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Tips For Counseling After A Disaster

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There are many volunteer organizations that work people in difficult emotional situations. One type of organization offers help and counseling after a disaster as an earthquake or hurricane. If you plan to volunteer any of these organizations you may find yourself in a counseling role so why not get some tips for disaster counseling in advance?

Make Arrangements - Survivors of disasters are often left with nothing but the clothes on their backs which can be emotionally devastating. It is important that you make arrangements for obtaining food, clothing and shelter as quickly and efficiently as possible while at the same time providing emotional support. Make the transition as smooth as possible.

Reduce Their Agony - Your client has been through a devastating experience and you need to let your client know you are there to help in any way possible. This may include giving a listening ear, providing advice, or assisting with making arrangements with a doctor, facility, or even housing. Your action will help reduce the mental distress your client is feeling.

Return To Normal - It is important that you help your disaster victims return to a state of normalcy as quickly as possible. You can start by providing a community center or a recreational area where there is a TV and comfortable seating. The normal sights and sounds will help reduce your clients' level of stress. During this period it is important you interact on a continuous basis lending your ear to their experiences and provide any counseling you can.

Compensation - Help victims fill out appropriate paperwork that will assist them in receiving any government emergency relief money. There are also other organizations such as the Red Cross or Salvation Army that may have funds available. Make sure you counsel the disaster victims in all options that are available to them, and ensure their paperwork is correctly filled out and processed.

avoid any additional stress.

Authorities - If you find you have persons with disabilities, mentally ill persons, or women with young children in a disaster group make sure that you notify the appropriate authorities and relief agencies and let these individuals know what other services are available to them. Make sure these people are not left alone to fend for themselves. If possible, ask members of your community to assist over the short time until you can make long term arrangements.

Listen - More than anything it is likely that your disaster victims need a patient ear that will listen to their experiences.

and help them deal with the horrors. A comforting hand, ad gentle nod will help console, and don't forget that touch of speech is very comforting. Some counseling and comforting words can help these victims' better cope and move forward.

Don't Interrupt - Your victims have been through quite the experience, for some of them it may have been horrible. Do not interrupt them as they tell their story as they weep with sorrow or cry with joy. Do not hurry the victim and interrupt. Console and comfort and let them tell their story. It will do a great deal for the emotional well being.

Provide Support - A hug, a wipe of a tear, the holding of a hand, or a gentle pat on the shoulder can lend a level of support that victims desperately need. But you must also be aware of traditions and customs of the area so that you don't inadvertently act inappropriately. People generally need human contact after a traumatic ordeal so as well as being a good listener give them that needed contact.

Each victim of a disaster will handle the disaster emotionally different. Some may be deal with it by being strong and helping others, let these victims assist you. Their emotional stability and healing is based on the ability to cope in a time of need. For others the experience will be emotionally devastating and they will need support and comfort from you and your team.

How emotionally devastating an event is will depend a great deal on what that person's loss was. You may have victims that have suffered the loss of loved ones, personal property, pets, or just an inability to deal with the surreal ordeal that they have endured. Hurricane Katrina is an excellent example of the various ways this horrible disaster was handled by the survivors. These tips for counseling after a disaster will help you provide the best support you can.

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