



Mental Health America of Franklin County

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Living Your Life During Challenging Times

Terrorist warnings. Economic struggles. Ongoing overseas military action. Extreme weather. Each of these may be unsettling, causing stress, fear and anxiety throughout the country about the future. Together, they have had a cumulative effect on the mental health of Americans. How can people cope and act 'normally' in these challenging times?

We all react differently to news of disturbing events but there are common feelings many of us experience. Disbelief, fear, difficulty making decisions, nervousness and irritability, sadness and depression, and powerlessness are just a few.

Here are some things you can do to cope and maintain a sense of 'normalcy':

- Remain engaged in the world by staying connected with people. Do not withdraw. Talk to family, friends or co-workers about your fears.
- Keep up on the news but do not watch it round the clock.
- Take necessary precautions. But do not overdo it. Make an emergency communication plan with family and friends. Re-introduce yourself to neighbors and exchange phone numbers.
- Maintain your regular routine and include time to do things you enjoy.
- Get involved in local activities. Attend a meeting on community preparedness. Send a donation to a relief fund.
- Take care of your health. Make time for exercise and other pleasurable activities that distract you and lower your stress level. Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Be optimistic about the challenges ahead. Stay in touch with your spirituality.

If you're anxious or 'down' feelings do not go away or are so intense that they interfere with your daily life, seek the help of a mental health professional. This may be especially important for those who live with depression, substance abuse problems, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Mental Health America of Franklin County is a private, not-for-profit organization, established in 1956. We help people navigate the mental health system. We are dedicated to promoting mental health in Franklin County through advocacy, education, and support services. Our programs include: information and referral to community mental health and alcohol/drug services; free support groups for people with mental illness and their families; an Ombudsman program that assists clients in navigating the mental health and alcohol/drug system; mental health screenings in English and Spanish; Pro Bono Counseling Program where underinsured and uninsured individuals can receive free counseling; community and professional mental health education including Get Connected; maternal mental health support and advocacy (POEM); and a quarterly newsletter featuring legislative updates and new happenings at MHAFC. We receive funding from the Franklin County ADAMH Board, United Way of Central Ohio, individuals, foundations, and corporations. To become a member or find out more information, please visit us online at www.mhafc.org.