

The terrorist attacks:

Help is available for coping with your feelings

Although it has been nearly two weeks since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania, many people are struggling with overwhelming feelings of anger, frustration, fear and dread. At the time I am writing this, it seems unlikely that resolution will be reached quickly or certainly. It is unclear what will happen to our peers who are in the reserves or military. Many of you may also worry about yourselves, your families and future generations.

Without question, coping with these events can be quite difficult. However, there are a number of things you can do to help improve your functioning during this time of uncertainty. First, it is important to try to resume your hobbies and outside interests. Exercise, attending services (if you are religious) and socializing with supportive friends will help you to feel more centered and calm. Additionally, they will help you to cope with other stresses in life and improve your health. This may be particularly important if you have children or other family members in your household who emulate your behavior.

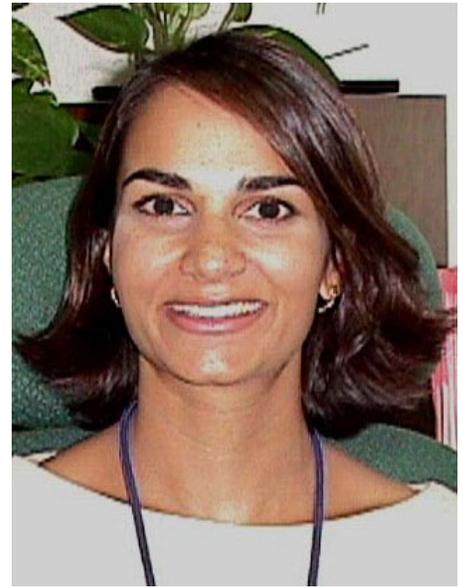
The reports on the terrorist attacks on the Internet, television, radio and in newspapers are quite disturbing. Some of you may feel re-traumatized as you watch or read about the details of the many facets of these attacks. While I am a firm believer in being informed, it is also important to know when to shut off or put away the media to protect yourself. If you are feeling frightened, unable to sleep, depressed or physically ill after watching television or listening to a particular broadcast, this may be an indicator that you need to limit the time you spend attending to such news.

Sometimes events such as these bring up other memories of dreadful events in our lives. If this is the case, it is important to try to work through these events rather than letting them fester. In my experience, problems that are not dealt with worsen over time.

As some of you may know, you can use the Employee Assistance Program at the Hanford Environmental Health Foundation to help cope with your feelings about the terrorism or any other difficulty you may be experiencing. People have used our services to deal with grief, depression, anxiety, family issues, occupational stress, substance abuse problems and many other issues. Services include up to eight sessions of counseling, and are available to you or a family member who is residing with you. Best of all, it is free and confidential.

Dan Lowe and I are clinical psychologists and Kris Myers is a social worker and certified substance abuse professional. All of us would be happy to help you or someone you care about with any of these issues. We also provide classes for work groups in gatherings such as safety meetings. You may call 376-94418 to make an appointment or for further information.

All Hanford employees (those with Hanford badges and doing Hanford work) and their family members are eligible for services related to concerns about emotional, behavioral, work, personal and family problems. ♦



Commentary
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