



Psych.E.In. MOOC 1

Unit 7

7.2 Improve strategies of stress management

The following list contains recommendations to help you prevent stress in the pre-stage of the crisis.

Management of Workload

- Set task priority levels with realistic work plans
- Recognize that “not having enough to do” or “waiting” is an expected part of disaster mental health response

Balanced Lifestyle

- Eat nutritious food and stay hydrated, avoiding excessive caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco
- Get adequate sleep and rest, especially on longer assignments
- Get physical exercise
- Maintain contact and connection with primary social supports

Stress Reduction Strategies

- Reduce physical tension by using familiar personal strategies (e.g., taking deep breaths, gentle stretching, meditating, washing face and hands, practicing progressive relaxation)
- Keep a balance between low and high-stress activities
- Use time off to “decompress” and “recharge batteries” (e.g., get a good meal, watch TV, exercise, read a book, listen to music, take a bath, talk to family)
- Talk about emotions and reactions with coworkers during appropriate times

Self-Awareness

- Recognize and heed early warning signs of stress reactions
- Accept that one may not be able to self-assess problematic stress reactions
- Recognize that over-identification with or feeling overwhelmed by victims' and families' grief and trauma may signal a need for support and consultation
- Understand the differences between professional helping relationships and friendships to help maintain appropriate roles and boundaries
- Examine personal prejudices and cultural stereotypes
- Recognize when one's own experience with trauma or one's personal history interfere with effectiveness
- Be aware of personal vulnerabilities and emotional reactions and the importance of team and supervisor support.

Source: Abuse, S., & US Department of Health and Human Services. (2005). *A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professions*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).