

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRANSLATION & REPRODUCTION

You can either use this brochure as it is (following steps 3 and 4 below) or modify it if needed.

By modifying the brochure you can create a more appropriate tool for the local context, for example by having the content translated, adding local contact information and inserting other examples etc.

1 . To translate the brochure, insert translation in place of the current text, using and/or changing the paragraph Styles and Formatting (available in the Format menu). If need be, reduce or increase font size and margins to fit text on page.

2 . Replace drawings and examples if more appropriate ones are readily available. To change a picture, click on it. Point to Picture on the Insert menu and choose From File. Select a new picture, and click Insert.

3 . Print pages 2 and 3 back-to-back onto sturdy, letter size paper. (Do not print page 1 as it is this instruction page.)

4 . Fold the paper like a letter to create a three-fold brochure (positioning the panel with the large picture on the front).

COPING WITH LOSS AND DEPRESSION



Bhuta lives close to the sea in Khao Lak, Phuket, Thailand. She lost everything, including her hope for the future, in the 2004 tsunami.

Now she lives in a two-room barrack with no privacy. Her husband has a new job, but she does not.

She was depressed and felt that her life had no meaning. She had nothing to do, no dreams for the future and no-one to speak to. Then she decided to volunteer for the Red Cross, to interact with others, get sense of normality in her life and bring back a sense of purpose.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US:

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 **Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support**

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Illustrations: Rod Shaw/International Federation

 **Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support**

COPING

WITH STRESS AND CRISIS



 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

EXTREME STRESS

Everyone who has lived through a crisis situation will most probably experience extreme stress. Such stress usually causes unpleasant reactions.

This brochure highlights common reactions to extreme stress and gives suggestions on how to cope with them.

FEATURES OF STRESS

Stress is a state of pressure or strain that affects body and mind. It can be caused by any positive or negative change. Stress is an ordinary feature of everyday life and is positive when it makes a person perform optimally e.g. at an exam.

When faced with a strong or sudden emotional and physical strain, such as a crisis situation, most will experience extreme stress. Ordinary negative stress may accumulate over a period of time and become a negative spiral. Extreme stress can seriously affect a person's health, working ability and private life.

REACTIONS TO STRESS

It is normal to react when experiencing an abnormal situation. This is important to

remember when experiencing stress reactions.

Reactions to extreme stress vary. Typical physical reactions include sleeping problems, headaches, muscle tensions and bodily pains, fast heart beat and nausea.

Typical emotional and behavioural reactions are anxiety, watchfulness and poor concentration, and negative feelings such as guilt, sadness and anger.

Other common reactions include to become disoriented, have intrusive memories and try to avoid being reminded of the crisis situation. Some also react by not feeling anything at all, by having difficulties in making decisions or by isolating themselves from others. Some people increase their intake of alcohol, medicine or drugs to escape the pain they are feeling.

COPING WITH STRESS

Extreme stress reactions will most likely affect your health and daily life, both at work and privately. Coping with and recovering from the effects of a crisis situation can take a long time. Coping is the process of managing difficult circumstances and finding ways of minimizing or tolerating the effects of stress.

It is important to find ways of coping with the stress reactions. It may help to:

Remember that stress reactions are normal reactions to an abnormal situation

Allow yourself to feel sad and grieve

Maintain daily routines and do things that normally give you pleasure

Eat healthy foods, get sleep and exercise if possible

Socialize with other people instead of withdrawing

Seek support and assistance

Accept assistance that is offered



– Exercise if possible.

WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

The stress reactions described in this pamphlet may last several weeks. If the reactions persist and make it impossible to function normally over a long period of time, seek help. One option is to contact the local health facility or the Red Cross Red Crescent emergency response unit.