

While others can certainly help you cope, there is much you can also do for yourself. This includes:

- Accept that the above emotional reactions are normal, and not a sign of being “crazy”.
- Be patient with yourself, realizing that it takes time to heal emotional wounds.
- Seek help for your needs (e.g. medical staff, spiritual counselor, relief organizations).
- Talk about your feelings when you are ready and with someone you trust.
- Let the person “tell their story” if they want to without your feeling pressure to fix it or taking their feelings personally.,
- Bolster self-esteem with reassurance that despite present troubles, they can cope; avoid statements like “things could be worse” or “you have other children” that are not consoling.
- Create a connection between you, and with others who can also provide support.
- Help them feel safe.
- Tell them to honor their own pace of dealing with trauma, and encourage them to explore past strategies they have used successfully.

- Encourage them to share feelings, when they are ready, with family, friends, clergy, and mental health workers.
- Offer to help in tasks that may be difficult to do.
- Volunteer for your local emergency agencies and get training in how to help.

Helping others is not only a great service, but is spiritually uplifting. American Red Cross is always looking for disaster volunteers and even offers training classes. Research shows that volunteering can improve your immune system. Offer emotional support to others. Share feelings. Listen to others with tolerance, understanding, compassion and patience. Encourage them to get help from Red Cross trained mental health support staff. Focus on their strengths. Be sensitive to others' style of reacting to grief. For those who do not want to talk, simply listen or be present.