

## Peer Responder Self-Care Strategies

Providing crisis response comes at a cost. No matter how resilient we may be, coming alongside those who have been traumatized takes an enormous amount of physical, emotional, and spiritual energy. After providing debriefing or other types of crisis response, we will likely feel fulfilled but also very depleted.

While some may think of self-care strategies as being unnecessary or even unspiritual, we have a good Savior who says, “Come unto me, you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Developing a self-care strategy is choosing good stewardship of our bodies, minds, and souls. It is allowing the Good Shepherd to restore and heal us. Failure to do this may mean that we become overwhelmed and discouraged and are not available to respond to future crisis situations in the future.

### Practical Suggestions for Self-Care

- Recognize when you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired (HALT)
- Take action to respond to those HALT needs
- Set aside some time for rest (emotional and physical)
- Eat healthy, nutritious food
- Exercise
- Socialize with positive and encouraging friends
- Do something creative and fun
- Journal

### Ways to Address the Emotional and Spiritual Impact of the Crisis Response

Take some time to pray about what you heard. It may be that you are feeling angry about what happened to those you helped. If you are feeling angry at any people who did harm to others, forgive them and release them back to the Lord.<sup>i</sup>

Meet with someone who is a mentor, pastor, or trusted friend. Ask them to pray with you for cleansing of any negative impact you might still be feeling from the crisis care you provided.

Meet with a more experienced peer responder or a mental health clinical provider who can help you process the intervention and with whom you can share concerns and questions.

Take time to reflect on how this crisis response experience has impacted your theology of suffering. Journal about this and discuss it with others.

Reflect on how this crisis intervention has impacted your personal convictions about the world, others and yourself.<sup>ii</sup> Journal about this and discuss it with others.

Use tools that are designed to help increase your stress hardiness.<sup>iii</sup>

Additional Resources/Supporting Documents:

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<sup>i</sup> Bringing our Wounds to the Cross (2.3)

<sup>ii</sup> Reviewing Personal Convictions before Crises (5.5)

<sup>iii</sup> Developing Stress Hardiness (4.4); Cross-Cultural Worker Stress Inventory (4.5)