Behaviors That Interfere with Giving Support

- Rushing to tell someone they will be okay
- Acting like someone is weak or exaggerating because they aren't coping as well as you are
- Giving advice without listening to the person's concerns or asking what works for them
- Stopping people from talking about what is bothering them
- Talking about your own personal experiences without listening to the other person's story

When Your Support is Not Enough

- Let the person know that experts think that avoidance and withdrawal are likely to increase distress, and social support helps recovery
- Encourage the person to get involved in a support group with others who have similar experiences
- Encourage the person to talk with a counselor, clergy, or medical professional, and offer to accompany them
- Enlist help from others in your social circle so that you all take part in supporting the person

Handouts from the Psychological First Aid Manual

You can help family members and friends cope with the disaster by spending time with them and listening carefully. Most people recover better when they feel connected to others who care about them. Some people choose not to talk about their experiences very much, and others may need to discuss their experiences. For some, talking about things that happened because of the disaster can help them seem less overwhelming. For others, just spending time with people one feels close to and accepted by, without having to talk, can feel best. Here is some information about giving social support to other people.