

Emotional Responses To Disaster

TUNKHANNOCK (Wyoming Co.) — As we have become all too familiar with, natural disasters can strike anywhere and anytime. With clean up, insurances, and the overall effort needed to begin the recovery process, we often forget the emotional toll such situations can take on the victims, the volunteers, and the communities.

Following are some suggestions to help remind us of the importance of coping.

There are two reactions during a disaster. Most people are very quick to take care of what needs to be done. sandbagging, packing, cleaning up, helping neighbors

At the same time people experience disbelief. "This can't possibly be happening!"

This emotional disbelief allows people to keep working on survival, but there may also be a sense of unreality during the disaster. Other powerful feelings may surface. Panic/feeling out of control anger, generosity toward others, despair, anxiety/uncertainty, disorientation, cooperation/team work

At times, people experience a real sense of community and connectedness when everyone pulls together to deal with the situation. The sharing of loss with others can create a strong bond among disaster victims. Often the full force of the emotional reaction hits well after the initial shock and clean up efforts. That's when exhaustion can set in. As we look at our real losses, we may experience grief, desperation and depression. We need to be prepared to pay more attention to our emotion reactions and to the reactions of our friends and neighbors once the emergency crews go home.

Coping

One of the first things people can do is pull together. Don't hesitate to ask for assistance. There are many people around who want to help and will help. They just need to know what to do that will be most helpful right now. People want to help, yet some people try to manage by themselves, without accepting help. Remember, help from others may make the critical difference between coping and suffering more from a disaster. Allow other people to help you!

Another important coping strategy is taking care of your physical and emotional needs. Eat a balanced diet to fuel your energy. As much as possible, get enough sleep. Fatigue will slow you down during an emergency. As you prepare for clean up from a disaster, talk with others about your feelings. Listen to theirs. Together, look for the positives in the situation, and hope for the future.

How family members can be more supportive of one another

- Tell family members when they have done a good job
- Laugh! Laughter can help relieve the tension.
- Be considerate of other family members
- Express love and concern often

Helping Others

As much as possible, provide practical help during the disaster. Help friends or family pack. Furnish meals. Store their belongings; provide them with a place to stay. Parents may be very busy; offer to spend some

time with the children to play and listen to their concerns.

Listen When others talk about, their experience and feelings, their emotional load seems lighter to bear. One of the best ways you can help is just to listen. You don't have to come up with solutions or answers.

It's OK if your neighbor needs to break down and cry. Others will ask "Why me?" They are not really looking for an answer but expressing their hurt.

Show by words and actions that you care. A friendly arm around troubled shoulders or a few words of support and encouragement can help in times of crisis. Small, kind deeds and sincere expressions of affection or admiration also will mean a lot.

About Children

Disasters bring stress to the whole family including children. Such crises can be extremely threatening for them. These tips can help your child cope during disaster.

- Heed public safety warnings. Quick actions may avert many difficulties for the whole family.
- Tell children what's going on simply and matter-of-factly. This helps avoid fear of the unknown.
- Listen. Answer their questions as much as you can.
- Reassure them. Use statements like "It's scary right now, but we'll always take care of you."

• Involve children. Let them help within their ability. This helps them feel a part of the family and prepares them for later situations.

• As much as possible, keep routines. They help children feel secure.

• Show love and support.

• Make sure children know the family's difficulties are not their fault. Children tend to blame themselves for problems.

• Keep your sense of humor and enjoy a good laugh together frequently.

• Take care of your own emotions and stress. Children will reflect your anxiety or your calm.

During crises, children may act younger than they are. A child may be irritable or misbehave. This is normal for a child who is scared and doesn't understand a situation as serious as a disaster. Children need your extra patience at this time.

"Neighboring" in times of trouble

1. Offer specific types of help or ask how you can help.
2. Go ahead and act. Don't be afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing.
3. Go ahead and help.
4. Keep helping. Recovering can take a long time. Your friends or family members will need regular, small acts of kindness to maintain their morale and to put their lives back together.

Pool Safety

NEWARK, Del — More than 1,000 drownings and 75,000 pool-related injuries occur each year in the United States. Over half of these reported incidents take place in the five million residential swimming pools nationwide, making pool ownership a significant responsibility.

"Prevention is key," says Ron Jester, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension safety specialist. "Learn how to swim, how to rescue others and be knowledgeable about basic safety rules."

Take precautions to reduce the risk of the top three swimming-related accidents; falling on slippery surfaces, striking the bottom or sides of the pool while diving because of insufficient depth, and drowning when swimming alone or without adult supervision.

Some of the most severe permanent injuries are the result of diving into shallow water. Using diving boards and slides with extreme caution and constant supervision. Safe diving requires a minimum water depth of 8 1/2 feet. Prohibit diving altogether in above-ground pools. Clearly mark water depth on the pool deck and use a safety float line to indicate a change in depth to keep swimmers aware of their surroundings.

Accidents occurring on the pool deck can be just as serious as those in the water. Minimize tripping hazards by keeping a tidy deck, free of scattered toys and pool equipment. Non-slip materials on the pool deck, diving boards and ladders also are essential in safeguarding against injuries.

