

Northeastern University Health and Counseling Services (UHCS) extends its support to those affected by the recent events in Japan. The Great Tohoku Earthquake (東北地方太平洋沖地震) not only has brought significant loss of life and material devastation but has disrupted for many a sense of safety and protection. This handout provides information on common responses to disaster, coping, and useful resources. **If you need additional support, contact UHCS at 617-373-2772.**

## **Common Responses to Disaster**

The response to a natural disaster of the magnitude of the Great Tohoku Earthquake and on-going concerns about the possibility of nuclear crisis in Japan can vary from person to person. It is important to understand that if you are affected by the events in Japan, you can experience some emotions that can be unwanted, yet are a part of a natural grieving process following the loss that any disaster brings.

### Some Initial Responses to the Disaster

- Disbelief
- Fear
- Feeling emotionally Numb
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Need for information
- Seeking help for yourself and your family and friends
- Desire to help disaster victims

### Some Later Responses

- Anger and frustration
- Moodiness and irritability
- Apathy and feeling powerless
- Sadness or depression
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Tearfulness and/or frequent crying
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping more than usual
- Difficulty relaxing
- Feeling overly alert and easily startled

- Excessive worrying
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling disappointed with help from others and wanting to reject it
- Difficulty with maintaining daily routine, including going to classes
- Isolating oneself from family, friends, or social activities
- Having a negative outlook for the future
- Experiencing “survivor guilt” (feeling guilty that you or your family survived while others did not, or feeling that others might have suffered more than you did)
- Turning to drugs, alcohol, and smoking for comfort

### **How You Can Cope**

- Limit your exposure to media coverage of the events; take breaks from watching or listening to news as they can be re-traumatizing.
- Use only reliable sources of information; avoid Internet and other media that spread rumor and inaccurate information.
- If people inquire about your loved ones in the affected area and you find it distressing, politely set boundaries by saying something like, “I appreciate your concern, but I need some space now.”
- Resume your regular daily routine if it was disrupted – this can be a way of regaining your sense of stability and control.
- Talk to others as it might help you realize that you are not alone in how you feel. Try not to become isolated from others.
- Take care of your physical health by getting enough rest, eating well, exercising, and avoiding excessive smoking, drinking, or using drugs.
- Get involved with your community by attending community events that help promote comfort and healing.
- Use supports and resources provided by the various University offices (ISSI, UHCS, Spiritual Life).
- Seek professional help, if you feel overwhelmed or need someone to talk to.

## For Japanese Students

- If you plan to go to Japan, contact ISSI at 617-373-2310 for more information on visa and immigration issues.
- If your family lives in the area affected by the tsunami, such as Miyagi prefecture, and you are concerned about financial support, contact ISSI at 617-373-2310. Some sources say there is a possibility of applying for permission to work off campus as an international student being affected by the natural disaster in home country, yet this has not been confirmed as of now. For more information contact ISSI.
- If you need additional support, contact UHCS at 617-373-2772 and request an appointment with a mental health professional. UHCS provides counseling, as well as medication treatment for common mental health concerns. If you need to be seen on an urgent basis, indicate so at the time of your call.
- If you have difficulty getting in touch with your family, contact Consulate-General of Japan in Boston (<http://www.boston.us.emb-japan.go.jp/>), telephone: 617-973-9772, address: 600 Atlantic Avenue, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02210
- Additional Services for Locating People in Japan in Japanese:
  - The Google Person Finder in Japanese: <http://japan.person-finder.appspot.com/?lang=ja> (Voice Message services for those who wish to leave messages about one's safety and other information)
  - NTT EAST: <http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/index.html>
  - If you have the mobile phone number of your family member or friend in the affected areas, you may utilize the following services to check whether he/she has registered his/her message(s) on this service. Services are available in English and Japanese:
    - Docomo : <http://dengon.docomo.ne.jp/Einoticelist.cgi?es=0>
    - SoftBank : <http://mb.softbank.jp/mb/entrance.html>
    - Disaster Message Board: <http://dengon.ezweb.ne.jp/service.do>

- Additional Disaster-Related Information in Japanese:
  - NHK Radio News: <http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/japanese/info/select.html>
  - Radio FM Wai Wai : <http://www.tcc117.org/fmyy/index.php>
  - International Organization for Migration :  
[http://www.iomjapan.org/news/press\\_237.cfm](http://www.iomjapan.org/news/press_237.cfm)
  - Google Crisis Response :  
<http://www.google.co.jp/intl/ja/crisisresponse/japanquake2011.html>
  
- Additional Information on the Situation on the Nuclear Power Plants in Japanese:
  - Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO): <http://www.tepco.co.jp/index-j.html>
  - Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency: <http://www.nisa.meti.go.jp/index.html>
  - Q&A on the Nuclear Power Stations by Science Media Centre of Japan: <http://smc-japan.sakura.ne.jp/?p=752>
  
- Additional Boston Area Community Resources and Supports in Japanese:
  - Japanese Bostonians Support Line (JB Line) (24 hours 365 days anytime) 日系ボストニアンサポートライン (いつでもどうぞ) (781) 296-1800, website: [www.jbline.org](http://www.jbline.org), e-mail: [help@jbline.org](mailto:help@jbline.org), Twitter: [www.twitter.com/jblineboston](http://www.twitter.com/jblineboston)
  - Japanese support group for those affected by the earthquake – group starts on Sat, March 19, is scheduled to run for 2-3 months, location - Japanese school (for more information, contact Satoko Watanabe at JB Line)
  - Some Japanese mental health professionals offer free 1-hour counseling around issues related to recent events in Japan (Yoko Harumi at Cambridge Health Alliance and Kumiko Ide in private practice in Cambridge) – for more information, contact Satoko Watanabe at JB Line