

Coping with Crisis in the Media (Part 1)

The news can be full of stories about unexpected or bad things like tornadoes or hurricanes, disease threats, bombings, kidnappings, and war. The scary thing is—it may seem like these things are happening all around you, even in places where you feel secure like campus, the mall, and at home. Seeing these things on TV or even experiencing them firsthand (like being in a tornado) can cause you to feel uncertain, worried, or scared. These feelings may last even after the event is over.

Here are some tips to understanding the news and what you see and hear:

- The news doesn't talk about everyday activities. Instead, the news talks about things that are out of the ordinary—both good and bad. Sometimes it seems like the news captures more of the bad stuff—things like tragedies and crime. For example, if a plane crashes, it will get a lot of attention in the news—so much so, that you may think planes crash all the time. In fact, thousands of planes take off and land safely each day—the news just doesn't talk about it.
- Sometimes you see stories over and over about tragic events like bombings, or disasters such as floods, earthquakes, or hurricanes. This doesn't mean these things are happening all the time—it just means that the news is talking about it again. The news will cover something when it first happens and then repeat the story. So you may see it on the news in the morning and then again at night. After the first day, the news may do what is called a "follow-up" story to tell you what happened after the event. So you may hear about the same thing for a few days, even though it only happened once.
- Bad news can alert you to what is going on around you. For example, a news story could tell you about someone in your community who is breaking into homes. While this may scare you, just remember that even though it's on the news, that doesn't mean it will happen to you. Stories like this can help make you aware of your surroundings and of things you can do to protect yourself (like locking your doors).
- Disasters or tragic events can bring out the best in people: Firefighters and police officers are doing their jobs (like saving people) and volunteers and everyday citizens also are there to help. You will see people in your community volunteering to bring food and clothing to help those who are affected, families coming together to help each other out, and shelters being put into place to give people a place to stay. You can get involved too!

It is normal to be concerned about what you hear in the news. However, it is important to know that while things may seem uncertain for a while, your life usually will return to normal fairly soon.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BAM! Body and Mind. (Updated 2015, May 9). *News you can use*. Retrieved April 22, 2019, from <https://www.cdc.gov>

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