



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Senator Lanza Urges New Yorkers to Take Advantage of Free Crisis Counseling to Deal With Stress and Mental Health Issues Following Hurricane Sandy

ANDREW J LANZA February 19, 2013

Stress from a traumatic event like Hurricane Sandy is normal, but sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Help is available for you during this difficult time.

What You Should Know

Most people who live through disasters will feel some level of distress. Anxiety, sadness, sleeplessness, shock and other emotional and physical reactions are common after traumatic events.

But New Yorkers are resilient. Learning about stress and strategies to manage it can help you cope successfully.

Stress reactions can appear immediately or may not appear for weeks or even months.

Memories of previous traumatic experiences may also re-surface. Those directly affected are more likely to have stronger reactions. Most reactions to stress are temporary, and most people will recover with time and support.

What You Should Do

Don't hesitate to ask for help any time you feel overwhelmed. Friends or family members may not feel the stress the same way you do – it's how you feel that matters in deciding to

ask for help.

- **Take Care of Yourself**

- Seek out support from others: family, friends, community
- Get enough sleep.
- Eat regular, healthy meals and stay physically active.
- Avoid drinking alcohol excessively or using drugs or tobacco to help you cope.
- Remember, it's normal to feel overwhelmed. Try to break down large tasks into small, manageable pieces and focus on daily progress.
- Make time to reflect, meditate or pray.
- Even if you are very busy putting things back together, find time for activities you enjoy.

- **Take Care of Your Children**

- Provide a sense of safety and trust.
- Assure children they are safe and taken care of.
- Limit exposure to images and information about the hurricane that they are taking in from TV and other sources.
- Talk about the event but tell children only as much as they need to know, in a way they can understand.
- Answer their questions and correct any misunderstandings about the event.
- Be a role model for steadiness and hopefulness.
- Reach out to others for help if stress or irritability is affecting your interactions with your children.

Resources

LIFENET

If you feel overwhelmed and unable to cope, if stress is interfering with daily functioning, or if you are concerned about someone else, call **1-800 LIFENET**, 24 hours/7 days a week:

- 1-800-543-3638 (English)
- 1-877-298-3373 (Spanish)
- 1-877-990-8585 (Chinese)
- 1-212-982-5284 (TTY).

Project Hope

LIFENET can connect you to **Project Hope**, a free crisis-counseling program available to all New Yorkers.

For more information about the Project Hope Team and Program at Staten Island Mental Health Society, Please call: **718-442-2225** and ask for **Project Hope**.

NYC Restoration Centers

NYC Restoration Centers provide information on the NYC Rapid Repairs program, temporary housing, and health and medical benefits. They also provide food and nutrition assistance, counseling, and other services.

For more information, call **311** or visit nyc.gov.

