Behaviors That Interfere with Giving Support

- Rushing to tell someone they will be okay
- Acting like someone is weak or exaggerating or that they should just “get over it” because he or she isn’t coping as well as you
- Discussing your own personal experiences
- Giving advice without listening to the person’s concerns or asking the person what works for him or her
- Telling them they were lucky it wasn’t worse
- Stopping people from talking about what is bothering them

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 talk with a counselor, clergy, or medical professional, and offer to accompany them.
- Encourage the person to get involved in a support group with others who have similar experiences.

Making contact with others can help reduce feelings of distress.

Children and adolescents can benefit from spending some time with other similar-age peers.

Connections can be with family, friends, or others who are coping with the same traumatic event.

Social Support Options

- Spouse or partner
- Trusted family member
- Close friend
- Priest, Rabbi, or other clergy
- Doctor or nurse
- Crisis counselor or other counselor
- Support group
- Co-worker
- Pet

Do . . .

- Decide carefully whom to talk to
- Decide ahead of time what you want to discuss
- Choose the right time and place
- Start by talking about practical things
- Let others know you need to talk or just to be with them
- Talk about painful thoughts and feelings when you’re ready
- Ask others if it’s a good time to talk
- Tell others you appreciate them listening
- Tell others what you need or how they could help—one main thing that would help you right now

Don’t . . .

- Keep quiet because you don’t want to upset others
- Keep quiet because you’re worried about being a burden
- Assume that others don’t want to listen
- Wait until you’re so stressed or exhausted that you can’t fully benefit from help

Ways to Get Connected

- Calling friends or family on the phone
- Increasing contact with existing acquaintances and friends
- Renewing or beginning involvement in church, synagogue, or other religious group activities
- Getting involved with a support group
- Getting involved in community recovery activities