PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF DISASTERS

BE PREPARED BY KNOWING THESE FACTS AND TIPS

Facts:

• Many people impacted by a disaster, especially those with direct experience, endure temporary distress after the event, which can take days or weeks to diminish.

• Symptoms of temporary distress include trouble sleeping, becoming angry or upset more easily, problems at school or work, a sense of isolation, flashbacks or nightmares, and difficulty concentrating or listening.

• The loss of things like homes, jobs, valued possessions, loved ones, etc., that can be associated with a storm, is a stressful and potentially traumatic experience for people.

• Some victims of weather disasters can be left with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) long after the disaster.

• As many as 40 percent of disaster victims can also experience other mental health disorders, such as anxiety and depression.

• Changes in social behavior are also possible, like increased aggression and domestic violence.

• Disaster victims can be triggered by reminders of the event, like thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, or wind events. The disaster anniversary can also be a triggering reminder that causes emotional distress.

• Major events can also bring out positive responses, with a sense of community causing people to join together and help those in need to recover and rebuild.

Tips:

• Stay informed, but avoid overexposure to news coverage.

• Keep an open dialogue with those around you (including children) about feelings and emotions.

• Learn what resources may be available to those impacted by the disaster to aid in recovery efforts.

• If necessary, seek the advice of a professional to help with emotional recovery from a disaster.