

Special concerns of older adults following a disaster

Each age group is vulnerable in unique ways to the stresses of a disaster. Different issues and concerns become relevant during the emotional recovery. In older adults some disaster stress reactions may be experienced immediately, while others may appear months later. Here are some of the symptoms you or a loved one may be having.

Many who survive a disaster experience a strong desire to withdraw from others. They may withdraw even from those to whom they are the closest. Overcoming the tendency to isolate ones self takes real strength and discipline. A few ways to break the isolation barrier are to:

- **TALK:** It takes courage to reveal what you are thinking and feeling to someone else. Talking can be very comforting and healing. Talking is worth it.
- **ASK FOR HELP:** Research shows that people who ask for help come through disasters stronger and healthier than those who view seeking help as a weakness.
- **BE WITH PEOPLE:** Life does not return to normal overnight. You have survived a disaster. That doesn't mean your life is over or that you don't deserve to be happy again. Do something good for yourself. Now is the time to do it!

For assistance or more information call one of the Nebraska area agencies on aging

Aging Office of Western Nebraska - AOWN
1517 Broadway, Suite 122
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
Phone: 308-635-0851 - Toll free: 800-682-5140
Website: www.aown.org

West Central Nebraska Area
Agency on Aging - WCNA
115 North Vine
North Platte, NE 69101
Phone: 308-535-8195 - Toll free: 800-662-2961

Midland Area Agency on Aging - MAAA
305 North Hastings, Room 202
Hastings, NE 68902
Phone: 402-463-4565 - Toll free: 800-955-9714
Website: www.midlandareaagencyonaging.org

Lincoln Area Agency on Aging - LAAA
1005 O Street
Lincoln, NE 68508-3628
Phone: 402-441-7022 - Toll free: 800-247-0938
Website: www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/aging/index.htm

Blue Rivers Area
Agency on Aging - BRAA
1901 Court St, Beatrice, NE 68310
Phone: 402-223-1376 - Toll free: 888-317-9417
Website: www.braa.org

Eastern Nebraska
Office on Aging - ENOA
4223 Center Street
Omaha, NE 68105
Phone: 402-444-6536 - Toll free: 888-554-2711
Website: www.enoa.org

Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging -
NENAAA
119 Norfolk Avenue
Norfolk, NE 68702
Phone: 402-370-3279 - Toll free: 800-672-8368
Website: www.nenaaa.com

This handout was adapted from:
<http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/dtac/resources.asp#grantee>