

Coping While Sitting On the Sidelines

The Earthquake in Haiti has left many family members and friends outside of Haiti worried about those they care about and love.

Dealing with your own feelings of stress, worry, anxiety, helplessness, sorrow, frustration and fear that are natural in this situation, is one of the most important challenges that you may face in the coming days and weeks.

Concrete steps to take to try and find out about the safety of those in Haiti.

- Attempts to use cell phones, text are always worth a try, but realize they are unlikely to work in the current environment for some time.
- For US citizen's believed to be in Haiti, US State Department is a resource: **(888) 407-4747** (it may take patience to reach a representative – be prepared)
- For Haitian nationals, the Embassy of Haiti can be contacted at **(202) 232-4090**
- For nationals of other countries, contact the Embassy for that country
- Networking with others has possibilities. Consider contacting other people in the US or abroad who may also be in touch with someone in Haiti and who might know something about those you are concerned about.

It may take sometime before you are able to learn about your loved ones.

Some tips to help deal with feelings of stress, worry, anxiety, helplessness, sorrow and frustration:

-Try to remain self aware and accepting of your own feelings and needs as well as others.

Be aware that everyone has different ways of coping. Some people will try to carry on “business as usual” with a stiff upper lip” or act simply as though nothing has happened. Others may be very emotional and find it difficult to focus or stop crying, have trouble sleeping, eating or carrying on everyday activity.

Everything in between these two extremes is possible and would be considered quite normal.

-Focusing on basic self care is important and helpful:

Sleeping, eating, exercising, avoiding non-prescribed drugs and alcohol

-Focus on things you can control and “let go” of things beyond your control.

-Spend time with people you enjoy and doing things that you find comforting

(this is very individual)

- Friends & family
- Personal spiritual practices
- Music
- Exercise
- Hobbies
- ... any of your own special favorites



Check in with your immediate family, and to those you live and work closest. See if they need information and support. They may be concerned about the same people in Haiti that you are thinking about.

-If you have children, provide age appropriate information, focus on basic self care and routines with an added dose of their favorite comforts and some flexibility. Don't worry if you see some acting out. It is a common way for children to express their anxiety.

-If you are struggling, try to let other people close to you know, even if you don't want to talk about it. It will help them to understand some of your behavior and enable them to give you space or other support that might be of help.

-If you or a family member continues to have a great deal of trouble coping, consider contacting:

- a doctor to discuss medications and activity that may help
- the **Aetna EAP, we can help**

Aetna Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

1-888-238-6232

TTY-TDD 866-843-6323

