations, chest tightness,
- Numbness, tingling, flushing, dizziness, muscle tension/twitching, shaking uncontrollably, restlessness, etc.
- Digestive problems, especially stomach complaints,
- Skin diseases (itching, eczema, etc.),
- Increase or loss of appetite,
- Changes in sleeping schedule (not sleeping, sleeping too much, not falling asleep, fragmented sleep),

Emotional reactions:

- Freezing up or panicking;
- Experiencing emotions such as sadness, anger, intolerance, fear more intensely
- Confusion, excitement, blaming oneself or others, insecurity, shame, feeling needy, and detached from real life,
- Feelings of withdrawal, pessimism, helplessness, reluctance to live, and hopelessness,
- Not feeling anything,
- The desire to be alone or to have someone with you all the time,
- Tension and uneasiness,
- The feeling of having been unjustly treated,



Mental reactions:

- Not being able to get the moment of the incident out of mind, constantly reliving that moment, recurring thoughts and images about the incident,



- Nightmares and dreams about the incident,
- Experiencing difficulty in memory and concentration,
- Absence of mind, inability to make decisions, inability to think,
- Thinking “Why did it happen to us?”

Behavioural reactions:

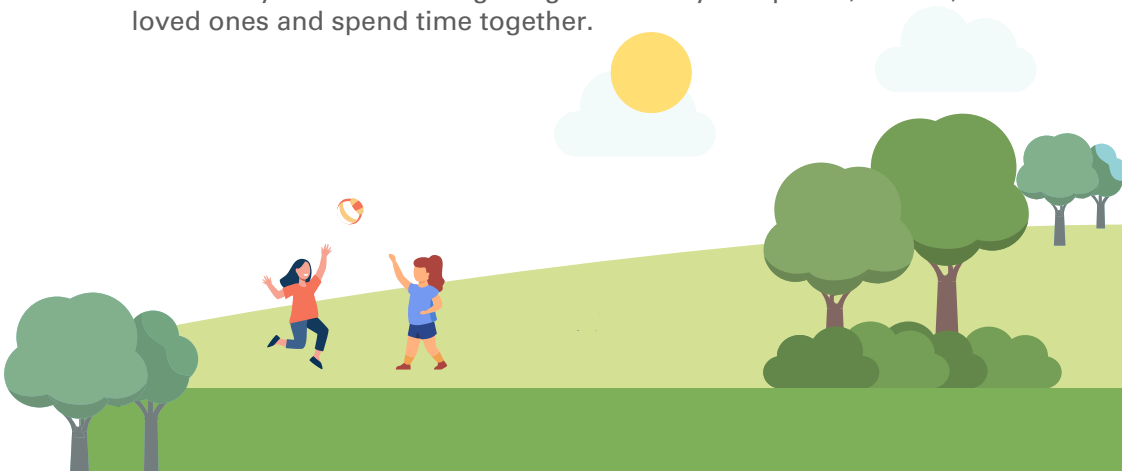
- Avoiding places, people, conversations, or activities that remind them of the incident,
- Getting angry quickly, acting aggressively,
- Talking a lot or not being able to talk,
- Decrease in the problem-solving skills,
- Experiencing deterioration in interpersonal relationships, conflicts within the family, communication conflicts, etc.
- Postponing, delaying, or inability to complete work, home, and school responsibilities, etc.
- Performing behaviours of self-harm,
- Using addictive substances or increasing the amount of substances used



REACTIONS FOLLOWING DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES ARE NORMAL REACTIONS THAT EVERYONE CAN EXPERIENCE.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FEEL BETTER?

- You are not alone. Remember that a lot of people like you have been affected by this incident and that everyone may be experiencing similar feelings.
- You may find it difficult to accept the incident you are experiencing in the first days, but over time, it will become easier for you to accept it.
- Do not stay alone. You can get together with your spouse, friends, and loved ones and spend time together.



- Feel free to talk about your feelings, share your feelings.
- You can chat and play games with small children around you.
- Try to support other people around you. Helping out will make you feel better.



- You can plan what you can do for yourself and your loved ones in the future.
- Instead of closing yourself in a tent or house, you can go outside, get some air, take short walks, and do other activities.
- You can pray according to your religious beliefs and fulfil your religious obligations.
- In order not to constantly think about the negative incidents you have experienced, you can acquire feel-good hobbies.



- You can do things you love or enjoy (knitting, tending flowers, meeting with friends, doing sports, relaxation exercises, breathing exercises, etc.).
- Continue to do the routines you used to do in your daily life to the best of your ability (going to work, cooking, going to the market, taking care of the children, etc.).
- Pay attention to your sleeping schedule and diet.
- Remember to drink plenty of water. Consuming plenty of water helps your body relax.
- If you feel the need to use medication (painkillers, sleeping pills, etc.) for your physical and mental reactions after the incidents you have experienced, consult a physician first and use them under the supervision of a doctor.
- During this period, take care to obtain information from accurate and reliable sources.



Remember!

WE FACE MANY CHALLENGES IN LIFE AND WHEN WE LOOK BACK, WE SEE THAT WE OVERCOME EVERYTHING WITH TIME.

WHAT HAPPENS AS TIME GOES BY?

- We begin to accept what has happened;
- The intensity of our reactions decreases over time;
- We begin to show interest in everyday life;
- We make plans for the future;
- Our emotions such as pessimism, sadness, anger, guilt, etc. decrease;
- We feel better emotionally;
- While the disaster or emergency we experienced becomes a part of our history, it does not completely occupy our minds.



WE MAY NEED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FROM OUR FAMILY AND LOVED ONES FROM TIME TO TIME.



When To Consult a Mental Health Professional?

- If the stress reactions you experience were present before the disaster and emergency and increased after these incidents;
- If the following reactions do not decrease over time after a disaster and emergency, but continue with a severity and intensity that affects your daily life;
- If your stress reactions are repeated in many situations or in different settings;
- If you have extreme hopelessness, extreme irritability, constant sleep (inability to get out of bed), or insomnia;
- If you are unable to return to or completely let go of your responsibilities, such as school or work;
- If you are acquiring habits that can harm you physically and mentally, to overcome the stress you are experiencing;
- If you have thoughts of harming yourself or your loved ones;
- If you are experiencing one or more of these problems together;
- If you think or feel that you need the support of an expert;

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET SUPPORT
FROM A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL.**





Remember!

You can seek help from psychosocial support staff deployed in times of disaster and emergency through Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Services.



**REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
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SOCIAL SERVICES**

**FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT APPLICATION AND
REFERRAL IN CASE OF NEED:**

..... Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services

Address:

.....

Tel: