



Dealing with Disaster and Other Scary Things

Sometimes life is scary. Maybe you or family members have been affected by a natural disaster, like fire or flood, act of violence or war. Maybe you live very far away from what you are seeing on the television, but are worried about something happening to you or someone you love. Watching TV and seeing houses burn up or the aftermath of a hurricane, or hearing talk about war and terrorism can be very disturbing. It's normal to be concerned.

Here are some tips to help you deal with your reactions to what is happening around you:

- **Talk about your feelings** with family members and trusted adults. This is very important. Ask questions, share what you think and feel, and get help if your feelings are overcome by strong feelings of sadness, anger, or fear. Be ready to help a friend who may need your support.
- **Do something to make a difference.** For example, volunteer with a community organization; write a letter to someone who has helped you, such as a fire fighter, a Red Cross worker, a police person or someone serving in the military.
- **Accept that people react differently in times of disaster.** Some of your friends or family members may be very upset; and others may not seem like they are. No one way is the right way to feel.
- **Turn off the TV or change the channel** if TV images are difficult for you to watch.
- **Know that the adults in your life may be upset, too.** Ask them about their feelings and find out what they are doing to help themselves deal with their feelings.
- **If you have a friend who is having problems,** acting out or threatening to harm others, talk to a trusted adult immediately. This person needs to talk with an adult, and you may help prevent them from harming themselves or others.
- **Get rid of some of your stress and worries** by exercising, writing in a journal, drawing pictures, doing a hobby you like, doing something fun with friends, or doing a service project in your community.
- **If you continue to feel sad or stressed,** don't keep it to yourself, ask for help. Talk to a trusted adult, a doctor, or an adult at school. Sometimes, it takes more than just talk to feel better, and they can help you get the assistance you need.