

Session 3
July 28, 2021



**We will begin on
time at 1pm CST**

Skills for Psychological Recovery ECHO

Part III:

Welcome!

- Your microphone has been **muted**. Please use the chat or unmute yourself to communicate.
- We appreciate you keeping your **camera** on.
- **Completion certificates** will be emailed after all sessions are complete.
 - ◆ Make sure your first and last name are visible.
 - Use the “rename” feature in the menu to change.

Presenters



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Project Disclosure Statement

- ▶ We have no relevant financial relationships with the manufacturers(s) of any commercial products(s) and/or provider of commercial services discussed in this CME activity.
- ▶ We do not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in our presentation.

Mitigating Potential Bias

- ▶ The information and recommendations involving clinical medicine is based on evidence that is currently accepted within the profession.

After the session

- ▶ Please read the SPR Manual Core Actions 1-3 (Contact & Engagement, Safety & Comfort, Stabilization) prior to the next training

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/special-resource/spr_complete_english.pdf

- ▶ Presentation materials: the slides and chat log will be emailed to you.

SPR Core Skills

1	Information Gathering & Prioritizing
2	Problem Solving
3	Positive Activities
4	Managing Reactions
5	Helpful Thinking
6	Rebuilding Healthy Social Support

Managing Reactions

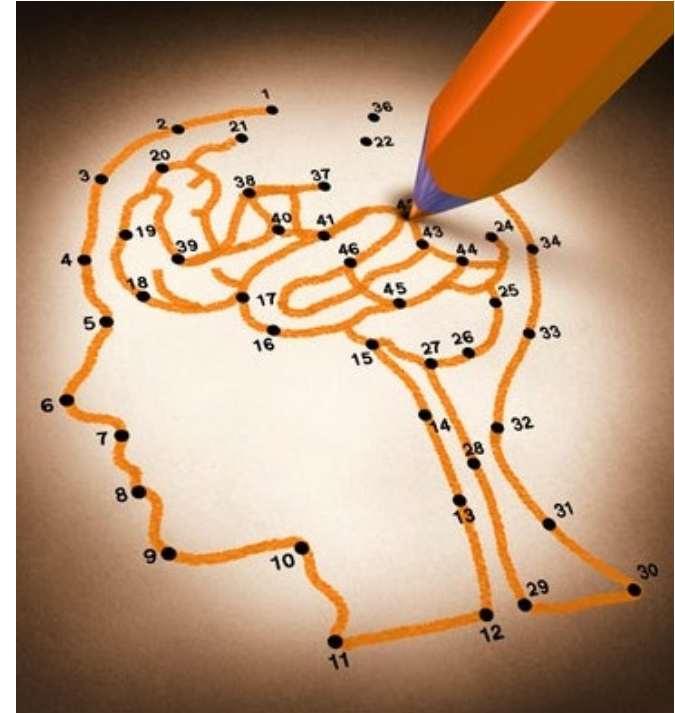
Managing reactions involves skills that may be useful for survivors who:

- Identify distressing physical and/or emotional reactions in response to death-related experiences, reminders, or other stressful situations

Managing Reactions

- Many survivors experience upsetting reactions when things remind them of the death
- These reactions can interfere with relationships, daily functioning, and overall well-being
- Learning to manage reactions can improve self-confidence and reduce maladaptive coping

Distressing Reactions - Connect the Dots



Distressing Reactions

► Post-traumatic Stress Reactions

- Re-experiencing
- Avoidance
- Numbing
- Activation

Posttraumatic Stress Reactions

What You Should Know

Following disasters, people with posttraumatic stress reactions have four different types of reactions: **re-experiencing**, **avoidance**, **numbing**, and **activation**.

