

Friendly Visitors

Mental Health Association of Montgomery County

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Home Friendly Visits

- Help home bound elderly individuals age in place
- provide companionship and reduction of loneliness
- monitor for health or mental status changes
- help in weekly self care tasks and provide access to necessary resources

Friendly Visits support Optimal Aging

- Cognitively fit, active, involved in life ¹
- Absence of disability with lesser psychosocial variables²
- promotes mental health, reduction of isolation
 - Depression affects 5% of individuals 65+³
 - unmarried, particularly the widowed; those with stressful life events; and those who lack a supportive social network³
- Allows individual to remain independent in their own home

Patient Advocacy

- Home Care PT, inpatient PT, SNF PT
 - When your patient wants to remain in their home alone
 - doesn't need to be an elderly patient, the service also provides visits to mentally and physically disabled adults who are homebound
- Discuss the program with your patient, provide resources

MHAMC Friendly Visitors Program⁴

- Montgomery County MD and DC Contact:
 - Email tschmidt@mhamc.org or call (301) 424-0656, ext. 507.
 - Intake forms can be taken over the phone, sent in an email, faxed or snail mailed
 - Referrals can come from the client, family, caretakers, doctors, etc.



Eligibility Criteria⁴

- Eligibility Criteria- Client:
 - Must be able to initiate conversation
 - Remember the volunteer from week to week.
 - Understand the role of the volunteer and express a strong interest in having a visitor.
 - The client's physical, mental and emotional condition must be stable enough to sustain a weekly friendship
- Eligibility Criteria- Volunteer:
 - Must be 18 y/o and pass a background check
 - Commit to a year with one visit/week
 - Participate in a training program

Patient Education Materials⁵

- how to face and deal with traumatic events



Disaster and Your Mental Health:
What is a Normal Response, and When to Seek Help

After a disaster people may experience many powerful emotions. For most people, the intense feelings of anxiety, sadness, grief and anger have been healthy and appropriate. These feelings usually lessen over time and impact daily life less and less.

But some people may have a more profound and debilitating reaction to the disaster. Knowing what is a normal response to an abnormal situation, and what signs might indicate you have a more serious problem, will help you determine if and when to seek help from a mental health professional.

Common Responses
 It is "normal" to have difficulty managing your feelings after major disaster events. Many people will experience some common symptoms in the days and weeks following such an event, such as:

- Disbelief and shock
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Disorientation, difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Inability to focus
- Anger and resentment
- Irritability and anger
- Sadness and depression
- Feeling powerless
- Extreme changes in eating patterns, loss of appetite or overeating
- Craving for "no apparent reason"
- Headaches and stomach problems
- Difficulty sleeping
- Excessive use of alcohol and drugs

It is important to remember that everyone reacts differently to disaster and each person has their own tolerance level for difficult feelings. To cope with these emotions, there are some things you can do for yourself and others. Experts say that remaining engaged in our world, staying connected with people, and being optimistic about the challenges ahead are key to getting through otherwise traumatic times. In fact, in times of turmoil, people can make changes that improve their lives and life satisfaction.

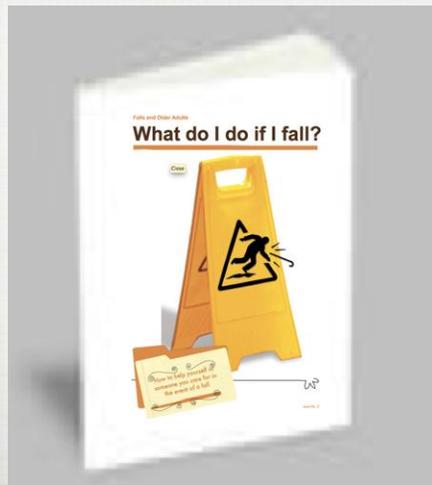
Signs to Seek Help
 However, when feelings do not go away or are so intense that they impair your ability to function in daily life, you may have a diagnosable disorder that requires mental healthcare. There are signs that can help you determine whether you are having a normal reaction to our nation's crisis or if you're experiencing a mental health problem. These signs include:

- Nightmares and recurring thoughts about the event
- Being unable to stop thinking about what happened
- Avoiding thoughts, feelings or conversations that remind you of the event
- Avoiding places or people that remind you of the event
- Having a sense of a foreboding future
- Continued difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Feeling jumpy or easily startled
- Being overly concerned about safety
- Feeling guilty, worthless or hopeless
- Not taking pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Having thoughts of death or suicide

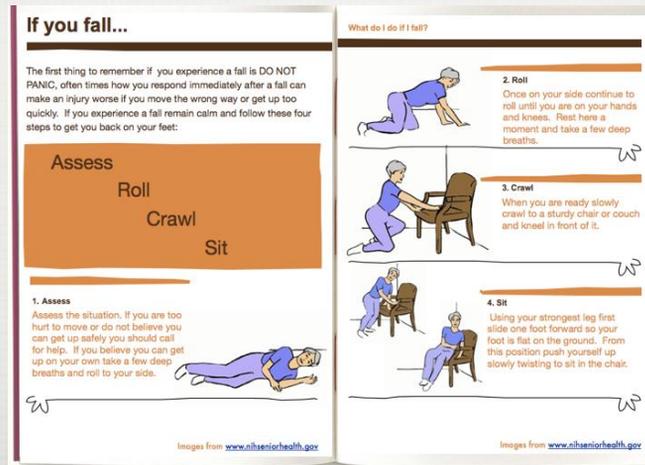
If you are experiencing these symptoms, talking with a mental health professional or taking a mental health screening test can help you understand how well you are coping with the recent events. Take that step and get help.

For support and training services, call the Montgomery County Office at (301) 738-2225.
 For immediate response to crisis situations, call the Montgomery County Crisis Center at (240) 771-4000.
 For general information or advice, call the State Health Assistance at (301) 426-0636 or visit www.ohhsdc.org.

Program Education Materials



Program Education Materials



References

1. Depp C, Jeste D. Definitions and Predictors of Successful Aging: A Comprehensive Review of Larger Quantitative Studies. *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*. 2006; 14:6-20.
2. Vaillant G, Mukamal K, Successful Aging, *The American Journal of Psychiatry*. 2001;158:839-47.
3. Diagnosis and Treatment of Depression in Late Life. NIH Consensus Statement Online 1991 Nov 4-6;9(3):1-27.
4. Montgomery County Health and Human Services Department. Mental health association: Friendly visitor program. Mental/Behavioral Health Web site. http://montgomery.md.networkofcare.org/mh/services/agency.aspx?pid=MentalHealthAssociationofMontgomeryCountyMHAMCFriendlyVisitorProgram_680_2_0. Updated 2009. Accessed 4/08, 2013.
5. Mental Health Association Montgomery County. Disaster and your Mental Health: What is A Normal Response And When To Seek Help. MHA Community Outreach Website.<http://www.mhamc.org/html/pages/outreach/publications.html>. Updated 2012. Accessed 4/08, 2013.