



J.EAP Co.,Ltd.

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For Supervisors/Managers

How to support the employees affected by the natural disaster

We have prepared the following information sheet for you to support the employees who are affected by the Tohoku Taiheiyou-oki earthquake.

When we face disasters such as this one, people go through various processes of psychological stress, grief, and sense of loss. How and to what extent we react to this kind of disaster varies. Physical symptoms are also frequently observed. The following are tips for management and organizations to support their employees in this difficult time.

1. Secure safety and security:

First and foremost, ensuring safety and security is important for those who are affected by the disaster – that is, ensuring a safe place and providing practical information about daily living. What is most needed in disasters where our daily lives are severely disrupted, information and daily living goods are most critical. This precedes psychological care.

2. Coping with hopelessness

When we face the disaster, it is hard to foresee the future. It is important to alleviate the anxiety of not knowing what will happen today, tomorrow, next week. In order to instill hope and help employees have a sense of future, it is critical that we share with them any information available, such as arrival of necessary items, financial aid, other various support, as well as plans. To make this possible, it is important to know the company procedures and guidelines in handling disaster.

3. Coping with isolation/loneliness

When we are hit by the disaster, sense of isolation affects us along with hopelessness. In order to provide mental health care, professional help will become necessary. Here are some tips on actions to take:

- Try to communicate with employees frequently, check in how they are doing
- Make yourself available so that the employee can consult with you
- Observe any employee that concerns you. Talk to the employee of concern and prepare support if necessary



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- Be considerate with the amount of work for those who are under significant stress.

4. Coping with fatigue and anxiety – self-care for managers

When the natural disaster hits, it becomes difficult to continue with daily life. Our daily structure may change and it may take a while to return to the daily structure and routine we used to have before the disaster. We may get increasingly fatigued physically and mentally.

- Think through whether and what support you require
- Do not sacrifice yourself or do not overextend yourself. Do the best you can with your own pace, and know your limit.
- Do not try to do everything all by yourself. Allow yourself to reach out for support. Collaborate with others to provide the support for the employees.
- Pay attention to your own psychological reaction. Do not judge or deny, and accept such feelings.

5. Earthquake information: AM radio station 693 is broadcasting earthquake information in foreign language, including English, Chinese, Korea, Spanish, Portuguese, German and French.

6. Consult with EAP

At JEAP, consultants who are experienced with disaster mental health are available to consult with you over the phone. If there are employees who seem to experience difficulties, please contact JEAP.

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For those who were affected by the Tohoku Taiheiyo-oki earthquake

Whether we are victims or witnesses to this unprecedented disaster, it is natural and normal to have strong reactions after/while experiencing the traumatic incident. It is certainly normal to experience a strong shock after watching such devastating scenes. Our mind and body reacts to these stressors in various ways. Sometimes such reactions are experienced a few hours or days after. Sometimes they appear after weeks and months. And such reactions could be brief or may last for a long time.

Stress reactions may be alleviated with the understanding and support of people we trust. However, there are times when we are in such emotional pain that we may need professional help. Needing professional help does not mean we are weak. It just means that this tragedy was beyond our capacities to deal with by ourselves.

The following reactions are what is expected following a disaster. Please remember: these reactions are **NORMAL** reactions to an **ABNORMAL** (traumatic) event.

Emotional reactions:

Feeling lost, anxiety, fear that an earthquake may happen again, irritability for no clear reasons, sadness, loneliness, depression, tearfulness

Physical Reactions:

Crying, Insomnia, headache, dizziness, chest pain, increased blood pressure, breathing difficulty, nausea, fatigue, stomach ache, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle tremors, sweating, chills, blurred vision

Cognitive Reactions:

Automatic physical reaction to aftershocks, hypervigilance, concentration problems, memory loss, confusion, decreased decision making ability, decreased problem solving capability, limited attention span, confusion, disorientation, amnesia

Behavioral reactions:

Nightmare, decreased appetite, binge-eating, excitability, inability to go outside, trying to be over-preoccupied, increased alcohol/tobacco consumption. Fear of going back to the place where the person was at the time of the earthquake.



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What you can do to take care of yourself:

- Talk to people

Verbalize your feelings such as anxiety and fear to those whom you trust. It is better not to push such feelings away as they may accumulate over time.

- Rest sufficiently

Recovery from the disaster is a long-term process. It is important that you set the amount of work you do every day and try to take a rest before you get too tired. It takes longer to recover once you are exhausted. Try to sleep a little longer.

- Collaborate with others and be willing to accept help

We tend to get tired more quickly when we work by ourselves. It is better if we can allow ourselves to accept helping hands.

- Avoid heavy consumption of alcohol and other substances

Alcohol consumption tends to increase in time of significant stress. Those who suffer from insomnia may drink in an attempt to try to sleep. Though alcohol may help you get to sleep, it decreases the quality of your sleep. You may end up waking up earlier and still feeling tired. Therefore, it is wise to limit your alcohol consumption. Likewise, watch out for excessive coffee and tobacco consumption.

- Do light exercises - it helps to release tension.

- Make sure to hydrate - it helps to purify your systems and feel less tired.

- We tend too much to be buried in watching T.V. showing traumatic scenes. Break away from that occasionally and take time to do things that you can enjoy and relax - it helps avoid being hyper-vigilant.

- Contact your EAP

JEAP is here to support you. We have consultants who are experienced in disaster mental health care. Please contact us for any assistance.

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Care for the children during/after disaster

The recent tsunami/earthquake (Touhoku Taiheiyou-oki earthquake) has brought us much devastation and loss. Children are often the most vulnerable in times of disaster. There may be children who report insomnia, headache, nausea, nightmare out of fear. Various other stress reactions may follow the disaster such as this. Here is a brief information sheet for what us adults can do for children.

(children here refers to those of elementary school age or younger)

- Help children feel sense of safety
 - Try to spend time together as much as you can.
 - Hug them frequently
 - Say comforting words such as “it is ok” “we will protect you” “we are here for you”
 - Do not scold even if your children regress (such as in toilet accident)
 - Do not show news of tsunami, earthquakes too much.

- Accept how children feel
 - Allow children to talk about their experiences and feelings with sense of safety
 - Teach them that it is normal to feel sadness, anger, and anxiety
 - Do not force them to talk
 - Try to look them in their eyes and nod as you listen

- Provide children places where they can be active
 - Allow children to express their feelings freely through drawing and writing
 - Let children communicate with other children while making sure the safety of the surroundings
 - Allow children to help you as it helps children to feel positive

When adults experience the traumatic incident, they can look at their experiences objectively. However, it is much easier for children to let the experiences affect them more directly and subjectively. As a result, the impact on children’s psyche may be more severe. When adults deal with children while holding their anxiety themselves, children tend to hold off their own fear to help adults feel better or their symptoms may get worse. At the same time, both adults and children suffer from tremendous pain and anxiety when hit by major disaster such as this one. It is important that adults take



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good care of themselves, and help children in their own way.

Please contact JEAP for any concerns/questions you may have about care for children.

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