

Coping *after an* Earthquake

After the initial shock of an earthquake passes, it's the "not knowing" afterwards that can leave us feeling out of sorts. Not knowing when the next one will be – and if it will be even bigger. Not knowing if we've done enough to keep our family and property safe.

After an earthquake, you may have a range of reactions. You may feel shock, fear, anger, helplessness, or sadness. You may find it harder to fall asleep or sleep well. Loud noises may startle you. In the days that follow, you may think of the earthquake again and again. These are all common reactions and should pass within a few days.

While we can't control when the next earthquake strikes, we can choose to focus on what *is* in our control: being prepared (within reason) and staying calm. If you're feeling rattled after an earthquake, these tips can help:

Be prepared

- Have an emergency kit stocked, and store all important documents safely.
- Develop an emergency plan. Make sure you have contact information for everyone in your family. Agree on a meeting place in case you can't get home.

- Earthquake-proof your home. Secure any objects that can fall on you, such as vases, books, paintings, and televisions. Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves. Repair any faulty electrical wiring, gas connections and cracks in your ceilings and foundations.
- Know the drill. Identify where the safest places are in your house to take shelter. (Look for sturdy desks or tables – away from objects that can fall on you.) Practice earthquake drills with your family.
- Learn CPR and how to use a fire extinguisher. (Fires are the most common danger after an earthquake.)
- If you are near a beach, stay away. There could be tsunami danger.

Lower your stress

- Stick to your regular routine as much as possible.

(continued)

- Try deep breathing, meditation, talking to friends or family, or exercise.
- Avoid spending too much time on media coverage of the earthquake.
- Avoid taking drugs or drinking too much alcohol or even caffeine.
- If your kids are feeling uneasy, give them more attention and reassurance than usual. Limit their exposure to news of the earthquake and stick to regular routines.

Strong emotions after an earthquake should lessen after a few days. If they don't, call your Employee Assistance Program. We are here 24/7 to take your calls, listen to your needs and give help or referrals. If you need help, call MHN using your company's toll-free access number (listed to the right). We'll connect or refer you to a professional who can help with stress and anxiety, grief and loss, or trauma.

MHN also has resources on its member website (members.mhn.com) to help you cope with stress, grief, traumatic events, and more.

Additional resources:

Ready.gov

What to do before, during and after an earthquake: www.ready.gov/earthquakes

Red Cross

Find a shelter, contact/locate loved ones: www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Disaster survivor assistance: www.fema.gov/disaster-survivor-assistance

Need help?

**Call toll-free, 24 hours a day,
seven days a week:**

1-866-327-4762

TTY/TDD callers, please dial 1-800-327-0801.

Or visit us at:

eap4soc.mhn.com

**and register with the
company code: soc**