

Understanding reactions to the earthquake and aftershocks - and what can help

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Aims

- Discuss and understand reactions to the earthquake and the subsequent aftermath.
- Provide strategies to manage our experiences
- What is helpful

Response

- Understand responses are ‘normal’
 - Earthquake and aftershocks
 - Change to life
 - Response to real concerns

Earthquake and aftershocks flight / fight / freeze response

- Automatic reaction when faced with danger
- Mind becomes focused, heart rate and breathing increases, digestion slows, saliva production stops, blood diverts to the muscles (pale with fright).
- Normal healthy response body react like this



Other issues

- Financial concerns
- Damage to property and businesses
- Dealing EQC and insurance
- Time pressures
- Increased workload/demands

- Relationships strained
- Substance use

Common reactions over first weeks

- Feeling on edge, tense
- Reactions triggered – aftershocks, sounds, movements, smells
- Hyperaroused/easily startled
- Constantly looking out for danger
- Sleep disturbance
- Swings in emotions - irritability
- Anxiety symptoms – racing heart, feeling shaky
- Worrying about what could have happened
- Feeling detached, disconnected
- Feeling exhausted

As weeks go on

- Fatigue
- Disillusionment
- Concentration difficulties
- Irritability

Common reactions in children

- Being clingy, not wanting to leave parents
- Increase in bad dreams (not just about earthquake)
- Loss of appetite
- Physical complaints, e.g. headaches, stomach aches
- Avoidance of places that remind them of earthquake

- All these responses are normal and will gradually reduce
- Remember we are resilient

5 key principles

- Safety
- Calm
- Self and community efficacy
- Connectedness
- Hope

- Want to do the best we can
- We already are the experts

Helpful interventions

- Responses are normal
- Getting back to regular routines
- Sleeping regularly
- Eating regularly, healthily
- Exercise to reduce anxiety, tension
- Limiting watching media re earthquake

Helpful interventions

- One step at a time
- Talking to friends, family, colleagues (if people want to)
- Being with others (if living alone) or having space to yourself
- Know that it is natural to worry about further earthquakes, accept this is an uncertainty and continue to live day by day

Try not to....

- Increase alcohol
- Increase caffeine
- Increase junk food

Suggestions for supporting children

- DO WHAT YOU KNOW
- Regular routines
- Getting back to normality
- Playing sport
- Nurturing but clear approach re behavior
- Be supportive and reassuring
- Resilience and strengths

Looking after yourself

- Do what helps you and your family personally
- Remember we are resilient
- Safe, Calm, Self and Community Efficacy, Connectedness and Hope