

eap *perspectives*

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Solutions Employee Assistance Program

What Will You Do On 9-11-02?

By Bud Wassell, CEAP

I met with a group of EAP colleagues over the summer, about 30 of us who belong to the CT Chapter of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA), to try to figure out what to do to prepare for the anniversary of 9-11-01.

We weren't sure what to expect from our organizational clients. Would people want workshops, discussions groups, information tables, a ceremony or nothing at all?

Craig Newton, our facilitator, who is an expert of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), suggested we begin with ourselves and our co-workers. **How did we** want to honor and remember the people who died on 9-11 and the many heroes who pitched in to help in the aftermath?

To get us thinking we watched a clip of the video, "America 9-11." After a few moments of silence, we all jotted down what we personally wanted to do for that day. Here is a partial list of what we came up with. Maybe it will generate some ideas for you, your family and your co-workers.

- Moment of silence, prayer
- Music, poetry
- Time for reflection to process the triumph of the human spirit
- Day of Caring – volunteering



*"Courage is
resistance to fear,
mastery of fear –
not absence of fear."
Mark Twain*

- Need to do something that day to help
- Good cry, time with family
- Some way to honor those who died and helped
- Celebrate life, a ceremony at work
- Spend time with co-workers
- Reconnect with patriotism
- Give myself permission to cry, to do what I need to at the time
- Sense of safety, justice
- A part in the healing
- Focus on rising up
- Keep calmness around me
- Process more, watch tape again
- Companionship
- Let it be – prayer
- Renegotiate career
- Re-evaluate your journey
- Participate in 9-11 events to memorialize

9/11 Anniversary *Making the Most of It*

When the U.S. marks the first anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, will you benefit from the ceremonies and media attention certain to come? Or, is hearing as little as possible your preference?

Each of us will experience the anniversary of 9/11 differently. For those personally affected by 9/11, the decision to watch film clips, ceremonies, and special media programs can be a difficult one.

Think carefully about what helps you with grief or loss. Do you benefit from learning as much as possible about what happened? Are you helped by deeply moving and symbolic tributes?

All of us deal with grief and loss differently. Knowing what works for you and respecting differences in others will help heal the nation.

Call the EAP for *free & confidential* counseling and referral.

1-800-526-3485

Family members are welcome.

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Solutions
FOR PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE



The Meaning of Assistance

By Jeffrey T. Mitchell, Ph.D., CTS,
President of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation

In these terrible times everyone wants to know what to do to help. They want to assist the victims of our national tragedies. They want to assist fire, rescue and law enforcement personnel. They want to assist their neighbors, their friends and their families. And, in reality, they also want to help themselves. Here is one way to look at **ASSISTANCE**.

Assurance. People need lots of assurance now. They need to be assured that government agencies are doing everything humanly possible to prevent further terrorist events. And they need to know that every effort is being made to find and bring to justice the murderers of thousands of innocent people. People need to know that they are loved and cared for and that they mean something to somebody else.

Security. Children need to know that they are secure within their families. Individuals and families must adjust to the threats that exist during this time of war.

Structure. An antidote to chaos and confusion is structure. Families, individuals and even business and organizations should be encouraged to maintain routines and structures.

Information. People need current, accurate and practical information. Information is a great anxiety reducer. It reassures, it guides, it strengthens, it assists, it supports and encourages.

Support. Most people in a catastrophe need support and guidance, not psychotherapy.

Truth. The terrorists are expert at lying. Telling the truth is essential if

we want to win the war on terrorism. Trust can be maintained only when truth is at the core of communications.

Action. Be part of the effort. Be vigilant. Report criminal or suspicious behavior. Write a check. Help a neighbor. Check on the elderly. Volunteer for service. Read a book to a frightened child. Write a letter to a rescuer or to a soldier.

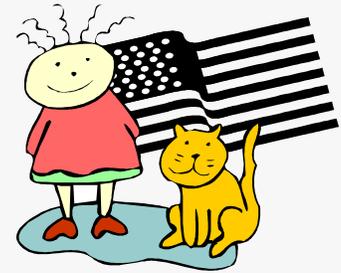
Neutralize. Counter rumors with facts. It is normal to have negative feelings in these tough times. But, let's not get stuck in those feelings. Instead of saying, "It will never work," we need to be saying, "What do we need to do to make this effort successful?"

Courage. All of us must have some courage. Wars are not usually won by single extraordinary events. They are won by a vast collection of small individual acts of courage.

Encourage. To win the war we must encourage each other. Be a listening ear. Offer guidance and support. Spend time with people you like. Spend less time watching the horrible events on the news. Maintain the rhythm of your life as normal as possible. Seek help if you need it. Smile and laugh when you can. Be positive and enthusiastic about something. Look out for one another. Refer a person who is having trouble healing from the tragedies to a competent mental health professional. As awful as things are now they can be better again, but only if we are dedicated to recovery and renewal.

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Helping Kids Cope With Crisis



To assist children in coping with severe stress associated with the September 11th incident, one national child development expert, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, recommends the following:

1. **Listen to your** child and discuss his or her fears. Help children believe that they are safe and so are those who take care of them.
2. **Tell children** a bit of the truth in simple terms, depending on the child's age. Don't share more than asked for. Some facts reduce fear by preventing a child's worst fears from filling in the gaps.
3. **Maintain a normal** routine as much as possible. Routines are important. They reassure your child that things are under control.
4. **Set limits on** exposure to TV images that can be traumatizing.
5. **Resist stereotyping** or labeling other cultures, peoples, and religions. Help children understand that not all people in a given culture act in evil ways.
6. **Children watch** and listen for adults' reactions to the traumatic events. How you respond and handle your anger and fears in front of your child will impact their mental well-being. Be cautious about exposing children to strongly worded adult conversations.
7. **Take care of** yourself. Attempt to live a normal life.

Source: PR Newswire