



# SAFETY TALKS:

## Coping with Stress During and Infectious Disease Outbreak

### Know the Signs of Stress

- An increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels
- An increase in your alcohol, tobacco use, or use of illegal drugs
- An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing
- Having trouble relaxing or sleeping
- Crying frequently
- Worrying excessively
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Blaming other people for everything
- Having difficulty communicating or listening
- Having difficulty giving or accepting help
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun

**Know the facts:** Have a reliable resource for health information such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organizations.

### Know How to Relieve Stress

- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, wash your face and hands, or engage in pleasurable hobbies.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do a fun thing after a hard task.
- Use time off to relax—eat a good meal, read, listen to music, take a bath, or talk to family.

#### Keep yourself healthy:

Eat healthy foods, and drink water.

Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol.

Do not use tobacco or illegal drugs.

Get enough sleep and rest.

Get physical exercise.

#### Keep things in perspective:

Set limits on how much time you spend reading or watching news about the outbreak. You will want to stay up to date on news of the outbreak, particularly if you have loved ones in places where many people have gotten sick. But make sure to take time away from the news to focus on things in your life that are going well and that you can control.