

As a community, we're all concerned about the emotional health of our citizens, especially following the most recent flood. The following information is being made available to help protect the emotional health of our citizens.

If you are a flood victim, you are urged to take the following steps to remain emotionally healthy during this time of crisis

Top ten things for your emotional health if you are a victim of the flood:

1. Stay Calm. Things will get better. Focus on family, friends and your personal faith.
2. Be willing to accept help from others. Don't be afraid to ask for or receive help from others. People who care about you feel helpless. They want to be of assistance. If others ask what they can do to help let them know what you need and let them help you.
3. Share your story with others. Sharing your feelings and your experience during this disaster will help you feel better.
4. Allow yourself to grieve. Don't judge your level of grief and healing by how others are grieving and healing, but by your own internal awareness. Remember, there are five stages of grief: sadness; anger; acceptance.
5. Pace yourself. You will not be able to get everything done at once.
6. Take breaks. Take time off from cares, worries and home repairs. Engage in recreation and relaxation. Getting away from home or a day or a few hours can help.
7. Pay attention to your health. A good diet and adequate sleep are needed greatly. Relaxation exercises may help if you have difficulty sleeping. Remember your physical and mental health as important as your environmental health. Make sure you are taking medications as prescribed, eating properly and drinking plenty of water.
8. Be patient. Many people were affected by the recent events. Everyone will need help and supplies of all sorts will be in demand.
9. Organize yourself. Make a list of important phone numbers (insurance company; emergency assistance; Red Cross, physician, pharmacy, etc.) Track your receipts. Start of file to track activity related to the flood. You will need this information when seeking assistance in the future.
10. Don't be afraid to seek professional help. Recognize that seeking professional counseling doesn't mean you are weak, inadequate or crazy.

Pathways Counseling Center: 419-523-4300

Toll free crisis hotline number: 1-800-468-4357

If you are in a position of trying to provide support to your loved ones, family and friends, the following tips are for you.

1. Listen to people's stories. When people are ready to share their stories they need others to listen with concern and empathy. Be willing to offer them an outlet. Be genuine in your interest.
2. Provide reassurance. Let them know that they are safe and there is hope.
3. Help people take a break....offer to take them out for a meal; a coffee break, a walk, etc.
4. Reach out to those who are alone or fragile. Help them get connected to services.
5. Be a contact person. Contact family and friends that are out of town to let them know others are safe. You could also be the contact person for updates.
6. Allow people to grieve. Provide a safe and comfortable environment for people to express themselves.
7. Help people create a list of important numbers. Important papers and resources to find phone numbers may not be accessible. Making a list of their insurance company, Red Cross, physicians, pharmacies, etc. that will easily assessable will allow them to make contact easier.
8. Contact the Volunteer Action Center to offer your help. There is a great need for help. Contact the Volunteer Center.
9. Encourage and help them to find support. They will be vulnerable and hurt for a period of time. If these signs of stress do not begin to lessen within a few weeks, or if they intensify, seek professional help. You may not understand what they are going through, but offer your support and love. Remember, others are experiencing these common reactions and your loved one is not alone.

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10. Keep in contact with them even after the initial trauma is over. Survivors will experience emotions long after the initial event is over. Similar events, anniversaries of the event, smells/sights, etc. could bring on strong emotions and linking them back to their own trauma.