

COPING TIPS ON CRISIS

WHAT IS A CRISIS?

As you go the course of your studies, certain situations may impact your life in very challenging ways. These situations can be traumas such as the sudden loss of a loved one, natural disasters, feeling affected by wars or terrorism; or personal crises such as a relationship ending, family conflicts, or financial stress. What crisis situations have in common is that they feel overwhelming and out of your control. Becoming aware of what a crisis is and what it involves can help you deal with it better.

WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE HOW YOU WILL EXPERIENCE A CRISIS?

Both individual and situational factors will influence how you experience a crisis. Some common influences would be your level of emotional and physical energy, your coping skills, the availability of social support, or the number of responsibilities you carry. The various combinations of all these factors will influence the intensity of your reactions. This explains why some people experience some situations relatively well, while others may feel devastated.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON REACTIONS TO A CRISIS?

PHYSICAL

Headaches
Tiredness/Low energy
Skin eruptions
Intestinal distress
Shortness of breath
Irregular distress
Irregular heartbeat/palpitations
Muscle aches
Desire/functioning
Chest pain

COGNITIVE

Confusion
Difficulty concentrating
Repetitive thoughts/dreams
Nightmares/Flashbacks
Poor judgment
Intrusive thoughts
Indecisiveness
Decreased memory

EMOTIONAL

Numbness
Fear
Anger
Sadness
Anxiety/Panic
Helplessness
Guilt
Moodiness

BEHAVIOURAL

Startle response
Changes in sleeping/eating
Aggression
Crying
Hyperactivity
Neglectful behaviour
Increase in drug or alcohol use
Changes in sexual behaviour



ARE THESE REACTIONS NORMAL?

Any combinations of these responses are normal. They are adaptive reactions that help you to cope for the duration of whatever is happening. These reactions usually subside with time.

ARE THERE SOME INSTANCES IN WHICH THESE REACTIONS CAN BECOME HARMFUL?

Yes. If stress reactions persist or become worse beyond a month after the event has occurred they can become more harmful than adaptive. At times, the event is so traumatic that reactions are immediately severe and daily functioning becomes more difficult. In these situations, the stress reactions can become harmful if they are not dealt with.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO COPE WITH A CRISIS?

- Get enough sleep and eat nutritious meals during this time.
- Try and maintain your usual routine, and reduce all unnecessary demands on yourself.
- Avoid using drugs or alcohol to deal with stress.
- Talk about the stressful event and your reactions to it with people who are willing to listen.
- Write about it.
- Make an appointment with a counsellor.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING TO A PROFESSIONAL ABOUT THE CRISIS THAT YOU ARE EXPERIENCING?

People who support us may love us dearly, but not always know how to help. Finding a professional such as a counsellor, physician or other mental health practitioner, can help a lot. Contact the department of Counselling and Development to make an appointment with a counsellor.

If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact Counselling and Development:

SGW H-440, 514-848-2424, ext. 3545

LOYOLA AD-103, 514-848-2424, ext. 3555