

Ways to Cope After a Trauma

After a trauma, stress levels are high and our normal ways of coping may not be sufficient. Take some time to reflect on how you are coping and what you might do differently in order to strengthen your coping resources. Ask yourself:

- How have you coped with severe stress in the past?
- What is working for me now and what might need to change during this stressful time?
- What coping strategies might I resume that I used to use?
- What new coping strategies would be good for me to try?
- Who can I talk with about this?

Possible things to do

- Relax and rest
- If safe, stay in familiar environment
- Spend time in communion with God (prayer, worship)
- Reflect in the Word
- Sing or listen to music
- Spend time with those who are supportive and helpful
- Eat nutritiously (Avoid sugar)
- Exercise
- Get more than enough sleep
- Talk about what happened (to God and others)
- Write about what happened (journaling, letters, e-mails)
- Laugh when you can
- Cry if you can
- Set small goals
- Keep some sort of routine
- Educate yourself about traumatic reactions
- Look for perspective and meaning in the event
- Ask for help and let others help you

Things to Avoid

- Making major decisions
- Setting up an active travel or speaking schedule
- Drinking alcohol
- Drinking caffeinated drinks
- Taking sedating drugs unless prescribed by a physician
- Talking publicly about sensitive details soon after trauma
- Making broad generalizations about the meaning of what happened