

# Maintaining Resilience

## Tips for Better Sleep During Difficult Times

Our mind and our bodies react to the stress and trauma. Whether earthquake and tsunami related devastation, the uncertainty of aftershocks or radiation leaks, or other less visible losses, we all react emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Unprecedented events in our lives can rob us of our normal capacities to cope. This does not mean we are weak...in fact we are very resilient. We all have endured stressful situations, but we are human and we can become very tired after time. A tragedy or unexpected loss taxes our capacity to deal with on our own, and it's dangerous to always expect that of ourselves.

It is important to recognize that we will experience reactions like fatigue, impatience, isolation, fear, sadness, and more, and these are normal reactions to stress and trauma. These emotions can make it difficult to sleep.

Here are some tips that might help you to sleep better:

- **Limit alcohol and caffeine consumption.** Although alcohol, caffeine and cigarettes tend to be used more during times of stress, it will interfere with your ability to sleep or the quality of your sleep.
- **Limit time watching television or news that is disturbing.** Up to date information is important for our peace of mind, but too much information, especially right before bed, can increase anxiety and cause us to have more difficulty falling or staying asleep.
- **Talk to people you trust.** Verbalize your feelings to gain some support from people who care. We need to be able to express our emotions and thoughts in order to release some tension.
- **Try deep breathing.** Close your eyes—and try taking deep, slow breaths—making each breath even deeper than the last.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation.** Starting at your toes, tense all the muscles as tightly as you can, then completely relax. Work your way up from your feet to the top of your head.
- **Visualizing a peaceful, restful place.** Close your eyes and imagine a place or activity that is calming and peaceful for you. Concentrate on how relaxed this place or activity makes you feel.

The **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** is here to help. Your employer offers free, confidential counseling with qualified professional psychologists for support—during these difficult times and for any concern you may have at any time. Please call on them during these difficult days ahead. Remember you are not alone and what you are feeling is normal given unexpected and extraordinary circumstances.