

MENTAL HEALTH

Do not underestimate the mental component of survival!

ADAPTABILITY is the #1 trait of a survivor.

2nd is the commitment to survive.

Survivors must be balanced.

To maintain mental health all of these things are necessary:

- NUTRITION-consider vitamins & supplements (especially vit C, B complex and zinc)
- SLEEP-*REM sleep-balanced amt. not too little or too much-humans need a
- balanced EXPOSURE TO LIGHT/SUN (broad spectrum light, at least 1/2 hr so that the retina and brain respond appropriately)
- EXERCISE/ACTIVITY-provides endorphins
- FUN/CREATIVITY/SENSE OF HUMOUR and
- SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS-bring cards/games/books/story telling/pen/paper/jump rope/balls/small instruments/music/song

To ease ANXIETY:

- MEDITATION
- RELAXATION TECHNIQUES/GUIDED IMAGERY/HYPNOSIS(all of these can also be used for pain control)
- don't forget BREATHING TECHNIQUES
- also PRAYER/SPIRITUALITY: (Gandhi said: "Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied it is the most potent instrument of action."

Allow for grieving and expressing fear.

DEATH: Be prepared for the possibility. Just as we participate in a birth in our family, we must be ready to assist our loved ones in their end days. We must learn to see it as completion of a cycle in the full circle of life.

Though it is not pleasant, we must begin to plan for what we would do in ANY CIRCUMSTANCE. Preparation which may include assisting a loved one during their final hours when the professionals we usually rely on to assist are not there.