Recognize Trauma Responses

Many reactions tend to be triggered by persons, places or things associated with the trauma. These are normal reactions to abnormal events.

Physical Reactions

- Sudden sweating and/or heart palpitations
- Easily startled by noises or unexpected touch
- Aches and pains like headaches or stomach aches
- Changes in sleep patterns, appetite and interest in sex
- Difficulty concentrating, feeling anxious

Emotional Reactions

- Shock and disbelief
- Fear and/or anxiety
- Denial and/or disorientation
- Irritability and/or restlessness
- Feeling hopeless
- Emotional numbing
- Depression and emotional swings

Prevalence of PTSD

70% of adults experience at least one traumatic event in their lifetime

1 in 13 people will develop PTSD at some point in their life

20% of people who experience a traumatic event will develop PTSD

Prevalence of PTSD in the United States is equal to the total population of Texas

Counseling Services

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Coping with Trauma

- **Give it time.** It may take weeks, months and in some cases years to reestablish normalcy.

- **Seek help, support and understanding.** Many people need the support of family and friends for encouragement and to draw comfort. Additionally, individual, group or family counseling is very helpful.

- **Mobilize a support system.**
  - Turn to family and friends
  - Draw comfort from your faith/spirituality
  - Join a support group
  - Talk to a therapist

**Identify helpful strategies.**

- Exercise such as jogging, bicycling, walking, etc.
- Relaxation exercises such as yoga, stretching or a massage
- Humor
- Maintain a balanced diet and sleep cycle
- Avoid overusing stimulants like caffeine or sugar
- Write about your experience
- Cry (or other appropriate release of emotions)
- Pro-active response toward personal safety

Helping Others Cope with Trauma

The greatest thing you can do is show your love and support by being a listening ear or a shoulder to cry on. If words are necessary here are a few ways to start dialogue:

1. “How can I best support you right now?”
2. “You are not alone. I am here for you.”
3. “Are there any resources or information you need?”