Re-experiencing reactions can include:

- Unwanted memories of the disaster that seem to come out of the blue
- A strong memory being triggered by something, like watching a television show about a disaster, a storm coming, a smell of something related, or the anniversary of the disaster
- Nightmares and flashbacks—strong memories that make you feel as if the disaster is happening again
- Intense bodily reactions like a racing heart, sweating, or shaking, or strong emotional reactions

Avoidance reactions can include:

- Not talking about what happened because it upsets you
- Avoiding situations that remind you of the disaster, such as watching the news or going back to the place where the disaster occurred
- Avoiding other places/situations indirectly related to the disaster, such as avoiding crowds because you worry you won't be able to escape

Numbing reactions can include:

- Feeling distant or detached from other people, even people you love
- Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Blocking out painful thoughts or feelings or not remembering parts of what happened (feeling down and withdrawing from others may go along with this reaction)

Activation reactions can include:

- Feeling keyed up and jumpy
- Being irritable
- Being easily startled
- Feeling overly watchful and on edge
- Having trouble sleeping or concentrating

Distressing Reactions

- ▶ Anger & Irritability
- ▶ Sleep Difficulties
- ▶ Reactions to Chronic Stress
- ▶ Depressed Mood
- ▶ Post-Disaster Fears



How distressful?

Symptoms & behaviors

- ☐ Frequency (How often? Too often?)
- ☐ Intensity (How much? Too much?)
- ☐ Duration (How long? Too long?)

Impact on functioning



Context Matters

Identifying Distressing Reactions

- ▶ Provide psychoeducation
- ▶ Review what was shared & prioritized during information gathering
- ▶ Discuss the past week in their life
- ▶ Ask about activities of daily living
- ▶ Ask what has changed in their life since the disaster/trauma
- ▶ Provide “anticipatory guidance”

Identifying Distressing Reactions - Children

- ▶ Provide psychoeducation with imagery and that is non-distressing
- ▶ Move from broad to specific
- ▶ Use human body drawings
- ▶ Use colors instead of feeling words
- ▶ Sit parallel
- ▶ Use motion and sensory tools
- ▶ Remember their biological and emotional state

Provider Alert

Survivors experiencing extreme negative emotions (e.g., depression, grief, guilt, shame, feelings of worthlessness, and thoughts of revenge) may require a more intensive level of support. If extreme negative emotions persist, refer the survivor to a mental health service.

If survivors mention any strong physical reactions (e.g., acute chest pain), ask if they have seen a physician or other health professional for the condition. Make a medical referral if needed.

Anchor Breathing



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ab/US_Navy_070116-N-5387K-024_Deck_department_Sailors_stand_clear_of_the_starboard_anchor_of_USS_Kitty_Hawk_28CV_6329_as_it_is_lowered_onto_a_barge.jpg

Breathing Technique Key Considerations

- ▶ Ask permission to teach
- ▶ Ask about prior experiences
- ▶ Do not focus on lengthening inhale (focus on exhale)
- ▶ Stop if any uncomfortable experiences and normalize/provide other supports

Putting Thoughts and Feelings into Words

Writing about distressing memories or disturbing aspects of the trauma can help survivors make sense out of their feelings and reduce the intensity of strong emotions



Putting Thoughts and Feelings into Words

Instructions to give survivors include:

- Try writing without interruptions for at least 30 minutes
- Start writing about whatever is most distressing to you
- If you are writing about the traumatic event itself, write about what you saw (or see in your mind's eye), heard, felt, and the thoughts and feelings you had or are currently having

Putting Thoughts and Feelings into Words

Instructions to give survivors include:

- As you are writing, think about things you did to help others during or immediately after the trauma
- Consider whether others were there to help you – if so, how did they help you?
- If you are not comfortable writing, try speaking into a voice recorder, or drawing/ painting the imagery

Putting Thoughts and Feelings into Words - Methods for Children

Young children in particular may have a hard time remembering the order of events during or after a trauma and may have difficulty identifying emotions

- Engage a parent or caregiver to play “secretary” and write down their thoughts as they dictate
- Draw pictures about the trauma and talk about the details



Putting Thoughts and Feelings into Words - Methods for Children



Putting Thoughts and Feelings into Words

The writing task may not be appropriate for survivors unable to manage the distress that comes with writing about trauma

- Those with extreme guilt about an action that caused harm
- Actively suicidal survivors
- Survivors with a history of psychosis



Create a Plan to Manage Reactions

Use a Managing Reactions Worksheet to:

- Identify cues and triggers
- Select skills to help manage reactions to these cues
- Include parents and caregivers in developing these plans to ensure that the child can carry it out

Thank You!

for attending

