

## Definition of psychosocial supports

Psychosocial supports helps individuals and communities to heal the psychological wounds and rebuild social structures after an emergency or a critical event. It can help change people into active survivors rather than passive victims.

Early and adequate psychosocial support can:

- 1) prevent distress and suffering developing into something more severe
- 2) help people cope better and become reconciled to everyday life
- 3) help beneficiaries to resume their normal lives
- 4) meet community-identified needs

Disasters, conflicts and health problems have severe psychosocial consequences. The emotional wounds may be less visible than the destruction of homes, but it often takes far longer to recover from emotional impact than to overcome material losses.

Early support and adaptation processes - which respect local customs in mental health or psychosocial healing - allow an affected population to cope better with a difficult situation.

Social effects are the shared experiences caused by disruptive events and consequent death, separation, sense of loss and feeling of helplessness.

The term psychosocial refers to the close relationship between the individual and the collective aspects of any social entity. Psychosocial support can be adapted in particular situations to respond to the psychological and physical needs of the people concerned, by helping them to accept the situation and cope with it.