Secure your pool from wandering children and uninvited

guests by fencing around all four sides of the pool. It is preferable not to use the house as part of the barrier, especially when small children reside in the home. Gates should be self-closing and secured with a lock.

When the leaves begin to fall and it's time to pull out the pool cover, don't let your guard down. Pool covers can be a serious drowning hazard and should not replace the security of a fence. Children or pets may attempt to cross a covered pool, putting themselves, as well as those who come to their aid, at great risk for drowning. Be sure to keep pool covers clear of excess water that may collect on top.

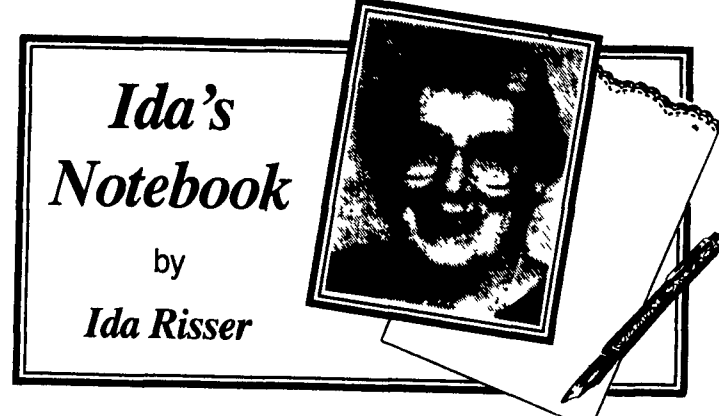
The pool and surrounding area should be sufficiently lit for easy visibility at night. Keep appliances, such as televisions and radios, out of the vicinity. Lock away pool chemicals in a dry storage area.

All electrical pool equipment should comply with local and federal codes. Use only laboratory-recognized equipment installed in accordance with the National Electrical Code Article 680. Check the code for types of electrical equipment requiring a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).

Essential elements in pool safety: basic first aid, rescue equipment and a phone should be accessible at all times.

A safe pool area requires substantial and constant attention. Jester urges vigilance when watching swimming children and enforcing safety rules.

"By establishing and following safety procedures for your swimming pool," says Jester, "needless injuries and fatalities will be prevented."



The other week we decided to attend our oldest grandson's graduation from high school in New Jersey. We were invited for lunch and arrived with vegetables from our garden and four kinds of berries. I played basketball with the seven-year-old grandson, but he did not like my method of throwing hoops. You see, I threw underhand instead of the regular way.

Everything was fine until evening, after we dressed for the occasion, we learned that the ceremony would be held inside and there were only two tickets for the parents. If it had been outside, we could have used the five tickets. As David was salutationary, he gave a speech, but we missed hearing it.

However, our daughter did take us on a historical tour. She drove us to Morristown, New Jersey where George Washington

spent a winter in the home of Mrs. Jacob Ford, Jr. She shared her home with General Washington and it became his headquarters.

That winter, 1779-80, one of the biggest problems was finding enough food for the encampment of 10,000 soldiers at Jockey Hollow a few miles away. The state government and the Continental Congress were needed to clothe and feed the army, as more than 20 snowstorms blasted the log cabins.

A museum has been built near the Ford house. It showcases soldier's clothes and guns. Also shown here are leather-covered trunks and wooden canteens.

We had a few days away from home and even managed to visit my husband's bother in Berks County. But, our work was still waiting for us when we got home.

Song Birds Are Dying

COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) — In mid-April, many bird watchers in Pennsylvania noticed that gold finches and pine siskins sometimes appeared tame and were easily approachable. These birds soon died near feeders. In the State College area, one individual reported more than 30 birds dead. They were not eating, feathers were ruffled and they were very listless. As confirmed by the Animal Diagnostic Laboratory at Penn State University, the cause was salmonellosis.

Fifteen states reported higher than normal songbird mortality this spring and in 13 states salmonellosis was confirmed as the cause. The disease is often linked to feeders, especially large artificial feeding sites with a high concentration of birds. The bacteria transmits through fecal matter and contaminated food. The primary species effected were American gold finch, pine siskin, and common redpoll.

There is no successful treatment for the disease. It is uncommon to have so many eastern states effected, the disease is more widespread in the western United States. The

cause for the eastern outbreak is unclear.

Prevention is the best medicine to avert the spread of Salmonellosis. Disinfect your feeders on a regular basis. Clean up food spillage and remove old food in and from underneath feeders. Buy feeders that have smooth edges which are easy to clean. Clean and disinfect wooden platform feeders on a more frequent schedule. Set up several feeders and space them throughout your yard. If you notice sick birds around your feeder clean, disinfect and move it to a new location. The National Wildlife Health Center, 6006 Schroeder Road, Madison, WI 53711 has a brochure entitled "Coping With Disease at Bird Feeders". The publication contains good information on songbird diseases and ways to prevent their spread.

Salmonellosis has the potential to affect humans however, transmission by songbirds does not pose a significant health risk to people. After handling feeders or sick birds wash hands with warm, soapy water. According to the Southeast Cooperative Disease Study, simple sanitation practices can protect the birds at your feeders, as well as your personal health.

