

## Connecting with Others

### Giving Social Support

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 those events seem less overwhelming. For others, just spending time with people they feel close to and accepted by, without having to talk, can feel best. Here is some information about giving social support to other people.

#### Reasons Why People May Avoid Social Support

- Not knowing what they need
- Not wanting to burden others
- Wanting to avoid thinking or feeling about the event
- Feeling embarrassed or “weak”
- Doubting it will be helpful, or that others will understand
- Assuming that others will be disappointed or judgmental
- Fearing they will lose control
- Having tried to get help and feeling that it wasn’t there
- Not knowing where to get help

#### Good Ways to Give Support

- Show interest, attention, and care
- Show respect for the person’s reactions and ways of coping
- Talk about expectable reactions to disasters, and healthy coping
- Find an uninterrupted time and place to talk
- Acknowledge that this type of stress can take time to resolve
- Express belief that the person is capable of recovery
- Be free of expectations or judgments
- Help brainstorm positive ways to deal with reactions
- Offer to talk or spend time together as many times as is needed