



# Combined Funds, Inc.

## CARPENTERS' COMBINED FUNDS, INC.

### COPING WITH TRAUMATIC SITUATIONS IN OUR LIFE

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*Submitted by: Lytle EAP Partners*

At times, unfortunately, in our lives we are confronted with tragedies that can be very crippling and can last a lifetime. Research indicates that the sooner a person receives "psychological first aid" the less likely that they will experience long-term or severe problems. Counselors can help before serious symptoms occur.

It is normal to have extreme emotional reactions to situations where an individual has witnessed a tragedy or where there is a perceived threat to one's life or where serious injury has occurred. Both adults and children experience emotional reactions to different situations.

Some normal reactions are: sleeping too much or not sleeping, depression, anxiety or nervousness, sensitivity (and feelings easily hurt), inability to concentrate, helplessness, irritability, frustration, crying anger/rage survival guilt, intrusive thoughts, isolation, denial of stress, emotional constriction, daze emotional numbing, amnesia/memory impairment, hyper vigilance /startle response and irrational fears.

Remember, an abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior. Although an individual may be experiencing a normal reaction, it can be very painful. Experiencing many of these emotions are part of the healing process.

Following is a list of things to try after such a crisis to alleviate the emotional pain associated with a trauma:

#### **For Yourself:**

- Try to rest a bit more.
- Contact friends.
- Have someone stay with you for at least a few hours a day.
- Reoccurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal – don't try to fight them they'll decrease over time and become less painful.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it).
- Try to keep reasonable expectations of yourself.
- Physical activity is often helpful.
- Reestablish a normal schedule as soon as possible.
- Don't drink alcohol or use drugs (it will only prolong the normal healing process).
- Express your feeling as they arise.
- Talk to people who love you.
- Find a good counselor if the feelings become prolonged or too intense.

#### **For Family Members & Friends:**

- Listen carefully.
- Spend time with the traumatized person.
- Offer your assistance and a listening ear even if they have not asked for help.
- Reassure them they are safe.
- Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, minding children.
- Give them some private time.
- Don't take their anger or other feeling personally.
- Don't tell them that they are "lucky it wasn't worse" – traumatized people are not consoled by those statements.
- Instead tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them.

Realize that you and those around you are under stress and try to keep things as normal and easy as possible. Tell other's you are having a difficult time. Try to keep daily schedules as normal as possible. Be kind to yourself.

Counseling is available to you and your family. Although emotional reactions are normal it is also normal and necessary to talk and we are available to listen.

For more information, please contact your [Member Assistance Program](#) at 1-888-MAP-6637

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