Tips for Coping with Extreme Stress

1. Concentrate on caring for yourself.
2. Talk about it with other people in the same situation. Compare reactions, and reassure yourself that you are not alone in the way you are feeling.
3. Talk about it with friends and relatives who care about you. It's normal to need to tell your story over and over.
4. Keep your schedule as routine as possible, and don't overdo it.
5. Allow time for hobbies, relaxing activities, and being with friends—even if you don't quite feel like it.
6. Participate in whatever physical fitness activities you normally enjoy.
7. Utilize whatever spiritual resources are part of your normal lifestyle.
8. Beware of any temptation to turn to alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and sweet foods. They may make you feel better momentarily, but can cause more problems in the long run. Concentrate instead on a healthy diet.
9. If you can, postpone major life decisions until things have normalized.
10. Don't hesitate to accept help from friends, coworkers, and others. If you can, offer help to others affected by the event.
11. Sometimes good self-care and talking with friends are not enough. You may want to seek professional counseling through your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This does not mean you are sick, but rather that a counselor may be able to help you get your recovery process on track.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). (1993, December; Reviewed 2024 [Ed.]). Tips for coping with extreme stress (p. 38) [B. Schuette, Ed.]. In *A manager's handbook: Handling traumatic events* (Pub. No. OWR-15). Retrieved May 24, 2024, from https://www.opm.gov

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Disclaimer: This document is intended for general information only. It does not provide the reader with specific direction, advice, or recommendations. You may wish to contact an appropriate professional for questions concerning your particular situation.

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