

TAKING GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF

- Within the first 24-48 hours post-incident, vigorous exercise can help your body offset the physical reactions of stress. Remember to move, stretch, and walk periodically between workouts. Alternate relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, with exercise.
- Keep trying to get at least 30 min of exercise, preferably aerobic, each day. Even a walk around the block is fine. Aerobic exercise is the best known stress-proofing or -preventing activity you can do.
- Make sure you get lots of rest, more than your usual. Naps are good.
- Contact friends and talk to people you trust. This is the most healing action you can take. Talk about the effects of the incident on you.
- Remember that the people who care about you may also be under stress. Talk to them about what's going on with you, and what helps.
- Stay around other people, even just one, for at least a few hours, even a day or so.
- Try to eat something at each mealtime. Eat healthy food and snacks, even if you're not hungry.
- Limit, or even better, eliminate, self-medication, especially your use of caffeine and alcohol. Both interfere with normal sleep and with your natural ability to process the incident. Alcohol metabolism produces additional stress toxins.
- Drink lots of fluids, preferably water.
- Keep your regular routines as much as you can. Structure your time and stay busy. Do what you feel you can do, make daily plans and the small, routine choices of life.
- Avoid making major decisions or serious life changes.
- Give yourself permission to feel things as they happen and to share those feelings with others. Express yourself.
- Take some quiet time: 3 minutes morning, noon, and evening. Look at a favorite view, pray if this is normal for you, listen to music, breathe deep.
- Let yourself have some pleasurable recreation.
- If you still are not sleeping after day or two of good care, call **EAP** or your personal physician for a consultation.
- Remember, reacting to highly abnormal events is **NORMAL**. Your reactions, such as intrusive memories, recurring thoughts, even flashbacks, are part of your body's attempt to help you survive and recover. If you don't push them away, they will decrease over time.